

Okemos Kids Club Early Childhood Parent Handbook

For programs at the Edgewood Early Childhood Center,
and Montessori 3 & 4 year olds



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WELCOME

Welcome to Okemos Kids Club (OKC)! Okemos Kids Club has an excellent reputation for providing outstanding childcare to area families. We have achieved this service orientation because of parental involvement and support of OKC.

The Okemos Kids Club opened in the fall of 1983. The program was created to meet a community need that was identified by parents and school personnel. It was developed and is sponsored by Okemos Community Education in cooperation with school personnel. Current Kids Club programs include: Infant, Toddler, Young and Older Preschool, Great Start Readiness Program, Preschool Discoveries, Montessori Enrichment and PPK Summer Camp along with Elementary and Middle School Before/After school care.

Okemos Kids Club is required by an Okemos School Board directive to be a self-supporting program. It is licensed by the State of Michigan, Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs (LARA). There is a licensing notebook that contains inspections, special investigations reports and related corrective action plans available during regular business hours for parents/guardians to view.

This handbook is designed to answer any questions you might have about Edgewood Early Childhood Center, Montessori Enrichment and Pre-Kindergarten Summer Programs. Please refer to it if you need clarification about any of our policies. If we can provide additional information, we invite you to call the Okemos Kids Club office at 517-706-5023.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To provide a safe and nurturing environment for children.
- To plan activities that meet the developmental needs of the “whole” child, social, cultural, emotional, physical, cognitive, and affective.
- To recognize and respect the uniqueness of each child.
- To maintain ongoing communication between Kids Club staff and parents.
- To provide quality child care at a reasonable cost at a convenient location.

Edgewood Early Childhood Center uses Creative Curriculum, which has a project based approach. Creative Curriculum has its own assessment tool referred to as Teaching Strategies Gold, which we use to track and monitor student growth and achievement at every level.

PPK Summer Program and Montessori Enrichment use a theme based approach.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

Enrollment in Edgewood Early Childhood Center full-day and PPK Summer Camp is non-discriminatory, based upon space availability, and taken on a “first come, first serve” basis. A lottery system is used to fill open spots in

the Montessori Enrichment, Preschool Discoveries and Great Start Readiness programs. Families can be placed on a waitlist that is maintained by the Childhood Supervisor or OKC Registrar..

REGISTRATION

The following must be completed each year and returned to the Community Education office before a child attends:

- Registration form
- Payment of *non refundable* registration fee
- Emergency/Child Information card (must be complete)
- Immunization Record and Health Form (not PPK Summer)
- Birth Certificate for children 3 years old and older
- Snack/lunch policy & photo release form
- Signed contract

Registration materials are available at the Community Education office any time throughout the year, as well as online <http://www.okemosk12.net/>; Community; Okemos Kids Club.

In order for OKC to continue to be an active partner and provide the best possible care, parents need to inform OKC staff as soon as possible of any medical or family changes that occur during the year.

Schedule changes: A permanent change to a child's schedule must be made in writing to the Community Education office a minimum of five (5) business days prior to the effective date of the change. Schedule changes may be requested via email, or forms can be obtained from the Okemos Kids Club office. Any schedule changes are space permitting. No more than one permanent schedule change is permitted per calendar year.. A \$25.00 schedule change fee is charged for any schedule changes. A permanent schedule change includes altering start date, and/or child's weekly schedule. Okemos Kids Club does not hold a child's prior schedule once a schedule change has been made. OKC will make every effort to fill any available schedules (T, Th; M, W, F; or Full Time), once a spot becomes available.

Withdrawal: A two-week written notice is required when a child permanently withdraws from any OKC program and must be submitted to the Okemos Kids Club office. Parents are responsible for tuition whether or not the child attends during this two-week period. Re-enrollment during the same year, space permitting, will require a new registration form and registration fee.

TUITION AND FEES

Procedures are as follows:

1. Parents select the type and quantity of childcare needed
2. A computerized bill is mailed/posted to each family by the 10th of every month
3. Advance payment for each month is due by the 25th of the preceding month (example: payment for September is due by August 25th)
4. Parents may add additional days provided space is available (with permission of the director only)

All fees charged are based on enrollment, not attendance. Parents are charged for the selected schedule regardless of whether the child attends.

Payment: Payment for childcare services is due to the Okemos Kids Club office by the 25th of the month preceding care. Parents may make their payments by:

- Auto pay: Call the OKC Registrar or Clerk and set up a monthly auto pay. Your card will automatically be charged the outstanding balance on your account on the 25th of each month. If the 25th falls on a weekend or holiday, it will be run the 1st business day after.
- Online: Visit our billing site www.daycarework.com. After obtaining a user ID and password from OKC, credit card payments are accepted.
- Mail: send a check made payable to Okemos Kids Club or credit card number to 1826 Osage Drive, Okemos, MI 48864
- In-person: Payments can be brought into the office during regular business hours or put in the drop slot after hours.

Returned Check: If a check is returned from the bank, due to insufficient funds or another situation, a \$30.00 fee will be assessed. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to bring the amount of the check plus the fee in cash or money order to the Okemos Kids Club office within a week of notification. If a second check is returned due to NSF, it can no longer be accepted from the family.

Late Payments: Payments received after the due date of the 25th of the month, will be considered late. The account will be assessed a \$25.00 late fee each time this occurs. If full payment is not received by the last day of the month preceding care your child/children will be dropped from the program. Balances that are 30 days past due will be sent to collections and reported to credit bureau.

Early Drop Off/Late Pick Up Fee: It is understood that a child arriving at the center before the designated starting time will be considered an early drop off and therefore, the family will be charged a fee and the charge will be noted towards the the maximum allowance of Early/Late Occurrences. This is also true for children being picked up after 6:00 pm on regular days and 5:00 pm on Snow Days. For every minute early/late, there will be a charge of \$1.00

per minute per child. On the 5th occurrence, the rate will be \$5.00/minute per child. After ten occurrences, OKC reserves the right to withhold childcare services.

Absence Policy: Fees are based on enrollment, not attendance. Therefore, parents are responsible for contracted fees even if their child is not in attendance. When enrolling a child and signing up for specific days and times, the parent is reserving the time, space and provisions for the child regardless of attendance.

If a child will not be attending childcare because of an illness or other reason, please notify the childcare staff by telephone.

MONTESSORI ENRICHMENT

Montessori Enrichment Tuition: Tuition is calculated based on a daily rate, billed monthly, and is dependent on the selected schedule.

Regular Schedule-Before Care, Enrichment, and After Care: This option is best if your schedule does not change. This schedule requires a minimum of two days per week, per program. There are only two (2) permanent schedule changes per school year. More than two (2) schedule changes will incur a \$25.00 fee per change. We require five (5) business days processing time for starting a program and any schedule changes. Trading or switching days is not allowed. Adding days in before care or after care is permitted at the Director's discretion using a punch card or added day fee. (Added day fee is charged when less than twenty-four hours' notice is given or no punch card has been purchased.)

Flex Schedule: FOR BEFORE AND AFTER CARE ONLY. This option is best for those schedules that change monthly but you have knowledge of your schedule at least a month in advance. This schedule requires a minimum of eight (8) days within a month per program needed. Calendars are sent on or around the 25th of the month and are due on the 5th of the month preceding care. Calendars received after the 5th will incur a \$15.00 late fee. Trading, switching, or canceling of days is not allowed once the calendar is submitted. Adding days is allowed at the Director's discretion using a punch card or added day fee. Payment is due on the 25th of the month preceding care.

Punch Card: FOR BEFORE AND AFTER CARE ONLY. This option is best if you only need occasional care and your schedule is unknown month to month. Punch cards are sold in 1-10 use cards and must be purchased from OKC. You must contact the Director at least twenty-four hours in advance to make sure there is adequate staffing and supplies available for your child to safely attend. Payment is due upon purchase, see punch card rules and regulations for complete information.

Supersaver: This option is best if you need every before care, after care and every Enrichment for the entire school year. This program is a full school year commitment. Full days off from school, Winter Break and Spring Break are not included. It requires nine (9) equal payments from August through April.

Full Days: OKC provides childcare to school-age students *currently enrolled* in OKC for in-service and conference days. These days are in addition to the regular schedule. A separate registration form for upcoming month's half/full days will be enclosed with the mailed monthly statement.

Payment must be included for these days and remitted with the regular monthly payment. Registration forms for full days of care will be accepted late with an additional \$10.00 fee within the stated deadline and space permitted. Once scheduled, there is no credit or refund for a change or absence. Full daycare is held at Edgewood from 7:15 am-6:00 pm..

Snow Days: Snow days, are held at Edgewood from 9:00 am-5:00 pm and you must be in an OKC program and be pre-registered to attend. Once your child is registered we will staff for them to attend and therefore, you will be billed whether your child attends or not. If a snow emergency is declared or unsafe building conditions are determined, then the school messenger phone call you receive will let you know that all childcare is closed.

Winter/Spring/Summer Breaks: Additional childcare is available for registered school age students during extended school breaks. Breaks are not included in the regular schedule and must be contracted for separately. Registration and prepayment are required for each break. Registration forms will be made available at the childcare site and the Okemos Kids club office. Late registration will be accepted with an additional \$10.00 late fee, see registration form for late registration deadlines. There are no credits or refunds for a change or absence during the breaks. All school age break days are held at the Edgewood Early Childhood Center from 7:15 am-6:00 pm.

PRESCHOOL TUITION

Full-day preschool tuition for the year-round programs is based upon a monthly fee, which will be prorated if enrollment or withdrawal occurs on a day other than the first of the month. When a transition from one program to another occurs during the month, the tuition will also be adjusted, effective the date of change.

Half-day preschool tuition is an annual fee divided into nine (9) equal monthly payments.

Receipts and Tax Deductions: OKC payments may be tax deductible. Check stubs and monthly statements may be used as receipts. However, OKC provides tax statements each January for the previous year to parents with children enrolled in the program.

STAFF

Okemos Kids Club is under the direction of the Community Education Coordinator. Day-to-day operations are the responsibility of site Directors trained in child development or related fields, and are CPR/Basic First Aid trained. The staff consists of qualified caregivers skilled in assessing children's developmental needs and are resourceful in

providing stimulating experiences. Staff at Edgewood Early Childhood Center are required to complete 24 professional development hours each year and Montessori staff are required to complete 16 hours.

Staff Ratios:

	OKC	State Requirement
Infant	1 adult to 3 children	1 adult to 4 children
Toddler 1's	1 adult to 4 children	1 adult to 4 children
Toddler 2's	1 adult to 4 children	1 adult to 4 children
Young Preschool	1 adult to 8 children	1 adult to 10 children
Older Preschool	1 adult to 8 children	1 adult to 12 children
Preschool Discoveries	1 adult to 8 children	1 adult to 10 children
Great Start Readiness	1 adult to 8 children	1 adult to 12 children
Montessori Enrichment	1 adult to 8 children	1 adult to 10 children

****OKC works hard to maintain ratios but reserves the right to use state guidelines****

HOURS AND HOLIDAYS

Edgewood Early Childhood Center program operating hours are 7:15 am-6:00 pm. The site will be closed on the following days:

- Friday before Labor Day & Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the Friday following Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve, Christmas Day & December 26th
- New Year's Eve, New Year's Day & January 2nd
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Pre-summer "Changeover Week" (varies with yearly school calendar, mid-June); closed to Montessori Enrichment and all school aged programs
- Fourth of July
- Post-summer "Changeover Week" (varies with yearly school calendar, mid-August)

SAFETY POLICIES

Attendance

Parents or a guardian over the age of eighteen (18) are required to accompany their child into and leaving Edgewood each day.

Children will only be released to parents or persons listed on the emergency card. A written statement of parental consent is required to alter standard pick up arrangements. When necessary, a director may be able to allow a change in this procedure by accepting a phone call from a parent. Child care staff may ask for photo identification of a person unknown to staff when picking up a child.

In classrooms using Tadpoles, a name to face program, parents are asked to move their child into and out of the classroom using the classroom ipads.

Great Start Readiness and Preschool Discoveries will sign children in and out through tadpoles during carline. For children to participate in carline, the automobile must have properly installed, age/weight appropriate car seats installed.

CUSTODY SITUATIONS

The custodial parent/guardian must be the person to fill out the registration and emergency information. In cases where the non-custodial parent is not allowed to have contact with the child, OKC will need a copy of the divorce decree or restraining order. Kids Club must be notified of any changes in custody arrangements in writing. Parents or guardians who enroll their children will be responsible for the payments unless previous arrangements have been made with the Okemos Kids Club administrative staff. The custodial parent will be notified in all cases requiring parental contact.

CHILD PROTECTION LAW

The Child Protection Law of Michigan mandates OKC to report to Child Protective Services any “suspected case of abuse, neglect, child sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.” It is the decision of Child Protective Services whether to begin an investigation. Please contact the Okemos Kids Club office at Community Education if there are any questions.

STAFF/PARENT COMMUNICATIONS

Parent Information: Each program has a specific place for information such as newsletter, injury reports, notes, and other important information relating to the program and students that is seen through Tadpoles. It is important to check this location daily. This will keep you updated on upcoming in-service days, field trips, daily plans, and snack menus. Also posted will be staff names, pictures and work schedules in the classrooms. In an effort to communicate more effectively with parents, Directors will utilize email with those parents who provide an email address for this purpose.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Okemos Kids Club staff respect the privacy of children, families, and colleagues. All information and documentation necessary for enrollment will be shared with lead teacher and registrar. Maintaining confidentiality also includes refraining from sharing any information regarding a child, including but not limited to all child/family information, records, private conversations with a parent, or developmental information. The Lead teacher may discuss confidential information with other OKC staff as needed to fulfill their job responsibilities. Employees should never discuss confidential information with anyone other than employees of OKC. Confidential information should not be removed by any employee unless approved by the site or Child Care Coordinator.

CALENDAR

The Okemos Kids Club calendar is available online or in the lobby at Edgewood.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

School-wide Expectations: The Edgewood Early Childhood building uses a set of three school rules to help students be successful during all parts of their day. The rules are designed to be simple, easy to remember, and are taught to the students in developmentally appropriate ways. The rules are intended to help guide students' behavior and are important for the overall well being of students and staff. The three rules are:

Be Safe

Be Kind

Be Helpful

Discipline Policy: The purpose of our discipline policy is to encourage the development of appropriate social-emotional skills to help build confidence and to help students become productive members of society. All students participating in any of the preschool classrooms, including infants through PPK, will be treated with respect and understanding. Okemos Kids Club uses a positive version of discipline that can be used in whole group settings, small groups, and on an individual basis.

Children will work on the following school-wide goals:

- Manage their feelings in an age-appropriate way
- Respect school rules
- Interact positively with peers in small and large groups
- Establish and maintain friendships
- Balance their personal needs and wants within the classroom setting
- Solve social disputes as they arise
- Use socially appropriate language and practice conversation skills

- Learn to care and respect materials and resources throughout the building

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

Research has shown that the implementation of punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective. Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior is an important step in a student's educational experience. The purpose of preschool classrooms PBIS is to establish a climate in which positive behavior is the norm.

Conflict Negotiation Policy

Conflicts between children over space, materials and for other reasons do occasionally occur. It is considered a natural part of the learning process. It is our goal to teach, model, and develop students who can learn and cooperate in a group setting. Classroom teachers will help students develop the appropriate social and problem solving skills in the following manner:

- Treat conflict situations objectively
- Approach conflicts between students calmly and stop hurtful actions immediately
- Acknowledge student's feelings
- Involve the student in identifying the problem
- Ask the student for solutions and encourage them to solve the problem together
- Make sure to offer follow-up support once the decision has been made
- Parents will be contacted if behaviors continue

Note: A student may be immediately removed from a program if the behavior warrants this severe of a consequence.

GUIDELINES FOR SICK CHILDREN

PLEASE DO NOT BRING YOUR CHILD TO CHILD CARE WHEN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR:

- A temperature 100 degrees or above
- A child has been on antibiotics less than twenty-four (24) hours
- Vomiting (more than once in a twenty-four hour period)
- Diarrhea
- A child has discharge from the eye, with or without redness
- A child has an unidentifiable rash
- A child has head lice

A child should not attend if he/she has a communicable disease (i.e. chicken pox, strep throat). For the health and safety of your child and others, communicable diseases must be reported to the classroom teachers so that other parents can be informed that their child may have been exposed and should be attentive to possible symptoms. Parents should call or email and inform the staff of the type of illness their child has so that parents and staff may better observe possible symptoms in other children.

CHILDREN MAY RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER BEING SICK WHEN:

- Fever is under 100 degrees for 24 hours without fever reducing medication
- It has been 24 hours since last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Child has been on antibiotic for 24 hours (when necessary)
- Rash has subsided or physician has determined rash is not contagious (written note required)
- Eyes are no longer discharging, or the condition has been treated for 24 hours
- The child is no longer contagious and is feeling well enough to participate comfortably in usual daily activities (we cannot keep children inside due to illness)
- Twenty-four hours after the hair has been treated for head lice and ALL nits have been removed.
- The signs of severe illness (including lethargy, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, severe pain, and uncontrolled coughing) have been checked and ruled out (in writing) by a physician

NOTIFICATION OF ILLNESS

If a child is ill and will not be attending childcare, notify child care staff by telephone at their site. If the staff at the childcare site cannot be reached, please leave a message on the voicemail.

ILLNESS DURING CHILDCARE

OKC staff will notify parents by phone of symptoms of illness (i.e. headache, fever, vomiting). If parents cannot be reached within a reasonable amount of time, the staff will call the person designated for emergency notification. Parents or their emergency contact will be expected to pick up the child if the director decides the child is too ill to remain at the site.

MINOR INCIDENT REPORTS

Any minor injuries that may have occurred, OKC will send a note home and a record will also be kept in the student's file.

Biting Procedures: The purpose of a biting policy is to encourage children to find an alternative way to express themselves and allow teachers to have a consistent policy when dealing with a biter. Since biting is a natural part of a child's development, the classrooms have developed a procedure to follow when these situation arise. These procedures are posted in the individual classrooms for viewing.

INJURY/SEVERE ILLNESS

In case of severe accidental injury or illness, the site will make an immediate assessment, administer basic first aid and/or obtain emergency medical treatment in the child's best interest. Once this has been done, parents will be notified about the injury/illness and what steps have been taken. Until the parent or ambulance arrives, the director or supervisor will be in charge and make all decisions concerning care for the child. It must be documented, in writing, if a parent does not want the OKC staff to follow these procedures. A written injury/illness report will be completed for all situations, and the parent will be given a copy. All cuts, scrapes and abrasions will be cleaned with water only and a bandage applied if needed. Medicated creams will not be applied unless supplied by a parent and a medication form has been completed.

Parents will be contacted in the event a child is injured and requires emergency care. If parents are unavailable, persons shown on the emergency card will be notified. In the event none of the above can be reached and it is an extreme situation, the child will be taken to the hospital via ambulance.

MEDICATION PROCEDURES

The following procedures will be used when dispensing medication to a child:

- The Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs and Okemos School Board Policy requires a physician AND parent to complete a medication form before staff can administer prescription medication of any type
- A written record of dosage and time of day will be kept
- Non-prescription medication, including but not limited to sunscreen, bug spray, diaper creams and Tylenol will be administered only with parents' written approval.
- All medication must be in its original container
- All prescription medication must include the child's name, dosage, and directions for dispensing.
- A designated staff member will administer all medication with an adult witness present

Allergies: Parent/Guardians should list all child allergies on the child's emergency card. A list of these allergies will be compiled and posted in a prominent place for all staff members to view.

OUTDOOR RECESS POLICY

It is the policy of OKC that if a child is healthy enough to attend our programs, he/she is healthy enough to go outside. We must maintain our adult to child ratio and are not able to accommodate children remaining inside the building while the rest of the group is outside.

Generally, Okemos Kids Club follows school decisions regarding the cancellation of recess. In the instance of inclement weather, children will not participate in outside play.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Inclement Weather Days: If the Okemos Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather (i.e. snow days) Edgewood Early Childhood Center is open from 9:00 am-5:00 pm. In the event of extreme weather we reserve the right to close the Edgewood Early Childhood Center. There are no refunds for inclement weather days.

Emergency Closing: In case of an emergency school closing during the day because of mechanical failure, severe weather or other unforeseen incidents, Kids Club will also close. It is the parent's responsibility to pick up their child in a timely manner, or arrange an alternate plan and promptly notify the site directors. There are no refunds for emergency closings.

Pesticide Notice: It is the practice of Okemos Public Schools to use a "NO SPRAY" guideline for the use of pesticides in any area where children or staff is present. In certain emergencies, pesticides may have to be used. *The Michigan Department of Agriculture requires the following notice: Parents and guardians of children attending school are to be notified by the school administrators of the right to be informed prior to any application of a pesticide at their school.* If a parent requests a form, they can obtain one from the program director.

Field Trips: Information regarding a field trip will be posted and/or sent home prior to the scheduled date of the trip. Please be aware that all children registered for care on the field trip days will be attending the field trip. Due to staffing OKC is not able to accommodate any children staying behind with another group. Okemos Public Schools provides transportation using the district's school buses.

Personal Belongings: Children should be dressed appropriately for inside and outside activities. All clothing items should be labeled with your child's name to help avoid mix-ups. Kids Club cannot be responsible for lost items. Please leave valuable items at home. Electronics are not allowed and OKC is not responsible for broken or lost items.

Snack and Lunch Policy: Edgewood and PPK Summer receive an A.M. and/or P.M. snack, Montessori Enrichment receive an after care snack. Lunch needs to be provided by parents daily. On Mondays a lunch of pizza, fruits and vegetables is provided to full day childcare children, this does not include children in Montessori Enrichment and Pre-kindergarten Summer Programs. Parents provide all food for infants.

Volunteers: Okemos loves to utilize volunteers both in the classroom and during field trips. Please note that all volunteers working with students must complete a background check one week prior to their volunteer date. The background check will be good for one full school year.

Expectations for Volunteers and Parents:

- Privacy is important. Please do not talk about other students/families outside of the facility
- Only teachers should discuss behavior concerns with other parents
- Please let the teacher know when you are leaving
- Please remember your phone should not be out when working with students
- Even though every attempt is made to keep our students safe, they do occasionally get hurt. LET THE TEACHER KNOW OF ANY ACCIDENT OR INJURY
- Volunteers are considered Mandated Reporters. A Mandated Reporter is required by law, to report their suspicions of child abuse or neglect to Children's Protective Services (CPS) at the Department of Human Services (DHS)

Parent Grievances: Okemos Kids Club strives to provide a positive nurturing environment for all; however, concerns may arise. If you have any concerns, please bring them to the attention of the classroom teacher. If you are unable to resolve your concerns through the classroom teacher, the Community Education Coordinator may be contacted, (517)706-5031.

Donations Welcome: Parents wishing to make tax-deductible donations to any of our Kids Club programs are encouraged to do so. From time to time, OKC programs may post wish lists of needed items. If someone chooses to donate items such as furniture, toys or money, they may obtain a donation slip for tax purposes from the OKC Registrar. Okemos Kids Club may also be the designated recipient of your United Way contributions.

Questions/Concerns/Suggestions: Questions, concerns and suggestions may be directed to the Edgewood Early Childhood Supervisor (517)706-5238 or Community Education Coordinator (517)706-5031. We value and respect your input and opinions.