

Lil' Explorers Parent Handbook



Chandler Unified School District

Community Education

1525 W. Frye Road

Office (480) 224-3900

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Hours & Locations

Chandler Unified School District operates three Lil' Explorers Early Childhood Development Centers. We provide nurturing care and developmentally appropriate education for children from **two years of age through the start of kindergarten**. Our centers prioritize a strong partnership with families to ensure every child receives the support necessary for future success.

Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday: 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Late Pickup Policy: To respect our staff's schedules, please ensure your child is picked up by 5:30 p.m.

Late Fee: A fee of **\$3.00 per minute, per child**, will be charged to your family account for any pickup after 5:30 p.m. The site clock at the center serves as the official time for determining late fees.

Our Locations | Coordinator | Contact Information:

Chandler High School

350 N. Arizona Ave., Chandler, 85225

Berry.Patricia@cusd80.com | (480) 812-7846 Office | (480) 204-3666 Site Phone

Navarrete Elementary School

6490 South Sun Groves Blvd., Chandler, 85249

Gaela.Hazel@cusd80.com | (480) 883-4811 Office | (480) 881-3693 Site Phone

Perry High School

1919 E. Queen Creek, Gilbert, 85297

Morcomb.Heather@cusd80.com | (480) 224-2937 Office

Additional Information

Detailed program information, including site-specific updates, can be found on the district website:

1. Visit www.cusd80.com.
2. Select the **Community Education** link.
3. Choose **Lil' Explorer's** from the menu

2026-2027 Calendar

<u>July</u> 6th Beginning of 2026-2027 school year	<u>January 2027</u> 4th – all centers re-open 18th - MLK Day, program closed
<u>September</u> 7th – Labor Day, program closed 21st – Oct. 2nd , Fall Intersession Camp Camp hosted at Chandler High School <i>Registration required</i>	<u>February 2027</u> 15th – Presidents Day, program closed
<u>October</u> 5th – all centers re-open	<u>March 2027</u> 8th – 19th – Spring Intersession Camp Camp hosted at Perry High School <i>Registration required</i> 22nd -all centers reopen 26th – Spring Holiday, program closed
<u>November</u> 11th – Veterans Day, program closed 25th – 27th , Thanksgiving holiday, program closed	<u>May - June - July</u> 21st – Last day of program services May 24th – July 8th - Summer Camp Camp hosted at Perry High <i>Registration required</i> 31st – Memorial Day, program closed
<u>December</u> 21st – 30th Winter Camp Closed on Dec. 24, 25, 31 & Jan. 1 Closing at 3:00 p.m. on Dec. 23 rd Camp hosted at Navarette Elementary <i>Registration required</i>	<u>July</u> 12th – All centers reopen for the 2027-2028 school year

Program Overview

The Lil' Explorers Approach

Lil' Explorers is where learning begins with play, curiosity, and connection. Our program is guided by research showing that young children learn best through hands-on experiences, exploration, and discovery. We provide a warm, engaging environment where children are safe to explore, ask questions, and develop new ideas at their own pace.

Play & Learning

At Lil' Explorers, play and learning are closely connected. Our classrooms offer inviting materials and meaningful activities that encourage children to follow their interests. This approach builds confidence, independence, and a lifelong love of learning.

Developmental Standards

Our experienced teachers use the **Infant and Toddler Developmental Guidelines** and the **Arizona Early Learning Standards** to provide developmentally appropriate experiences. These practices support growth across all key areas:

- **Physical & Motor Skills, Social & Emotional Intelligence, Cognitive & Language Development**

The Daily Experience

Each day, children participate in a variety of engaging activities designed to strengthen thinking, problem-solving, and social skills. These include Early Literacy & Math, Science & Sensory Exploration, Music & Movement, Dramatic & Pretend Play, and Creative Arts

Professional Standards & Safety

- **Highly Trained Staff:** Our programs are led by trained teachers and supported by qualified assistants.
- **Licensing:** We are licensed and inspected by the Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS). Inspection reports are available for public viewing online.
- **Safety:** Minimally, one staff member in each classroom is CPR and First Aid trained to ensure quality care for every student.
- **Positive Guidance:** Our educators use positive redirection to help children develop self-regulation and mutual respect.

Family Partnership

We value strong partnerships with families and work together to support your child's learning and development every step of the way.

Enrollment Information

Visiting Our Center

We invite you to tour our center prior to enrollment to meet our team and experience our learning environment firsthand. While we maintain an open-door policy for enrolled families, **tour appointments are required** to ensure a coordinator is available to focus on your family and answer your questions. Once you choose our center, notify the Center Coordinator to begin enrollment.

Securing Your Spot

After we confirm that space is available, you must complete the online registration at <https://cusd80.ce.eleyo.com>.

- **Deadlines:** Registration must be completed within **one week** of confirmation, or the space may be reassigned.
- **Fees:** A non-refundable \$80.00 registration fee is charged upon contract approval.
- **Rates:** Current tuition rates are published at www.cusdcommunity.com.

Keeping Information Current

For your child's safety, parents are required to keep contact information current. You must report changes to contact information, emergency contacts, or medical status immediately.

Updates must be reflected in two places:

1. **The Online System:** Update your account at the Eleyo link above.
2. **On-Site:** Update Coordinator and/or your child's teacher of any changes made to contract and/or medical information in your child's account.

Note: Completed Emergency Information and Immunization Records are mandatory at the time of registration and must be kept up to date thereafter.

SUMMARY OF FEES

REGISTRATION FEE (\$80.00) – The registration fee is non-refundable and will be charged at the time of initial enrollment approval as well as at the time of annual re-enrollment near the beginning of each school year.

TUITION PAYMENTS – Tuition payment options are weekly or monthly only and may not be changed. Weekly tuition is invoiced on Thursday and collected on Friday for the upcoming week of attendance. Monthly tuition is collected on the 1st of the month. If paying by debit card, please understand that it may take up to a week for the charge from a checking account to clear your bank account.

Weekly payments are not pro-rated for weeks that have holidays. Tuition payments are based on the school year calendar of care and do not relate to the number of days in a week. There is no refund for days not attended. Monthly payments are not prorated for intersession/camps or cancelation/withdrawal of contract during the month of service. *Weekly and monthly rates for Lil' Explorers childcare are available upon request at communityeducation@cusd80.com*

LATE PAYMENT FEE (\$25) – A late fee is assessed to each family account when payments are not received by the 2nd business day after the payment was due. Your child's attendance may be suspended from the program due to past-due payments. This includes but is not limited to returned/canceled checks and declined credit card transactions.

UNSCHEDULED ATTENDANCE FEE – Children enrolled 3 days per week may attend only their scheduled days. Any attendance on non-scheduled days will be considered unscheduled attendance and will be charged at a rate of \$54.00 per additional day attended. If a child attends more than six (6) unscheduled days during the school year (July - May), the account enrollment will be changed to a 5-days-per-week contract. No additional registration fee will be assessed.

CHARGEBACK/STOP PAYMENT FEE (\$25) – will be assessed to the family account if credit card charges are disputed or if a stop payment is placed on a check, and the charges are valid for services received/contracted. Late fees may also be assessed to parent account. If a check is declined by the bank institution two times, checks will no longer be accepted for payment.

CHANDLER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT RETURNED CHECK POLICY – CUSD gladly accepts checks. For any checks returned as unpaid to CUSD, the check writer's account may be electronically debited without further notice for the amount of the check, plus a \$25 returned check fee, as allowed by state law.

REFUND POLICY - The annual registration fee is non-refundable. Unused days will not be refunded, including sick days.

FAMILY DISCOUNT - Families with two or more children active in the Lil' Explorer program will receive a 5% family discount. This discount does not apply to current CUSD employees.
NO ADDITIONAL DISCOUNTS: Accounts that are already receiving a discount do not qualify for additional discounts.

LATE PICKUP FEE (\$3.00 PER MINUTE, PER CHILD) – Lil’ Explorers’ hours are from 6:30a.m. to 5:30p.m. Monday - Friday. When a parent picks up their child(ren) after the normal hours of operation, a Late Pickup Fee of \$3.00 *per minute per child* may be charged to the family account. The site clock will be used to determine the time.

SCHEDULE CHANGE REQUESTS AND/OR WITHDRAW SCHEDULE CHANGE REQUESTS AND/OR WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES - Although we prefer to avoid any of our families leaving; we know that situations and circumstances arise that create the necessity to cancel a child’s attendance. Requests for either a schedule change or permanent disenrollment of attendance should be requested through your account a minimum of one week prior to invoicing. Please contact your Site Coordinator by email (listed on page 2 by site) so they may review the request in a timely manner. If your schedule change or withdrawal request is not submitted prior to 5 days in advance, your account will be billed for tuition as scheduled. Cancellation of registered days for all Intersession Camps must be done by the promoted cancellation date. Any fee refunds are subject to Financial Reporting Specialist approval.

SUSPENSION OF ATTENDANCE - If payments for the contracted week are not made, your child’s attendance may be suspended indefinitely. Any outstanding tuition balance left unpaid for more than five (5) business days for which arrangements have not been made, will result in immediate suspension of attendance until the account has been paid in full. If space is available in the classroom, reinstatement is possible by contacting the Center Coordinator.

TEACHER WORKDAYS - All centers are open on scheduled CUSD “Teacher Workdays” and “Teacher In-Service Days.” Please review thoroughly the current district calendar online at <http://www.cusd80.com/page/1298>.

SCHOOL BREAKS & HOLIDAYS - Lil’ Explorers Camps are available during the fall, winter, spring, and summer intersession breaks. Camps are held at a different site for each break. All sites are closed on CUSD observed holidays designated on the district calendar. Registration for camp(s) is required at <https://cusd80.ce.eleyo.com>.

MEDICAL LEAVE - Children hospitalized for three (3) days or more will receive medical leave status from Lil’ Explorers. Upon written medical documentation of the hospitalization, the center coordinator will contact accounting for processing the request leave, and space will be available upon the child’s return. During the medical leave period, the parents will not be charged the weekly tuition.

MILITARY LEAVE - Any Lil’ Explorers parent who has military duty due to deployment or reserves for more than 10 days will be allowed to request the disenrollment of their child(ren) during the deployment/reserve period. Parents can reinstate care at no additional cost. A space will be available for the child upon their return. The Center Coordinator will assist with disenrollment and re-enrollment when needed.

INSURANCE – CUSD Lil’ Explorers Child Development Centers are covered under the district’s liability insurance policy.

STATEMENTS & TAX ID NUMBER - May be obtained by logging into your Eleyo account

Staff Qualifications

All our staff members are employed by CUSD, obtaining a valid fingerprint clearance card prior to beginning employment. Each team member undergoes a thorough background check conducted through multiple agencies, along with comprehensive reference checks from previous employers, ensuring the highest standards of safety, professionalism, qualification and trust.

We are committed to continuous learning and professional growth, which directly contributes to the high-quality care and education we provide. All staff participate in ongoing professional development throughout the year, completing a minimum of 24 hours of training annually. These essential training courses focus on key areas such as developmentally appropriate practices, effective classroom management, positive guidance strategies, comprehensive health and safety protocols, and advanced child development principles.

For added safety, at the minimum, one staff member in each classroom is certified in CPR and First Aid.

Staff-to-Child Ratios

- **2-year-olds:** 1:8
- **3-year-olds:** 1:13
- **4-year-olds:** 1:15
- **5-year-olds:** 1:20

The Arizona Department of Health Services determines all ratios and room capacity requirements. Lil' Explorers Child Development Centers are fully licensed by the Arizona Department of Health Services Bureau of Child Care Licensing and remain in full compliance with all regulations set forth by their offices.

A copy of the Child Care Licensing Rules and Standards, as well as past licensing inspection reports for Lil' Explorers Child Development Centers, is available online at: **ADHS – Child Care Facilities Licensing (azdhs.gov)**

Behavior Guidelines

Lil' Explorers uses a proactive, positive approach to guiding behavior grounded in the **Arizona Statewide Training and Technical Assistance for Expulsion Prevention (AZSTEPS)** program. We believe that behavior is a form of communication. Our trained professionals respond with intentional teaching and consistent support to help children develop self-regulation and social-emotional skills.

Our team supports your child's success by:

- **Building Relationships:** Establishing strong, responsive connections with every child.
- **Intentional Teaching:** Modeling safe, respectful behavior and teaching appropriate alternatives.
- **Consistent Environment:** Setting clear limits and providing experiences that support emotional regulation.
- **Redirection:** Using positive redirection to guide children toward successful interactions.

Challenging Behavior

Addressing Challenging Behaviors

When a child exhibits behaviors that may be unsafe, our priority is understanding the root cause and providing meaningful support. Challenging behaviors include, but are not limited to: kicking, biting, scratching, slapping, hitting staff or peers, or any behavior that causes harm to others or significant damage to property.

We are committed to making every reasonable effort to support each child's placement in our program. When additional support is needed, we utilize a collaborative process:

- **Family Partnership:** We host parent conferences and maintain daily communication to develop individualized support strategies.
- **Supporting Consultation:** When appropriate, we utilize **Smart Support Mental Health Consultation**, a service providing specialized in-class expertise to support social-emotional development. This support service works with families and teachers together on behalf of the child and is only initiated after receiving signed parent or guardian consent.
- **Support Plans:** Our team will work with you to implement behavior support plans tailored to your child's needs.

Biting

Biting is a common behavior in early childhood settings and can occur for a variety of developmental reasons, including teething, limited language skills, expressions of affection, or overstimulation. Young children may also bite in response to strong emotions such as frustration, anger, or fear when they lack the verbal skills needed to communicate their feelings effectively. When children are unable to express discomfort or dissatisfaction verbally, biting may become a means of communicating, “I don’t like that.” As a child’s language and communication skills develop, incidents of biting typically decrease.

Classroom teachers actively supervise children and intervene promptly when biting behaviors are observed with the goal of reducing and preventing future occurrences. Staff work to identify potential triggers and implement proactive strategies to redirect the child before an incident occurs. Ensuring the safety and well-being of all children remains a priority, and every effort is made to provide a safe, supportive learning environment free from harm.

Program Placement & Safety

While we strive to support every child, Lil’ Explorers must maintain a safe learning environment for all students and staff. If a child’s behavior continues to present a serious safety concern—and all reasonable supports and interventions have been implemented without sufficient progress—Lil’ Explorers reserves the right to determine if the program remains an appropriate placement and may revoke the child’s ability to attend.

Health and Wellness Policy

When the staff observes that a child is not feeling well, out of love and concern, parents will be notified regarding the child's condition. Because we are not trained medical professionals, staff will use their best discretion regarding medical concerns and parents may be notified to pick up their child when an illness is suspected or if the child displays any of the following symptoms.

ABNORMAL LETHARGY

When a child demonstrates an inability to participate in normal, everyday activities and exhibits loss of appetite, parents will be notified regarding these signs and symptoms and may or may not necessitate the child to be picked up from the center.

COVID-19

If a child tests positive for COVID-19, they must remain at home until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication and their symptoms have improved. Children who test positive for COVID-19 but have no symptoms will be asked to wear a mask (optional).

CONTAGIOUS CONDITIONS

If a child has any contagious conditions (strep throat, pink eye, chicken pox, etc.), please contact Lil' Explorer's Site Coordinator immediately so parent alert letters can be posted. (Confidentiality will be maintained.)

DIARRHEA

If a child has one or more episodes of diarrhea on the same day, parents will be notified to pick up the child. We understand that diarrhea can be caused by various other reasons besides illness, such as antibiotics or teething in the very young. In these cases, two or more episodes will still constitute a child to be picked up for other reasons including but not limited to the risk of dehydration. Child may return when they are 24 hours symptom free without medication(s).

FEVER

If a child has a body temperature of 100.4 degrees or more, parents will be notified to pick up. Child may return when they are 24 hours fever free without the use of medications, such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, or any other medication related to the illness and/or a note from health care provider indicating that child is not contagious.

HAND/FOOT/MOUTH DISEASE

At the discretion of the program, children having been diagnosed with Hand Foot Mouth Disease and produced blisters during their illness, may return when all dermal blisters have been scabbed over and oral blisters show signs of healing (pink, not red sores). If no blisters occur, a child may return after they have been fever free for 24 hours without the aid of a fever reducer.

HEAD LICE

At the sign of any live lice or nits, parents will be notified to pick up the child. Hair must be free of all live lice and nits prior to returning to school.

PINK EYE/CONJUNCTIVITIS

Parents will be asked to pick up a child that shows signs and/or symptoms of Pink Eye/Conjunctivitis red, itchy watery eyes with any white/yellowish/greenish discharge. Prior to returning to the child development center, a child with pink eye should have received prescribed medication for a minimum of 24 hours

RSV

When a child shows any combination of signs and symptoms of possible RSV, the child will be excluded from attendance until it is determined with clinical testing done by a medical professional that RSV is not present. CDC.org states that symptoms of RSV usually include a runny nose, decrease in appetite, coughing, sneezing, fever, and wheezing.

PRESCRIPTION OR OTC MEDICATIONS

If a child needs medication during the day, a Medication Consent Form must be filled out before medications can be dispensed. Prescription Medications need to be in the original container and show the child's full name, current date, dosage, frequency, and mode of administration. Any medications being dispensed to children must have had the first dosage at their home 24 hours prior to administering at the CUSD80 childcare location. Children who have health concerns that require an epi-pen or breathing treatment must complete a personal health plan packet each year. No medications are to be kept or stored in children's diaper bags or back packs while in the classroom. Please see your Center's Coordinator if you need to bring meds to school for later pickup.

VOMITING

If a child vomits while at the child development center, parents will be notified to pick up the child. Child may return when they are 24 hours symptom free without medication(s).

UNEXPLAINED RASHES

If a child has an unexplained rash, a doctor's note will be required before the child can return to the childcare center.

When a child demonstrates an inability to participate in normal, everyday activities and exhibits a loss of appetite parents will be notified regarding these signs and symptoms, which may or may not necessitate the child to be picked up from the center based on the discretion of the Site Coordinator.

Frequently Asked Questions

What should I pack for my child on the first day of enrollment?

Two-Year-Old Program (and children not toilet trained): *Please label all personal items with your child's first and last name.*

- Sippy cup
- Crib sheet and blanket (52L x 28W)
- Change of clothes
- Diapers and wipes/pull ups as necessary for your child

Preschool (3-Year-Olds) and Pre-K (4-Year-Olds) Programs:

- Refillable water bottle
- Crib sheet and blanket, labeled with your child's first and last name (52L x 28W)
- Change of clothes, labeled with your child's first and last name

What are the daily arrival and departure procedures?

Navarette and Chandler have sign in/out in the classrooms. Perry has a centrally located sign-in/sign-out system. A parent/guardian or other authorized pick-up person must present a photo ID. Please record your child's arrival and departure times and sign your full first and last name. This procedure is required by ADHS. Families are encouraged to communicate brief updates with classroom staff at drop-off and pick-up.

What if I am running late and cannot pick up my child by closing time?

If you anticipate arriving after closing time, please contact the Center as soon as possible. A late fee of \$3.00 per child, per minute will be charged to your account.

Is payment required on days when my child is absent?

Yes. Families are responsible for payment on contracted days, including days of absence. Charges do not apply during intersession and summer breaks unless your child is registered for camps offered during those breaks. For tuition and account questions, please contact ceact@cusd80.com.

Is tuition the same during holidays or short weeks?

Yes. Tuition is calculated based on the number of days of care is available during the contract year, resulting in a consistent payment amount regardless of holidays or short weeks. For tuition and account questions, please contact ceact@cusd80.com.

How do I contact my child's classroom during the day?

Center contact information is provided at the front of this booklet. Please contact the Center Coordinator at your child's site for assistance.

Are birthday celebrations permitted at the Center? Yes. Families may bring a treat (e.g., cupcakes, cake, or cookies). Food items should be store-bought or purchased through our Food and Nutrition Department. Due to food allergies, Lil' Explorers does not allow nut products to be served.

What if my child has food allergies?

Please notify the Center staff of any food allergies. Families may choose to provide their child's lunch and snacks. Due to food allergies, Lil' Explorers does not allow nut products to be in program.

Are breakfast, lunch, and snacks provided?

Yes. Menus are posted at each site and are also available online at [MealViewer Schools](#).

Classroom Celebrations and Food Brought from Home

Families are encouraged to participate in classroom celebrations throughout the year, including birthdays, holidays, and other special events. If you would like to provide a snack or treat for a classroom celebration, please coordinate with your child's teacher in advance regarding the class size and the date of the celebration.

To help keep all children safe and healthy, all foods and beverages brought for classroom celebrations must comply with Arizona Healthy Schools Act (AHSA) and Smart Snacks guidelines. Because we follow AHSA guidelines, foods and beverages served during the school day may not contain potassium bromate, propylparaben, titanium dioxide, brominated vegetable oil (BVO), Yellow Dye 5 or Yellow Dye 6, Blue Dye 1 or Blue Dye 2, Green Dye 3, or Red Dye 3 or Red Dye 40. This includes foods and drinks brought in to share, so please read the ingredient label before purchasing items for school.

Because our children are very young and are not yet developmentally able to recognize food allergens or reliably avoid foods that may be unsafe, peanuts and peanut-containing products are not permitted in our program. We also ask that foods not be labeled as manufactured or processed in facilities that handle peanuts. These precautions help us provide the safest possible environment for every child.

To ensure ingredients and allergen information can be verified, all treats and snacks brought for classroom celebrations must be commercially prepared in their original, unopened packaging.

What We All Need to Know About Play!

- **Play is how young children learn.**
When children build, pretend, explore, and interact, they are developing skills they will use for life—not just having fun.
- **Play builds the brain.**
Research shows that play supports physical development, language growth, problem-solving, creativity, and social skills.
- **Play supports emotional development.**
Through play, children learn to cope, express feelings, and build relationships with others.
- **Play is not separate from learning.**
As researchers explain, “we learn via play”—it is the foundation for how young children understand the world.
- **Play prepares children for school and life.**
Skills like teamwork, communication, and critical thinking all develop through hands-on, active play.

Adapted from First Things First, *Children Learn Through Play*

Supporting Your Child's Development

Early identification and support can make a meaningful difference in a child's growth and learning. Families know their children best, and we encourage you to reach out if you ever have concerns about your child's development.

You may wish to seek additional support if your child:

- Has difficulty seeing or hearing
- Is unusually quiet for extended periods
- Has difficulty speaking or pronouncing words clearly
- Experiences challenges with movement (such as crawling, walking, or running)
- Learns more slowly or has trouble understanding new ideas
- Has difficulty interacting with other children or adults
- Has specific health or developmental needs

Your child may also benefit from support if they are having difficulty reaching milestones in areas such as:

- Vision or hearing
- Motor skills or coordination
- Behavior or social skills
- Cognitive or early academic development
- Speech or communication

If any of these concerns apply to your child, help is available. Early intervention services can provide valuable support for both children and families.

Free Screenings and Support Services

Families have access to free developmental screenings and services for children from birth through age 21:

Birth to Age 3: *Arizona Early Intervention Program (AZEIP)*

Phone: 1-888-592-0140 or (602) 532-9960

Ages 3 to 5 (Chandler residents): *CUSD Preschool Child Find Office* Phone: (480) 883-5865

Ages 5 to 21: Please contact your local school for evaluation and support services.

Babysitting Procedures & Consent to Hold Harmless

Chandler Unified School District #80 – Community Education Department

Babysitting Expectation

Chandler Unified School District – Community Education maintains a “**No-Babysitting**” procedure. The district does not authorize, approve, or endorse district staff members providing childcare services for enrolled families outside of our licensed facilities.

If you wish to hire a district staff member for outside childcare, you must submit a signed **Hold Harmless Consent Form**. By submitting this form, you acknowledge that the district is not responsible for any childcare provided outside of official program hours and locations.

I, _____, understand that Chandler Unified School District – Community Education has a “No-Babysitting” procedure. Whereas the District does not authorize, approve, or endorse district staff who provide childcare outside of the district’s licensed facilities, I am seeking an exception.

I understand that by submitting this required form, it is my responsibility to complete and file this consent with the Community Education Department. I also understand that it is my responsibility to provide the family I am babysitting with a copy of this documentation.

Consent to Hold Harmless

We/I, _____, parents/legal guardians of _____, agree to hold Chandler Unified School District and its Community Education Department harmless for any harm that our children may experience while under the care of staff member _____.

We are aware of the program’s “No-Babysitting” procedure and have chosen to take an exception to that policy. We understand that the district does not authorize, approve, or endorse district staff providing childcare outside of official licensed facilities.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Employee Providing Care Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Coordinator/Administrator Signature: _____ **Date:** _____