

# Children's Center

722 East Beaver Avenue  
Fort Morgan, CO 80701  
(970) 542-0731

## Parent Handbook



2023-2024

# CHILDREN'S CENTER PARENT AND STUDENT HANDBOOK

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## ***Welcome to the Children's Center***

The Children's Center has been a proud part of the Morgan County School District Re-3 since 1989. Our childcare program was originally started with the goal of providing a loving and caring place for children outside of school hours. Over the years we have kept that goal and have grown into a full-time childcare facility providing care for children from 6 weeks to 12 years old.

The staff members at the Children's Center are constantly endeavoring to provide high quality programs and childcare to district staff, teen parents, and the community. We offer endless opportunities to learn and thrive in an enriched, supportive, and inclusive environment.

The children in our care are given educational and social experiences that encourage them to explore, experiment, and embrace new skills while building on existing skills for lifelong success.

Thank you for allowing the Children's Center to be a part of this special time in your child's life.

Caring for Kids,

*Esther Cooley*

Early Childhood Program Director

## ***Mission Statements***

The mission of Morgan County School District Re-3 is to inspire creative thinking, high achievement, and lifelong learning.

The mission of the Children's Center is to provide a safe and caring environment that enriches children's lives through educational experiences offered in a quality childcare program.

## ***Purpose, Philosophy, and Vision***

The *purpose* of the Children's Center is to provide a safe, loving, fun and caring environment for all children to flourish and reach their full potential. The *philosophy* of the Children's Center is that all children should be provided with a quality and affordable childcare program with enrichment activities and recreational experiences to help children grow and develop during their early childhood years. The *vision* of the Children's Center is to continue to evolve the program into the highest quality of early learning and childcare for children and families.

The Children's Center does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sexual identity, or disability.

All policies and procedures established by the school district will continue to apply at the Children's Center.

## ***Ages of Children Accepted***

The Children's Center accepts and care for children 6 weeks old to twelve years old and has a license capacity of 120 children.

	Age	Option
Infant Care	6 weeks to 12 months	Full Time
Toddler Care	12 months to 36 months	Full Time
Pre-K Care	3 – 5 years	Full Time / Part Time
Before School Care	Preschool Students	7:30-8:00
School Age Care	4 to 12 years	3:00-5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday
Summer Care	4 to 12 Years	Full Time and Part Time Options Available

Please note that if applicable when a child's age qualifies for transition into another room for care, the decision will be made by the family, child, teacher, and director. This process will include a 'Bridge Time' between rooms to help the child acclimate to the new environment, teacher, and friends. After this a collaborative conference will occur to discuss the completed transition.

## ***Center's Operating Hours***

The Children's Center is open on all Morgan County School District Re-3 days from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm.

### ***Care on No School Days***

The Children's Center also provides care on most of the days that school is not in session. Families are encouraged to sign-up for care ahead of time.

### ***Closure Dates***

The Children's Center will operate when Morgan County School District Re-3 is in session and during most no school days and school breaks. Please reference the Open & Closed yearly schedule for specific dates.

The Children's Center will be closed on the following holidays:

- \* New Year's Eve
- \* New Year's Day
- \* Good Friday
- \* Memorial Day
- \* Fourth of July
- \* Labor Day
- \* Thanksgiving Day, and the Friday after Thanksgiving Day
- \* Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

If the holiday falls on a weekend, the Children's Center will designate another day for closure. Advanced notice of additional or early closures will be given to families and an Open and Close Schedule annually. The Children's Center **will be CLOSED on district SNOW DAYS.**

During After School Care, if early dismissal is activated, children will be bused from their school to the Children's Center. **Families are asked to *please call both* the Children's Center 970-542-0731 and their child's school if other care plans are made for their children.**

The Children's Center **reserves the right to close for the day when attendance falls below 15 children.**

For safety, no child will be allowed to walk to the Children's Center from school or walk home from the Children's Center.

### ***Inclement/Adverse Weather***

Children will play outside every day if the weather permits. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the changing weather every day. If the temperature is 30° F or below or if it reaches 90° F or above the children will remain inside for large motor recreational activities.

Please see District Policy information on our website.

### ***Admission/Registration***

Registration forms are available at the Children's Center and online. Registration is limited to license capacity. Please note that limited part-time care is available during the summer. The

number of spaces available in the summer is 100 full-time students and 20 part-time students. Registration is offered on a first come first served basis. Once the program is at license capacity, a waiting list will be kept accommodating families in a fair and timely manner.

The Children's Center will conduct a parent interview before care begins. The interview will cover overall program information and requirements and determine if the program is able to meet the needs of the child and family.

Teen parents must be currently enrolled in Morgan County School District Re-3 to register their child for care at the Children's Center.

The Children's Center meets all ADA regulations and is an inclusive early learning and childcare center. The Children's Center partners with families to meet the needs of children with learning and developmental delays. This is an individualized process for each family focusing on inclusion and embedded support. The Children's Center partners with families and the school district to meet all needs for children's learning and developmental goals.

### ***Two-Week Trial Period***

The first two weeks of a child's enrollment is a trial and adjustment period for children, parents, and the center staff. During the two-week trial, the parent or the provider can terminate care without reason or notice. Please note that every effort will be made to accommodate care for all children.

### ***Fees and Payment Procedures***

The Children's Center has established flat rates for all program options. Please refer to fees for specific prices. Infant Care, Toddler Care and Pre-K Care are billed at a flat monthly rate. School Age Care is billed on a monthly rate. Summer care is billed at a weekly rate according to enrollment option. There is a \$50 registration fee per application per child and it is *non-refundable*.

*It is our expectation that the entire balance is paid in full each month and that you pay your account to prevent it from exceeding one month's fees. We do not allow a carry-over balance; however, if accounts have a carry-over balance or are not paid in full by the end of each month, a \$100 monthly fee will be added to your account until it is paid in full.*

*Please note that Infant, Toddler and Summer Care are charged a 50% retaining fee to reserve your spot in the program. The Children's Center accepts Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) through The Colorado Department of Human Services. Families are encouraged to apply for CCCAP to assist in the cost of childcare. Please note that it is the parent's responsibility to approve attendance in Attendance Tracking System (ATS) for DHS each week. **If approvals are not completed, it will be the parent/guardian's responsibility to pay the full balance.***

Fees are due and payable as per the payment contract signed by each parent. **ANY CLIENT THAT**

**IS THREE (3) DAYS BEHIND IN PAYING FEES WILL BE DENIED SERVICES UNTIL ALL FEES ARE PAID IN FULL.**

An additional \$50.00 will be charged for all checks returned due to insufficient funds. Additionally, a client who has a check returned due to insufficient funds will need to make all further payments in cash or money order.

Please be advised that accounts turned into collections will no longer be eligible for care at the Children's Center.

***Identifying Where Children Are at All Times***

Every child is signed in and out every day. The person dropping off or picking up a child must sign and date the sign in/out book for every child he/she is picking up every day. When children arrive, the classroom teacher and program Director document their attendance. At various times throughout the day children are counted, especially during transitions. Circles are posted outside the classroom doors to inform where children are when not in their classroom.

Class	Age	Option	Price	25% Discount for District Staff	Teen Parents
Infants	6 weeks - 12 months	Full Time	\$800/month	\$600	Rates for Teen Parents will be determined by Department of Human Services after reviewing their Application for Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP). amount.
Toddlers	12 months - 36 months	Full Time	\$800/month	\$600	
Pre-K Care	2 ½ - 3 ½ years old	Full Time Part Time	\$600/month \$300/month	\$450 \$225	
No School Day	3 -12 years old		\$40 daily \$30 daily	\$22.50 daily	
Before School Care	Pre-K Only	7:30-8:00	\$5/hour \$20/week	\$15/week	
School Age Care	4-12 years	3:00-5:30	\$150/month	\$115	
Summer Care	4-12 years	Full Time Part Time	Full time- \$150/week Part time- \$ 75/week	\$115 \$60	
Please note: The following fees may also be applied. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Retaining Fee – 50% weekly/monthly depending on program option.</li><li>• Late Departure Fee - \$10.00 per day per child.</li></ul>					

Staff and children are scheduled into different activity areas throughout the day. Since children leave at different times, staff keep track of children in their care on an attendance sheet. They mark the children's departure by being sure that all the children have safely left the Children's Center by the end of the day. Staff use radios to communicate where children are at all times-



## ***Guidance, Positive Instruction, Supporting Positive Behavior***

the Children's Center will:

**Cultivate positive child, staff, and family relationships:** Each teacher at the Children's Center has been trained in positive teaching practices that ensure each child's behavior is guided in a positive manner. We continuously incorporate our families through daily communications regarding their children and encourage family involvement to ensure their children are being guided in a positive direction.

- 1. Create and maintain a socially and emotionally respectful early learning and care environment:** All of our teachers encourage positive interactions with each child through demonstration and teaching that allow children to learn and be capable of respecting others socially and emotionally.
- 2. Implement teaching strategies supporting positive behavior, pro-social peer interaction, and overall social and emotional competence in young children:** Through training each teacher can reinforce children's positive behavior effectively and positively and re-direct any behavior that is harmful to a wanted behavior. Each teacher continuously demonstrates positive interactions with each child, which helps children learn how to treat others in a positive way and allows them to be more socially and emotionally aware of the feelings of their peers.
- 3. Provide individualized social and emotional intervention support for children. Including methods for understanding children's behavior and developing and implementing team based positive behavior support to prevent suspensions and expulsions:** The Children's Center believes in working as a team to identify the specific social and emotional needs of each child. Our staff are trained in methods that enable them to understand children's behavior and develop positive support plans for each child. This reduces challenging behaviors and may help to prevent suspensions and expulsions.
- 4. Access and early childhood mental health consultant or specialist as needed:** At the Children's Center we continuously strive to strengthen our relationships with our children and their family. While working with our families we strive to provide each child with specialized care within our classrooms. When the situation arises that a child's needs are too difficult to address in the classroom, we will give families information about an Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist to support their child in all environments.

## ***Discipline/Guidance***

All children are learning to be responsible for their behavior. Appropriate behavior is expected and will be positively reinforced by all staff. Staff are responsible for children's discipline in and out of the classroom with the goal of helping children gain self-control. Our classroom environments encourage appropriate behavior and help children learn social skills. The rooms are filled with a wide range of activities that are age and child appropriate and that will interest

and channel behavior constructively. Our Early Childhood Teachers are trained to observe and recognize signs of an impending crisis, to redirect children before problems arise, to reinforce positive behavior whenever possible, to encourage pro-social behavior, setting limits, help children learn problem solving skills and natural or logical consequences as well as knowing when it is appropriate to remove child from a situation.

The following actions are not acceptable by staff or volunteers in any classroom:

- Physical mistreatment or restraint of any kind.
- Frightening or threatening a child.
- Humiliating, degrading, ridiculing, or yelling at a child.

The staff will utilize a system of progressive discipline when inappropriate behavior is involved. The consequences will range from a verbal warning to expulsion from the Children's Center. Parents will be informed of serious discipline concerns and will be involved in the writing of a discipline plan when appropriate.

The Code of Conduct and Violent and Aggressive Behavior (file: JICDD) for all Morgan County School District Re-3 students is enforced at the Children's Center.

### ***Notification and Handling Children's Illnesses, Accidents, and Injuries***

*When a child is injured or has a minor accident while in the program, staff will first administer first aid. Children who become ill while attending childcare will be sent home. Parents will be notified immediately and will be expected to pick up the child promptly. An ill or injured child may not stay at the Children's Center. Children who are ill or have been sent home by a school nurse will not be accepted into care at the Children's Center that day. All communicable illnesses will be reported to the local health department pursuant to the Colorado State Department of Public Health and Environment. We follow the 'How Sick is too Sick' Health Department guidelines.*

In case of an emergency, 911 will be called and the child will be taken to the closest emergency room at CommonSpirit St. Elizabeth Hospital, 1000 Lincoln Street, Fort Morgan.

The following is the order of notifications and reports:

1. Emergency Services will be notified.
2. Families will be notified.
3. Morgan County School District Re-3 Accident Report will be completed.
4. The Department of Human Services Accident Report will be completed.

### ***Emergencies and Drills***

The children and staff are educated and practice the steps to follow in case of a fire, tornado or other emergency and they participate in drills throughout the school year. The fire drill exit procedures are posted in each room. Tornado drills will be held monthly from March through October. A record of all drills is kept at the center. The Children's Center also practices lock down, reverse evacuation, and shelter in place drills.

We adhere to all Emergency Response Procedures instituted by Morgan County School District Re-3. Guidelines about the procedures used are available in each classroom and the office. All staff are trained using Emergency Response Procedures annually.

### **FIRE PROCEDURES**

Fire exit directions are posted in each classroom. In case of an actual fire or drill children and teachers will follow these steps:

- Teachers and children will follow their fire exit route.
- Teachers and children will walk normally and quietly while exiting the building.
- Program staff will close all doors and check classrooms and bathrooms for children.
- Once outside, teachers and children will stand quietly in their designated area.
- Teachers and children will re-enter the building in a calm and orderly manner when directed to do so by the building administration.

### **TORNADO EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Children practice tornado drills monthly. Tornado procedures are posted in each classroom. In the event of a tornado, classroom staff will be notified over the P.A. (public address) system and they, along with the children will follow these steps:

- Teachers and children will proceed into the Sherman building hallways where they sit against the wall.
- If teachers and children are outside when a warning is signaled, the teachers will immediately bring the children inside to the nearest hall and have the children sit against the wall.

### ***Lost Children Procedure***

The plan of action in the case of a lost or missing child from the Children's Center premises will include the following:

- 1) The staff member in charge of the missing child will notify the office immediately.
- 2) A quick check of the premises will be done immediately by staff not supervising children.
- 3) The parents or guardians will be notified immediately.
- 4) Prompt action will be taken to notify the local authorities (police, etc.) immediately.
- 5) The Morgan County School District Re-3 District Support Center will be notified immediately following the notification of parents and local authorities.
- 6) The Children's Center will submit a lost child written report to the local authorities and will contact the Colorado Department of Human Services within twenty-four hours of an incident.

### **A LOST CHILD ON A FIELD TRIP**

The plan of action to follow in the case of a lost or missing child on a field trip will include the following:

- 1) A master list of the students leaving the Children's Center will be made with a list being left at the Children's Center and one carried with the supervisor in charge of the field trip.
- 2) Each group leader will be assigned a specific number of children. They will always carry a list of the students in their charge.
- 3) Each group leader will make frequent periodic checks to confirm that all the children are with them.
- 4) If a child becomes lost the group leader will notify the supervisor in charge. A quick check of the premises will be done immediately by staff not supervising the children.
- 5) The supervisor will immediately contact the local authorities available for immediate help in locating the child.
- 6) After a plan has been put into action in trying to locate the lost child, the supervisor will immediately check the safety of the rest of the children.
- 7) The supervisor in charge of the field trip will immediately notify the Children's Center office so parents or guardians and Morgan County School District Re-3 authorities are notified.
- 8) If the field trip is terminated before the child is found, the Director will remain at the site until the parents/guardians arrive. The other staff members and children will return with the bus to the Children's Center.
- 9) The Children's Center will submit a lost child written report to the local authorities and will contact the Colorado Department of Human Services within twenty-four hours of an incident.
- 10) Any child who arrives after a group has left for a field trip or excursion will remain at the Children's Center. The child can be taken to the event by a parent. A staff member may transport children to events if they are preapproved by the Transportation Director and there is district vehicle available. No child will be left unattended.

### ***Transportation***

Families participating in Infant Care, Toddler Care and Pre-K Care programs will transport their children to the Children's Center. Children participating in After School Care coming from

Morgan County School District Re-3 schools will be bused to the **Children's Center** immediately following afternoon dismissal. Please note that there is no bus transportation offered during school breaks or on district no school days. Parents must provide their own transportation during these times.

### ***Field Trips***

Children may have the opportunity to go on field trips throughout the year. Please note that other fees may apply for field trip expenses.

Field trips provide opportunities for hands on experiences and extended learning. Children will be always supervised by staff during field trips and the child-staff ratio will be maintained according to regulations. If children attending the field trip require routine medications during the field trip or have special health needs, a staff member with current medication administration training and delegation will be present on the field trip.

### ***Television and Video Viewing***

Video viewing will be used and allowed at the **Children's Center** on a limited basis.

- No television, recorded media, computer, tablet, and media devices will be used during meals or snack time and will be limited to no more than 20 minutes per week.
- On special occasions, 20 minutes may be exceeded with permission from the Director.
- Content of all material will be previewed by a staff member and screened for explicit language or topics. Movies viewed are rated either G or PG.
- Computer and tablet devices must not exceed 20 minutes per day.
- Parents or guardians must give permission for television and video viewing.
- Children under two years old will not be exposed to any screen time.

### ***Safety Related to Riding in a Vehicle: Seating, Supervision, Emergency Procedure***

Morgan County School District Re-3 provides bus transportation to the **Children's Center** from all Morgan County School District Re-3 schools each afternoon for After School Care. When a child misses the bus that transports them to the **Children's Center** the school staff will contact the **Children's Center** to let them know that the student is at the school. The **Children's Center** will then call the parent. The parents will be responsible for picking up the child and transporting them to the **Children's Center**.

When children are transported in a school vehicle other than a school bus, each child must use a seat belt and proper safety restraint. Children are to be instructed on safety in case of an emergency or accident. Children must remain seated while the vehicle is in motion. All transportation staff are tested and certified through the Transportation Director of Morgan County School District Re-3.

During bus transportation it is expected that all children follow the bus rules and regulations (File:

JLCC). Children who are given citations from the bus driver will have their parents contacted and could be suspended from bus services. If the bus services are suspended due to behavior issues, parents will have to transport their child to the **Children's Center** until a resolution is reached. Please refer to policy (File: EEAEC).

In the event of a transportation emergency the children will be kept calm and safe until emergency service arrives. The driver will notify 911, transportation department, and the Program Director of the emergency. The staff will remain and supervise children during the emergency or instruct children on safety steps to follow.

### ***Dropping Off / Picking Up Students***

Keeping children safe at all times while they are in the program is a priority at the **Children's Center**. We require that all families sign their children in and out of the program on the computer. Families may list alternate adults that have permission to pick up their child on the registration form. This form includes the names, phone numbers and addresses of those individuals the parent(s)/guardian(s) authorize to pick their child up from school. Please keep in mind the following:

- **If an individual's name is not on the list, the child will not be released to that person.**
- *All persons picking up a child must be prepared to show a picture ID every time they enter the building*, regardless of being named on the pick-up list. If a person is not known by staff, they will need to present a photo ID for verification.
- No one under the age of 18 will be allowed to pick up a child from the program.
- If applicable, children will not be released to people listed on a restraining order from the courts.

To make morning transition easier for younger children, we ask parents that when dropping off their child, they make every effort to reassure their child and then say good-bye. It will be easier for the child, and it will allow the teacher to comfort and redirect the child's attention to the activities of the day.

At the end of the day, staff will check the sign in sheet upon leaving to ensure that all children are gone and signed out.

School Age Care and Pre-K Care children will be checked in by a staff member. The Children being transported to the **Children's Center** from private schools will need an adult to enter the building and check them into sign-in/out book.

During summer, parents are responsible for bringing their child into the center and signing them into the sign-in/out book.

Failure to pick up children from the **Children's Center** will result in the Department of Human Services and Law Enforcement being notified and intervening on behalf of the child.

Parents, please notify the Children's Center when your child will be absent from the program.  
**970-542-0731 ext. 40216**

### ***Emergency Contacts***

An emergency contact person listed on the registration form is required. Emergency contact person must be someone other than parents. List a person *that* can assume responsibility for your child in the event of an emergency. ***Please update your child's records if your emergency contact information changes.***

### ***Caring For a Child Who Arrives Late at the Center***

When a child arrives late at the center and their group has left the center, a staff member will care for that child until the classroom teacher returns.

### ***Storing and Administering Medications***

Any medication that must be given requires written permission from the student's doctor and a parent must sign the Permission for Medication Form file: JLCD-E. This includes prescription and non-prescription medication.

The medication must be brought in an original labeled container and have doctors' orders for the administration of the medication. Medications are stored out of the reach of children in a locked cabinet. Refrigerated medications are stored in a locked box in the refrigerator in the clinic.

Medication will be given at school only if the effectiveness is altered by not giving it during the school day.

If it becomes necessary for a child to take any form of medication at school, these steps must be followed:

1. Only staff members trained in Medication Administration and given Nurse Consultant Delegation will be allowed to give medication to children at the Children's Center.
2. Written authorization from the physician for the school stating the child's name, reason for medication, medication name, dosage, time to be given, length of time of administration and any side effects or reaction to watch for.
3. Written authorization from the parent/guardian.
4. An adult must bring the medication to the center in its original pharmacy labeled container.

5. The medication must also have written orders from the physician and a “Permission for Medication” form signed by a parent/guardian. Any time medication and/or dosage changes throughout the year, all paperwork (written doctor’s orders, permission for medication form and label on the pharmacy bottle) must be updated. Prescriptions must be renewed at the beginning of each year.
6. The staff member with medication administration authorization will keep a medication log.
7. All medication is kept locked up in the clinic and inaccessible to children.
8. All over-the-counter medication sent to school to the child will not be given and will be kept at the center and given back to the parent.

### ***Children’s Personal Belongings and Money***

During After School Care, children will have a cubby available to store their personal belongings. All other care programs will have a cubby in their classroom labeled with their name. The Children’s Center is not responsible for items that are lost or broken in the program. Parents are asked not to send toys or money with their child unless requested by a teacher. All money brought by the children for field trips will be the responsibility of the child.

### ***Meals and Snacks***

Breakfast and an afternoon snack will be provided without charge for children who are in attendance that day. Notice will be given the day before if children will be required to bring their own lunch or if lunch will be provided by the Children’s Center. All children enrolled in the Children’s Center program are required to fill out the CACFP IEF for childcare form.

Parents of infants are asked to provide formula or breast milk for their child. When the infant is ready the Children’s Center will supply baby food, cereal, and snacks.

The Children’s Center participates in CACFP, a USDA-funded program and is an equal opportunity provider and employer. In accordance with federal law and US Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write:  
USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights  
Room 326-W, Whitten Building  
14th and Independence Avenue  
SW Washington DC 20250-9410  
Or call: (202) 720-5964



## ***Diapering and Toilet Training***

For infants and toddlers diapering is done throughout the day with loving care and reassurance that their needs are being met. When diapering, staff members follow the rules and steps posted by the changing stations. Because of the many diseases and germs that can be transferred during diaper changes, Standard Precautions are always used when diapering. Please note that the Children's Center does not allow the use of cloth diapers, only disposable diapers are permitted.

Parents will provide wipes and diapers for their infants and toddlers as needed.

The Children's Center believes in partnering with parents to start toilet training. We begin by having an agreement between parents and teachers on the process we will follow while toilet training. We provide unique child-size toilet areas to help alleviate fears and insecurities.

To start toilet training we require that children meet the following:

- Be at least 20 months old.
- Be able to pull their own pants on and off.
- Be able to communicate verbally the need to use the bathroom.

Teachers and parents will plan to work together to remain consistent between home and childcare. There will not be force or shame involved in toilet training. Each child will be given the opportunity to use the toilet, but we understand that it is ultimately the child's decision.

If your child is in the process of toilet training, we ask that you provide extra clothes, wipes, pull-ups, and underwear.

## ***Visitors and Volunteers in the Center***

Visitors and volunteers are welcomed and encouraged to be a part of the Children's Center program. They must check in and out at the office before proceeding to the classroom and before leaving the building.

If a visitor is going to the infant room, they must wear booties and a smock. We also require frequent handwashing throughout their visit, especially before and after transitions.

**Visitors and Volunteers will never be left alone with the children.**

Volunteer responsibilities:

- Participate in activities.
- Follow rules and regulations of all governing agencies.
- Receive training regarding expectations of volunteers.
- Work directly under the supervision of a staff member.
- Complete background investigations to CBI and TRAILS at their own expense.

- Complete Mandatory Reporter Training in Child Abuse and Neglect.

### ***Parent and Staff Conferences***

Parent and staff conferences will be held in the Fall and Spring. They will also be available at parent's request when needed to discuss concerns, progress, or recommendations.

### ***Filing a Complaint***

If families have a complaint or concern, they can make them known by telephone, email, or personal interview. Complaints should be made to the Director and will be addressed immediately. We will strive for a peaceful resolution for all parties involved, so we can maintain a high level of care for each individual family.

To file a complaint with DHS about this facility contact:

Colorado Department of Human Services

Division of Child Care

1575 Sherman Street

Denver Colorado 80203-1714

Or Call (303) 866-5958 or (800) 799-5876

### ***Reporting Child Abuse***

Staff are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. In the event that a report is made, the program will cooperate with the Department of Human Services and the Fort Morgan Police Department. To report suspected abuse or neglect of any child, call the Child Abuse and Neglect hotline at 1-844-CO-4-KIDS (1-844-264-5437).

### ***Withdrawal from the Program***

A two-week notice is required when withdrawing from the Children's Center. Also, a two-week notice will be given to families if the Children's Center can no longer offer care to their children.

### ***Suspension and Expulsion from the Children's Center or School***

Suspensions and expulsions can be utilized in cases of severe, chronic, and dangerous misbehavior. Please refer to policy (File: JKD/JKE) If a child is suspended or expelled from school, they may not attend the Children's Center.

Program staff are trained and work to identify the social, emotional, and developmental needs of each child. However, there are times when a child may need additional care that our staff are not able to provide. If we feel that a child's behavior endangers the safety of other children, we will notify the family and begin with a conference. We will work together to develop and plan of action. During that time if a child is a danger to themselves or others, we may choose to suspend the child from care. Including but not limited to biting, hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, and any type of aggressive bullying behaviors. Please refer to the Discipline Policy and Procedure on Guidance, Positive Instruction, Supporting Positive Behavior, Discipline and Consequences in this handbook for the steps taken by our staff to work with children who are displaying challenging

behavior. It is only as a last resort that we would ask to remove the child from care at the Children's Center.

### ***Asbestos Notification***

To comply with the EPA AHERA regulations, Morgan County School District Re-3, must notify all students, staff, and patrons that all schools have been inspected and that there are Management Plans available for inspection. These plans are available at the Maintenance Office, 1301 East Riverview Avenue. Any remaining asbestos in schools is in good shape and poses no danger. The district maintains periodic inspections every six months to comply with the regulations.

### ***Caregiving and Continuity of Care***

Children enrolled at the Children's Center will be assigned to a specific classroom and teaching staff. These staff members will be the child's continuous care providers in support of the formation of a strong emotional bond between child and adult. Every effort will be made to maintain continuity for each child in our care.

### ***Clothing and Supplies for Infants and Toddlers***

Please send a complete change of clothes, socks, and jacket for your child to be kept at The Children's Center. Parents are responsible for providing the following items as needed:

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Bottles
- Formula
- Diaper Cream
- Sunscreen
- Water Bottle
- Blanket for Toddlers and Sleep Sacks for Infants

All belongings should be labeled with the child's first and last name.

Please make sure your child wears shoes daily.

### ***Communication***

The Children's Center strives to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency have a meaningful and equal opportunity to participate in services, activities, and programs by providing communications services. The Children's Center communicates through a Language Interpreter and district resources to accommodate home language accessibility.

Communication in Infant and Toddler Care program involves parent and teacher face to face interactions and daily reports through Early Learning Ventures app to inform families about their child's daily activities and care. Communication in the Pre-K Care programs involves using the Early Learning Ventures app and face to face interactions. School Age Care communication is done face to face and the Early Learning Ventures app.

To communicate by phone please call 970-542-0731 ext. 40216.

To communicate by email please email [esther.cooley@morgan.k12.co.us](mailto:esther.cooley@morgan.k12.co.us)

### ***Critical Incident Procedures***

In the event of a safety/security threat inside or outside the building, the Fort Morgan Police Department has assisted the school in establishing safety procedures. Children will be taken to secure areas until the school office is notified by the police department that everything is safe. The safety procedures are practiced each year. In the event of a safety or security threat, please do not call the school or attempt to pick up your children.

### ***Commitments to Excellence***

Please see District Policy information at the back of the book. The Children's Center is also committed to excellence in Continuous Quality Improvement. Part of quality improvement is planned in Colorado Shines. A copy of the plan is available in the office and will be reviewed with families and stakeholders yearly.

### ***Children with Special Needs***

The Children's Center accepts children with special needs and different abilities. Children with unique physical and mental abilities are accepted and offered care. Before a child with special needs is admitted to the Children's Center, the parents or guardians are required to meet with the director and provide a complete background explaining the child's condition and accommodations that need to be provided. There may be exclusion for care based on adaptive equipment availability and lift limits of 50 pounds. This must be done before the child can be accepted for care into the program. Our goal is to provide an inclusive environment with embedded support for all children.

### ***Daily Schedule and Activities***

At the Children's Center, we strive to provide a nurturing, healthy and comforting environment where children can be happy, healthy, and secure. Every room's schedule and environment are designed to help children develop positive self-esteem.

Children are involved in many different activities throughout the day suitable for their developmental level on a group and individual basis. Activities provided include arts, crafts, music, and movement along with unstructured and structured play. Enrichment activities are designed to enhance their emotional, cognitive, social, and physical development. They are planned based on children's interest and are structured and supervised. All children are encouraged to participate within their abilities. A daily schedule and monthly newsletter are printed to inform parents of the activities. Students are asked to come to school neat, clean, and dressed appropriately for the season and childcare setting. The district policy (File: JICA) regarding dress code is enforced while students are attending the Children's Center.

### ***Damages to Program Property***

The Children's Center provides a variety of toys, manipulatives, supplies, materials, and furniture for children to enjoy while learning and playing. We understand that with everyday use, wear and tear is expected. For this reason, we take great care of all our property and ask that children do the same. We expect children to treat program property with care and respect. If a child intentionally destroys or steals program property, parents will be responsible for the cost of the item, so we can maintain a high-quality environment for everyone.

### ***Environment for Infant Room***

With infants commonly on the floor we want to provide a clean, safe, and healthy environment in the Infant Room. We practice a 'shoe safe shoes and smocks' policy in this room. We ask that parents and staff entering the carpeted area of the infant room please slip a pair of shoe covers over their shoes and wear a smock over their clothes.

### ***Food Allergies***

The Children's Center must be notified in writing of any food allergies a child may have. All medical documentation must be submitted before the child begins care in the program. Please see (File: JLCDA) for further information.

### ***Handbook Agreement***

The Children's Center handbook is a reference for policies and procedures designed to provide families with important and current information about our program. The handbook is updated annually and is approved by the Morgan County School District Re-3 Board of Education. Any time there is an update, it will be presented to the Board and, once approved, families will receive the updated version of the handbook on the district website.

When registering for care, each family will be sent an electronic version of the Children's Center handbook. It will also be available online on the program's website. Families are required to sign that they received and understand the parent handbook.

### ***Health***

To maintain health in our environment, teachers spray down the classroom with a sanitizing or disinfecting solution every night. Toys are sanitized and disinfected once a week and stuffed animals and bedding are washed weekly. The children's cots are washed down daily with a sanitizing solution after nap time. The walls, sinks, tables, bathrooms, cribs, highchairs, cubbies, and other furniture are constantly maintained and washed.

Before a child can start care, a Health Form must be signed by a doctor and returned to the center. Once a child is enrolled, this form will be renewed annually.

The Health Status Form, Immunization Form, and Over the counter Medication Form must also be updated as directed by your physician.

## ***Illness Policy and Screenings***

For the health and safety of children and staff, we ask that parents keep their child at home if they do not feel well enough to participate in normal activities, need more care than staff can provide or have any of the symptoms listed below:

1. Fever over 100
2. Vomiting
3. Diarrhea
4. Flu symptoms
5. Coughing (severe)
6. Rash with Fever
7. Chicken Pox
8. Pink Eye (until treated)
9. Head Lice (until treated)
10. Hepatitis A
11. Impetigo
12. Ringworm
13. Roseola
14. RSV (until doctor approved return)
15. Strep Throat
16. Vaccine Preventable Diseases (until doctor approved return)

If your child is sent home, they must be symptom free for 24 hours, on antibiotics or have a doctor's approval before returning to the **Children's Center**.

To mitigate the spread of lice, the Program Director has the option of sending home any child with live lice for initial treatment. Children with nits only may remain in childcare if parents are actively combing out and treating the nits.

Vision, Dental, and Hearing Screenings will occur during the school year for our Infant, Toddler, and PreK Care programs. Families will be given advance notice and will be able to authorize permission before the screening occurs. The dates for the screenings will vary according to the availability of the screeners. Families may also opt out of any or all the screenings by documenting their choice on the permission slips.

## ***COVID Policy***

The pandemic has presented unique challenges for early childhood, but the **Children's Center** will make every effort to support families and continue providing services through pandemic incidents. If the center is forced to close due to strict COVID restrictions, families will be responsible for 50% of typical rates and fees until the center is re-opened.

### ***Immunization of Students***

Before your child begins care at the Children's Center, you must provide your child's immunization record if it is not obtainable from the Colorado State Immunization site. The Children's Center is required to have an immunization or exemption record kept in file at the center. If your child needs immunizations, you will be notified to have them done before your child can return to childcare. Parents may also file an exemption form on the CIIS website. The Immunization Record must be updated according to the age requirements of your child as stipulated by the Health Department.

Staff members who handle or process immunizations are trained annually on immunization courses through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

### ***Parents Right to Know***

Please see District Policy information on our website.

### ***Parent Portal Instructions***

Please see District Policy information on our website.

### ***Playground***

The playground areas at the Children's Center are used to help children develop their large motor skills and experience nature. Every class has scheduled playground time daily. If they cannot play outside due to weather restrictions or hazards, large motor activities will be provided indoors. All structures, equipment and environments are checked for safety daily. All indoor equipment meets safety standards.

### ***Referral for Family Services or Support***

If a family expresses that they may need additional support services mental health, health, developmental, education, trauma, and adversity support services to a staff person will forward this information to the Director. The Program Director will provide contact information to the family or call the service provider directly, depending on the nature of the support needed. The Children's Center works to provide outside resources for parents, these resources include but are not limited to Nurse Family Partnership, St. Elizabeth Hospital, Baby Bear Hugs, and the Caring Pregnancy Center, and WIC. The Children's Center Director will also meet with families regarding progress and if further assistance is needed.

### ***Right to Searches and Possession of Drugs and Alcohol***

It is unlikely that there will be a need to search for a student. However, in the event of the necessity to do so, we will be guided by Morgan County School District Re-3 School Board Policy (File: JIH). The use, possession, distribution, or sale of drugs and alcohol by students is prohibited by Board of Education Policy (File: JICH and JICH-R). All Morgan County School District Re-3 facilities are smoke-free environments.

## ***Safe Infant Sleep Policy***

### **Safe Infant Sleep in Child Care**

Providing infants with a safe place to grow and learn is very important. For this reason, the Children's Center has created a policy on safe sleep practices for infants up to 1-year-old. We follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission to provide a safe sleep environment and reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). *SIDS is "the sudden death of an infant under 1 year of age, which remains unexplained after a thorough investigation."* The staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at the Children's Center follow the AAP safe sleep policy.

### **Sleep Position**

- Infants will be placed flat on their backs to sleep every time unless there is a physician's signed sleep position medical waiver up to date on file. In the case of a waiver, a waiver notice will be posted at the infant's crib without identifying medical information. The full waiver will be kept in the infant's file.
- Infants will not be placed on their side for sleep.
- Devices such as wedges or infant positioners will not be used.
- Infants who use pacifiers will be offered their pacifier when they are placed to sleep, and it will not be put back in should the pacifier fall out once they fall asleep.
- Pacifiers will be cleaned between each use, checked for tears, and will not be coated in any solution.
- Parents are asked to provide replacement pacifiers on a regular basis.
- While infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep, when an infant can easily turn over from back to front and front to back, they can remain in whatever position they prefer to sleep.

### **Sleep Environment**

- Our program will use safety-approved cribs and firm mattresses.
- Crib slats will be less than 2 3/8" apart.
- Infants will not be placed to sleep on any standard bed, waterbeds, couches, air mattresses, or on other soft surfaces.
- Only one infant will be placed to sleep in each crib. Siblings, including twins and triplets, will be placed in separate cribs.
- The crib will have a firm tight-fitting mattress covered by fitted sheet and will be free from blankets, loose bedding, toys, and other soft objects (i.e., pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, etc.)
- To avoid overheating, the temperature of the rooms where infants sleep will be checked and will be kept at a level that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- Sleep clothing, such as sleepers, sleep sacks, and wearable blankets, will be used as safe alternatives to blankets.



- Bibs and pacifiers will not be tied around an infant's neck or clipped on to an infant's clothing during sleep.
- Smoking is not allowed in or near the **Children's Center**.

### **Supervision**

- When infants are in their cribs, they will be always within sight and hearing of staff.
- A staff member will visibly check on the sleeping infants every 15 minutes.
- When an infant is awake, they will have supervised 'tummy time.' This will help babies strengthen their muscles and development.

### **Training**

All staff, substitute staff, parents, and volunteers at the **Children's Center** will be trained in safe sleep policies and practices.

Safe sleep practices will be reviewed with all staff, substitute staff, and volunteers each year. In addition, training specific to these policies will be given before any individual is allowed to care for infants.

Documentation that staff members, substitutes, and volunteers have read and understand these policies will be kept in each individual's file.

All staff and substitutes at the **Children's Center** will be trained in first aid for unresponsive infants as well as what to do when they have a question or need assistance before, they are allowed to care for infants.

### **When the Policy Applies**

This policy applies to all staff, substitute staff, parents, and volunteers when they place an infant to sleep at the **Children's Center**.

### **Communication Plan for Staff and Parents**

Parents will review this policy when they enroll their child in the **Children's Center** and a copy will be provided in the parent handbook and a paper copy will be available at parent's request. Parents are highly encouraged to follow this same policy when the infant is at home. These policies will be posted in prominent places. Information regarding safe sleep practices, safe sleep environments, reducing the risk of SIDS in childcare as well as other program health and safety practices will be shared if any changes are made. A copy will also be provided in the staff handbook.

Any individual who has questions regarding this policy may ask Program Contact:  
Esther Cooley, Early Childhood Program Director for the **Children's Center**.

### ***School/Parent Policy Compact (Title 1)***

Please see District Policy information on our website.

### ***Screenings and Assessments and Referrals***

Staff and professionals will conduct various screenings and assessments of children while enrolled.

Possible assessments may include:

- Dental Screenings
- Vision Screening
- Hearing Screening
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire
- Informal Classroom Assessments
- Teaching Strategies Gold Assessments

Based on the screening results referrals for appropriate services will be made. Families will be given advance notice and will be able to authorize permission before the screening occurs. The dates for the screenings will vary according to the availability of the screeners. Families may also opt out of any or all the screenings by documenting their choice on the permission slips.

### ***Weapons in School***

The Morgan County School District Re-3 policy regarding weapons at school (File: JICI) Weapons, or other objects being used as weapons, will not be tolerated. Students disregarding these policies will be subject to suspension and/or expulsion from school.

This policy will be enforced year-round while children are attending the **Children's Center**.

### ***Web Site***

The Morgan County School District Re-3 website can be found at [www.morgan.k12.co.us](http://www.morgan.k12.co.us). The **Children's Center** icon is in the upper right corner on the home page. This area on the web site is available for program information. Also, on this website all Morgan County School District Re-3 policies can be accessed and reviewed.