



Family Handbook 2022-2023

Growing Futures Early Education Center, Inc.

8155 Santa Fe Drive
Overland Park, KS 66204
913-649-9714

Attendance Line: 913-649-9714 ext. 282

Agency Information

Office Location (and Early Head Start and Head Start classroom locations)

8155 Santa Fe Drive
Overland Park, KS 66204

Phone and Fax Numbers

Phone: 913-649-9714
Fax: 913-649-3485

Office Hours

7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
(In the event that classes are not in session, the building may be closed.)

General Information

Growing Futures Early Education Center, Inc. is an independent, non-profit corporation and is partially funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to deliver an Early Head Start and Head Start program. We offer a prenatal through age five child development program designed to meet the educational, developmental, social, health, nutritional, psychological and self-sufficiency needs of children and families.

Admission policies are non-discriminatory concerning race, religion, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, or gender, in accordance with Kansas' civil rights statute KSA 44-1009 and relative federal laws.

Growing Futures abides by the Federal Head Start Program Performance Standards, the 2009 Head Start Act and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Child Care Licensing Regulations for general operations.

This is an equal opportunity program. If you believe that you have been discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability, genetic information, sexual orientation, veteran status, ancestry or any other status protected by law write immediately to:

The Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Growing Futures Management Team

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Program Director: Samantha Mothersbaugh
Assistant Program Director: Vicky Flucke

Director of Finance: Dave Harrold
Human Resource Manager: Suzanne Handlin
Education Team Managers:

- Education Specialist: Taylor Williams & Kesha Tribitt
- Disabilities and School Readiness Specialist: Vicky Flucke
- Mental Health Specialist/Family Educator Coach: Julie Taylor
- Education Coach: Danelle Abbott

Family and Community Partnerships Coordinator: Tanesha Thompson

- Family Support Advocates: Sophie Cassmeyer, Leslie Shuck, & Andi Newingham
- Data Associate/ERSEA Monitor: Heather Taylor
- Health and Nutrition Specialist: Bryanna Contreras

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Growing Futures Early Education Center, Inc.

We are excited that you are here! Our classrooms are filled with opportunities for imagination, creativity and fun! You will see busy friends working, playing, learning, and growing – developing the skills for success in school and life.

Mission

Our mission is to *nurture children and strengthen families to enrich our community.*

Vision

To be a leading center of excellence in the growth and development of young children and support of their families.

Welcome

Welcome to Growing Futures Early Education Center, Inc. We are glad that you are here, we want to ensure you and your child feel comfortable in our program. The Family Handbook covers program opportunities, policies, and procedures. Keep it in a convenient place so that you can refer to it easily throughout the year. We look forward to your suggestions and encourage you to ask questions about any program area.

School Readiness Goals

Our Head Start program is more than an early childhood education, it is also school readiness. Head Start defines school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. *The Head Start Approach to School Readiness* means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Head Start is a leader in the early childhood field with a strong, clear, and comprehensive focus on all aspects of healthy development, including physical, cognitive, and social and emotional development, all of which are essential to children getting ready for school.

School readiness goals articulate the program's expectations of children's status and progress across the five essential domains of child development and early learning that will improve children's readiness for kindergarten.

Growing Futures' School Readiness Goals are:

- For Infants and Toddlers:
 1. Children demonstrate age appropriate language and literacy development.
 2. Children demonstrate age appropriate cognition and general knowledge skills.
 3. Children demonstrate age appropriate approaches to learning.
 4. Children demonstrate age appropriate physical development and health.
 5. Children demonstrate age appropriate social and emotional development.
- For Preschoolers:
 1. Children demonstrate age appropriate physical development and health.
 2. Children demonstrate age appropriate social and emotional development.
 3. Children demonstrate age appropriate approaches to learning.
 4. Children demonstrate age appropriate logic and reasoning skills.
 5. Children demonstrate age appropriate communication and literacy knowledge and skills.
 6. Children demonstrate age appropriate mathematics knowledge and skills.

7. Children demonstrate age appropriate science knowledge and skills.
8. Children demonstrate age appropriate creative arts expression.
9. Children demonstrate age appropriate social studies knowledge and skills.
10. Children who speak English as a second language demonstrate age appropriate English language development.

Our Program

The Head Start Model

We are a Head Start program. The Federal Government began Project Head Start in 1965 as an 8-week pilot program for children in over 2,600 communities. The goal was for children who participated in Head Start to be better prepared for entry into kindergarten. In addition, Head Start was intended to bring change in children, families, and their communities. Once the data showed success, the “project” spread around the nation. Head Start services focus on children 3, 4 and 5 years of age. We currently serve 108 children in our preschool programs.

Early Head Start was created in the 1990’s. Growing Futures received a grant in 1998 to develop an Early Head Start Program. Early Head Start provides services to pregnant women, infants, and toddlers. Growing Futures receives federal and state funding to serve 95 pregnant women, infants, and toddlers.

All Head Start programs are required to implement and follow the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the Head Start Act. The Standards define the objectives and features of a quality Head Start program, while also providing a structure for enforcing quality. Federal Monitoring Reviews are conducted of all Early Head Start and Head Start programs in order to ensure compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the Head Start Act.

What Makes Head Start Unique?

Head Start programs serve the whole family delivering comprehensive, high quality services designed to foster healthy development of young children and their families. Head Start programs provide a range of individualized services, not only in education and early childhood development, but also in health, mental health, nutrition, social services/family support, disabilities, and parent involvement. In addition, all Head Start services are responsive and appropriate to each child and family’s development, culture and personal experiences.

Our program seeks to provide the highest quality-learning environment for infants, toddlers and preschoolers in preparation for school readiness. Our program is designed and built around a research-based program model that reflects the developmental needs of children from prenatal to five, their families and the high-risk communities in which they live.

Program Options

- **Early Head Start Center Based** – This program option is for children whose parents are working, attending job training or going to school. Young children, 6 weeks to 3 years of age, are taught basic self-help skills such as toileting, eating, washing and cleaning up. Children also learn how to play together. The teacher-child ratio is one to four with no more than eight children enrolled in a classroom so that each child can proceed at his/her own pace.

- **Early Head Start Home Based** – Family Educators provide weekly 90-minute visits in the family’s home to support parents in fostering the relationship between the parent and child through guided interactions and activities. Services to pregnant women encourage early access to prenatal and postpartum care as well as opportunities to access parenting education and information on fetal and child development.
- **Head Start** – Promotes the school readiness of children ages birth to 5 from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development.
 - Our Head Start classrooms provide children with activities that help them grow cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically. Children socialize with others, problem-solve, and have other experiences that help them become self-confident and ready to enter kindergarten. Teachers welcome your involvement in activities and want to work as partners with you to help your child progress. The teacher child ratio is one to eight with no more than 18 children in a classroom so that each child can develop at his/her own pace.
 - **Extended Day:** This option serves children 6 hours a day Monday – Thursday, July – June. Classes are from 8:00 a.m to 2:00 p.m or 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m
 - **Wrap-Around-Care (WAC):** This option is for children whose parents are working or in school at least 30 hours a week and require full day care 5 days per week. The first portion of the day, 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., is funded through Head Start. The family is responsible for payment of the second portion of the day but may utilize resources such as Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) childcare subsidy assistance.

Child Bereavement Policy

In the event of the death of an enrolled Early Head Start or Head Start child, who does not have a sibling enrolled in the program, families may continue receiving services from Growing Futures until they are able to transition to another program that may better meet their needs. Families may receive up to five home visits from a Family Educator, Family Support Advocate or other staff person, during a period not to exceed 60 days. During this time, staff will provide resources and support to help families deal with the loss of their child, as well as any other social service and/or mental health needs they may have. These same services will be provided to an enrolled pregnant woman who has a miscarriage.

Operating Hours

- **Early Head Start:** Growing Futures offers Early Head Start Center Based Services. The center opens at 7:15 a.m. and children must be present for a minimum of **six hours a day**. Classrooms 17, 18, 19, and 20

Sample Schedule:

- 7:15-8:15 arrival/ worktime/ clean up
- 8:15-8:45 breakfast/ books at table
- 8:45-9:00 teeth brushing/ diapering/ bathroom
- 9:00-9:15 circle time
- 9:15-10:00 outside time

- 10:00-10:15 baby doll circle time
 - 10:15-11:15 work time (small group)/ clean up/ diapering/ bathroom
 - 11:15-12:00 lunch/ books at table/tooth brushing/
 - 12:00-2:30 nap time
 - 2:30-3:00 snack/diapering/ bathroom
 - 3:00-4:30 work time/ clean up/outside time/departure
- **Extended Day:** Growing Futures offers Extended Day classroom options and operates 8:00 a.m.-2:00 PM or 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Classrooms 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7

Sample Schedule:

- 8:30-8:50 Arrival/sign in/ Greeting circle
 - 8:55-9:00 Bathroom
 - 9:00-9:30 Breakfast
 - 9:30-9:35 Brush teeth
 - 9:35-9:50 Circle time
 - 9:50-10:30 small group
 - 10:30-10:35 clean up/bathroom
 - 10:35-11:15 Outside
 - 11:15-11:20 water break/wash hands
 - 11:25-11:45 Work time/clean up
 - 11:45-12:00 recall/wash hands
 - 12:00-12:30 Lunch
 - 12:30-12:45 bathroom/books
 - 12:45-2:00 Chill time
 - 2:00-2:30 Bathroom/tabletop activities /departure
- **Head Start Wrap-Around-Care:** Growing Futures Early Education Center, Inc. is open from 7:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Classrooms 2 and 16

Sample Schedule:

- 7:15-8:00 arrival/ worktime/ clean up
- 8:00- 8:15 circle time
- 8:15- 8:45 breakfast
- 8:45- 9:00 brush teeth & sign-in
- 9:00- 9:10 bathroom
- 9:10- 9:55 outside time
- 10:15-10:15 circle time
- 10:15-10:30 small group
- 10:30- 11:20 work time
- 11:20- 11:30 clean up/bathroom
- 11:30- 12:00 outside time
- 12:00- 12:30 lunch time
- 12:30-12:45 bathroom
- 12:45-3:00 rest time
- 3:00- 3:15 bathroom
- 3:15- 3:45 snack
- 3:30-4:30 outside & departure

For those enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start Wrap-Around Care sessions:

- **It is important for us to know the hours your child is going to be with us because we set up our staffing patterns to accommodate the need.**

- **There is a 10-hour limit of childcare per day.**

A center calendar will be given to each family to alert families on closings.

Parking

Parking lots are dangerous for young children. We want all children to arrive safely to their classrooms. We ask that all families and their guests drive at a maximum safe speed of 5 mph while in our parking lots. Park your car in a designated parking area in the back of the building. **The parking lot located on the south end of the building is designated for staff only. Signs are posted outside of the parking lot indicating that it is for staff only.** Anyone parked in the handicap parking without a permit may be ticketed. Turn off your car engine before removing your child (ren) from their car seat(s). ***Other children may NOT be left in the car without an adult present. Please hold your child(ren)'s hand when walking between the parking lot and the building.***

Educators and Staff

Caring, responsive, knowledgeable and reflective educators are essential to children's early learning experiences. Our teachers have various qualifications including a passion to provide a stimulating learning environment for children. All staff have completed a national criminal background check, Department of Kansas Health and Environment fingerprinting and renew their First Aid/CPR certification every 2 years. Our staff members are dedicated to professional growth and as such attend several professional development workshops and conferences both internally as well as within the community.

The Family Support Advocate, in collaboration with teachers, will provide services to families in the Head Start Center Based program. In partnership with parents, the Family Support Advocate develops mutually trusting relationships, acts as an advocate for families, and provides support services as needed. The Family Support Advocate will assist families in determining their needs and in identifying and developing goals to meet those needs.

Program Approach

Environment

The environment plays a vital role in children's learning and discovery. A beautiful, welcoming and thoughtfully planned environment invites and supports children's questions, theories, ideas and discoveries. Growing Futures environments are warm, encourage children's learning and reflect the work of the children and teachers in each classroom.

Documentation

One of the main purposes of documentation is to make thinking, and the process of learning, visible. There are numerous ways that teacher's document: photos, video, children's drawings and other work samples, transcribed conversations, as well as adult interpretations and theories about the work of the children. Teachers and children work collaboratively to display, reflect on and revisit

documentation. We believe that documentation is one way that adults can respect children and in turn, demonstrate that each child is listened to, and that their work is important and valued. Documentation is also a powerful tool for teachers and can help them to understand the children more deeply and make decisions for next steps in their curriculum.

Teacher as Co-Learner

We believe that teachers are not transmitters of knowledge, but rather partners in learning with children. We believe that knowledge is built through relationships with others. With this view, teachers build strong relationships with the children, and their families, and learn alongside them. Teachers observe and listen to the children and encourage deeper thinking through thoughtful questions, documentation of their thinking and an engaging environment full of a wide range of materials that meet each child's strengths and interests.

Our Curriculum

Our primary curriculum is High Scope. The philosophy behind the High Scope curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Learning requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work. Children learn best when they are in an environment where they feel safe, emotionally secure and have a sense of belonging. This is best achieved by ensuring that the children in our program interact with teachers and staff that establish and maintain secure nurturing relationships with each child. Establishing and maintaining positive secure relationships is extremely important to children's later school and life success. Our curriculum is implemented in collaboration with our families. We seek their input and encourage them to share any ideas that will enhance learning with their child's teachers or to come into the classroom and facilitate a learning experience.

- **Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum:** Young children, who can listen, pay attention, remember directions, and control their behavior will benefit more from preschool and be better prepared for kindergarten. The Second Step curriculum teaches self-regulation and thinking skills that help preschool aged children learn and skills to manage their feelings, make friends, and solve problems.
- **Conscious Discipline:** Is a guidance model that provides teachers on the latest brain research, which helps them understand how the brain influences behavior. Teachers use connecting activities, known as "I Love You Rituals" , which can be used at school/ our center and at home to foster self-regulation and cooperation, as well as stimulate healthy brain development in children.
- **Project Approach:** Children learn best through exploring and discovery. Project Approach builds on natural curiosity, allowing children to interact, question, connect, problem-solve, communicate, reflect, and so much more. This form of learning extends beyond the classroom to each child's home, community, and the world they live in. It is based from real life and the classroom actively participating.

Screenings

It is a Head Start requirement that every child receive developmental, hearing, vision, and social emotional screenings within 45 calendar days of when the child first attends the program or the first home visit. The information from the screenings will identify your child's strength, and areas of growth. Your classroom teacher, Family Support Advocate and Health and Nutrition Specialist will give you a copy of these screenings, as well as review the information with you. If a screening reveals

that your child needs further assistance in a specific area, with your permission, a referral will be made to the appropriate support agency.

Services to Children with Disabilities

Growing Futures maintains a collaborative agreement with Infant/Toddler Services of Johnson County and the Shawnee Mission School District to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities, providing a wide range of services to include social, educational, nutritional, medical, speech, occupational and physical therapy. Inclusion in Early Head Start and Head Start allows children with various needs and strengths to be in an inclusive classroom setting. This inclusion fosters understanding of individual differences for all children.

We Play Outdoors

Being outside is a big part of what we do each day within our curriculum approach. We take children outdoors every day so they can crawl, explore, run, jump, climb, and use all the large muscles in their bodies. We also talk about the things children see, hear, touch, and feel so they become aware of changes in the outdoor environment.

Going outside particularly benefits children's health. Fresh air and physical activity help to strengthen children and lessen their chances of getting contagious viruses.

All children will need to have appropriate clothes for the weather. For example, if it is snowing, your child will need a coat, boots, gloves or mittens, a scarf, and hat. **Be mindful that clothing and/or shoes may become dirty and/or wet during the day while children explore their environment.**

Please know that your child's safety is always primary. We will not go outdoors if it is dangerous and/or above or below a safe temperature. We will require a doctor's signed note if your child is unable to participate in outdoor activities. **Please let your Family Support Advocate or classroom teacher know if your child needs a coat or any other article of clothing.**

Field-Trips

A permission slip will be sent home, or posted in your child's classroom, for you to sign each time the class plans to go on a field trip. We need to have this signed permission slip prior to the day of the field trip in order to transport your child to/from the field-trip site.

Volunteers are welcome and needed on field trips. If you would like to join your child's class on the field trip, you may walk with us on walking field trips or you may follow us in your vehicle for bus field trips. If your child is transported on the bus to the field-trip location, he/she must also be transported back to Growing Futures on the bus. If you choose to transport your child to the field-trip location, you must also provide your child's transportation back to Growing Futures. Unfortunately, for liability reasons, we cannot allow siblings on field trips.

We Rest During the Day

All children have their own cot/crib, which is labeled and cleaned weekly with a bleach and water solution. Sheets are sanitized and laundered once a week or when soiled for your child to keep on their cot or have with them in their crib (no pillows for infants).

In all classrooms (except infants), children lay down on their cots after lunch and are required to be on their cots for at least 1 hour. After that, if they are not sleeping they may get up and do quiet activities until the remainder of their classmates wake up. Soft, soothing music may be played and teachers may help children fall asleep by sitting near them or rubbing their back.

All children in “Early Head Start and Wrap-Around-Care ” rooms must bring their own blanket. If you are unable to provide a blanket, please reach out to your FSA for support.

Nutrition and Meal Times

Healthy habits are established in the classroom with daily tooth brushing, emphasis on hand washing and other habits that help reduce the spread of illness. All classes exercise daily dental self-care through brushing teeth, using fluoride toothpaste.

Meal Times:

Early Head Start		Head Start	Wrap-Around-Care	
Classroom	#	Breakfast	Lunch	Snack
	1	8:30	11:45	NA
	2	8:30	12:00	3:00
	3	8:30	11:45	NA
	4	9:00	12:00	NA
	6	9:00	12:00	NA
	7	9:00	12:00	NA
	16	8:15	11:30	2:45
	17	8:15	11:15	2:30
	18	8:15	11:15	2:30
	19	8:15	11:15	2:30
	20	8:15	11:15	2:30

If your child arrives outside of these times, he/she will be offered an alternative meal.

The children are served in a relaxed, family style atmosphere, and are encouraged to try new foods. As in all other activities, mealtime is child-oriented. It is a happy and enjoyable time when the children share ideas and comments about their favorite foods, what they are learning to taste, and what they eat at home. It is also a nutritional learning experience where children are taught the various food groups and their values. Our monthly menus will be posted for you so that you will always know what is served to your child. **If your child is allergic to any foods or has any dietary special needs, you must complete a required meeting with the Health and Nutrition Specialist to review the Meal Modification plan that is signed by the child’s doctor, along with having a doctor's note.**

We are nut and pork free! All meals and snacks are prepared to ensure children with allergies are accommodated. **Due to strict regulations, outside food is not allowed in the program.**

For families enrolled in Early Head Start, the program provides formula and baby food for infants and toddlers. Children are fed according to what the child shows us they need and the United States

Department of Agriculture (USDA) infant meal pattern. Children's need for food and milk are individualized in the Early Head Start program. Infant's intake is written down after each meal. As children are able to sit up, they are placed at the table in a high chair to eat with their friends. As toddlers get older, they are introduced to eating with a spoon and drinking from a cup with no lid.

Additional Information: The menus provide good food sources of Vitamin C, Vitamin A, and Iron. The nutrients are ones frequently low in the diets of young children, but are very important to maintain good health and strong bones. Following recommended US Dietary Guidelines, the menus are low in fat, sugar, and sodium.

See Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Statement.

Procedure

Biting Policy

Growing Futures' policy on biting is designed to keep all children and staff safe in the classroom and provide as much support to children and families as possible.

Biting is a common but upsetting behavior of some toddlers. Biting behavior can also occur at the pre-center age and can be very problematic and unsafe for others. It is important for staff and parents to address biting when it occurs.

Preventive Care

Children bite for many different reasons. In order to respond effectively, it is best to first explore the reasons why a child is biting. A child may bite as a means of relieving stress and tension, or expressing his/her needs, wants or feelings such as frustration, anxiety, anger, etc. It is important that the staff model statements that the child can use to communicate their feelings and needs. For example, "You feel mad when Joey takes your truck," or "I can tell that you want me to pay attention to you." Modeling appropriate communication can help prevent problematic biting behavior from continuing.

Teaching staff will reinforce desired behavior in the classroom through the acknowledgement of pre-social behavior such as showing empathy, comforting others, taking turns with a toy, or helping others.

Staff will:

- Not label, humiliate or isolate a child who bites.
- Discourage play that involves "pretend" biting or play that is rough and unsafe.
- Help the child make connections with the others through appropriate play and communication.

Interventions

The classroom staff will seek consultation from the Education Management Team and/or Mental Health Specialist on any recurring biting behavior in the classroom. When children experiment with biting, staff will direct the child to a more suitable option that allows for sensory-motor exploration through the variety of toys, appropriate objects, or mediums to touch, smell, and/or taste. When needed, the Mental Health Specialist will be brought in to observe and assist the classroom.

When a child bites another child, staff will intervene immediately in a calm and reassuring manner. Staff will use a calm, but firm tone of voice, to communicate that biting is not acceptable. Examples may be, "I do not like when you bite friends," or "biting is not safe for others." Staff will ensure that they have the child's full attention by observing nonverbal cues, such as eye contact when conveying these messages. It is important that the child who bit understands the consequences of their behavior. Staff will point out how the biter's

behavior affected the other child in ways such as, “Your friend is crying because you hurt him with your teeth.” Staff will encourage children (preschool age), to explain how it affected them.

If there appears to be a consistent pattern of biting between two children, staff will attempt to separate the children in different groups for a short length of time. If a child continues biting over several weeks, staff should seek additional support and consultation from the Management team to determine if a further evaluation for development concerns is necessary.

Staff will work with parents to implement strategies that support each child. Staff may schedule a meeting with their direct supervisor, Mental Health Specialist, or Disabilities and School Readiness to identify additional needs of the child and develop a support plan, if necessary.

See parent acknowledgement of the policy on biting.

Safety Plan

Family, Teacher(s), Education Specialist, Family Support Advocate, Family & Community Partnership Coordinator, Program Director and/or Mental Health and Disability Specialist will meet to create a plan that will give all parties (children, families, and classroom teachers) a clear set of strategies to help your child(ren) to meet specific goals to ensure safety behaviors within our school environment.

Safe Sleep Policy

In an effort to provide infants in our facility with a safe environment in which to grow and learn, Growing Futures implements procedures to create a safe sleep environment. Growing Futures follows the Safe Sleep Procedure recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

During orientation for any child under the age of 12 months, the teacher will discuss the Safe Sleep practices of Growing Futures with the family. The teacher will have the caregiver sign a copy of the Safe Sleep Policy.

The family will receive a copy of the signed Safe Sleep Policy, and the original will be placed in the child’s Education File.

Following the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) for safe sleep environments to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) our written procedure is as follows:

- All infants under 12 months of age will always be placed on their backs in safety-approved cribs, with a firm tight-fitting mattress. The only exception is if a note from the infant’s physician is provided indicating a medical reason for an alternate sleep position.
- Positioning devices will not be used.
- Soft materials such as pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and loose bedding will not be placed in the infant’s sleep environment.
- Each infant will have its own crib. Infants will not share a crib with other infants.
- When infants can easily turn over from their backs to their stomachs, they shall be put down to sleep on their back but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep. Cribs will be labeled “can turn over”.

- Sleeping infants will be supervised at all times.
- Supervised “tummy time” will be observed while the infant is awake.
- All Early Head Start staff are trained in safe sleep and SIDS risk reduction.

Mental Health

Growing Futures strives to provide the very best services to children and their families. We realize children and families enrolling at our center may face challenges that require special services. Our Mental Health Specialist works with the classroom teachers, family educators, and parents to develop strategies that support children with healthy social-emotional and behavioral development and connects them to outside support services when needed. The Mental Health Specialist seeks to understand the child’s whole environment and how that may be impacting a child’s social emotional development and behaviors. Some examples of factors that would be considered are exposure to violence, losses, and family stress.

Parent Participation

Parents as Partners: We believe that parents are their children’s first teachers and as such, you have much to offer to your child’s program. Your participation can greatly enhance your child’s program and maximize their learning experience. The meaningful exchange of ideas between teachers and parents supports the child as they grow and develop within our program. We encourage you to be active in your child’s experience in our programs through the many opportunities that we offer. The areas listed below are ways we incorporate families into our program:

- **Home Visits** – Home visits provide great opportunities to make connections between the home and the program setting. They offer a chance for parents and staff to get to know one another and for staff to give individualized attention to family strengths, interests, and goals. Families enrolled in Early Head Start Center Based services receive monthly home visits by their Family Support Advocate. Early Head Start Teachers will do two home visits per year. Head Start Center Based services require two home visits per year. The staff will work with you on arranging convenient times for these visits.
- **Family Partnership Agreements** – Because Head Start is a comprehensive program, we also recognize that families are unique. We work with parents, through the Individualized Family Partnership process. In this process, we assist parents to meet goals they have identified by providing ongoing support, referrals (as needed), training and volunteer opportunities. We provide assistance in seeking employment, obtaining housing, helping through crisis intervention, accessing community resources, or simply by making sure their children are healthy and prepared for Kindergarten. Anytime we can be of assistance to you in finding services or resources please feel free to talk to your Family Support Advocate.
- **Parent - Teacher Conferences** – Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice per year. These are scheduled meetings but you can request a personal meeting any time during the year. The conference is a time to share information, talk about goals, and report on what is going on in our classrooms.
- **On-going Involvement/Communication** – Primary parents are automatically opted-in to receive center alerts. We welcome the involvement of all family members and are always interested in hearing your suggestions, concerns, or thoughts. Parents or other close family

members are strongly encouraged to participate in the classroom, attend workshops and trainings at our center.

- **Parent Committee Meetings** – All parents of enrolled children are automatically members of the Parent Committee. Parent Committee meetings are held each month, the first Thursday of the month. The purpose of the meeting is to give parents an opportunity to assist in the development of activities that address your interests and needs. Important program updates will also be discussed. You will have the chance to suggest topics for the meetings and attend sessions on child development, child language and literacy, nutrition, and child guidance just to name a few. All parents and other involved family members are encouraged to attend.
- **Policy Council** – The Policy Council, with the Board of Directors, share governance responsibility of our Early Head Start/Head Start programming with staff overseeing the delivery of high quality services to children and families. Through the Policy Council and Parent Committees, parents and other community representatives are empowered to actively participate in the shared decision making process. Serving on the Policy Council provides an opportunity for parents to develop valuable team communication and leadership skills. Policy Council members are nominated and elected annually by the Parent Committee in the fall. Once elected, you can begin to be a part of a unique experience that will thoroughly enrich your life. See Appendix for more information.
- **Parent Classroom Observations** – In addition to the above-mentioned meetings and activities, we love to have parents attend field trips or observe your child's classroom. Parents can observe the variety of activities in the classroom like our family-style meals, circle time and work time.
- **Volunteering** – Growing Futures also encourages you to volunteer in your child's program. We welcome whatever way you can be involved! To volunteer please contact Kathy McLellan at (913) 649-9714.

Volunteer and Student Participation

Volunteers and student placements are important to our program. In order to ensure the safety and well-being of all children in our program, volunteers or students will not have direct unsupervised access to children and are not counted in our required staffing ratios. Growing Futures has an orientation process in place that includes a criminal records check, a review of policies and procedures and ongoing monitoring, and the behavior guidance of all volunteers and students. A current physical and TB test on file are also required.

Celebrations

- **Religious and Cultural Observances:** Our program is not affiliated with any religious institution and therefore does not include any type of religious instruction or observance. Staff respect each family's individual beliefs and faith systems and will never impose personal beliefs on your child or family. We ask that you share with us during enrollment any instructions regarding special traditions or beliefs that your family observes. In the hope that all children will share stories and thoughts freely with each other, children will be hearing about the different beliefs and holiday celebrations that are happening in your family. Staff will use

these differences as educational experiences and try to integrate these ideas into themes of understanding and respecting diversity. For this reason, specific holidays are not observed.

- **Birthdays:** Children's birthdays are acknowledged in various ways in our classrooms. We want all children to feel special when celebrating birthdays, and therefore do not allow parents/guardians to bring goody bags or gifts for the children in the classroom or center as this can cause added hardship on families. We prefer to keep the celebration simple, but special for your child. Parents/guardians are welcome to celebrate by doing a special activity with the child in honor of the birthday. In keeping with our Nutrition Policy, we do not allow families to bring any food or treats into the center to celebrate birthdays. If your child is having a birthday party and would like to invite friends from the center, we ask that you directly contact the other families. Teachers will not pass out birthday invitations. **Due to strict regulations, outside food is not allowed in the program.**

Photography/Social Media

In order to protect the confidentiality of children at Growing Futures, photos are taken only by employees or approved media outlets.

Designated staff will only take pictures of children with parent permission for publication.

Photos will be used per the indicated consent found on the Permission Record form.

Photos, audio recordings, or videos that are used in newsletters, bulletin boards, displays, local newspapers/magazines, agency website, social media or other media publications.

Drills

For your child's safety, fire drills are conducted monthly. Tornado Drills are conducted during April - September. Lockdown and Evacuation drills are conducted twice a year.

Transitions

Going to Kindergarten:

Planning for the transition from Head Start to Kindergarten begins in the spring. Head Start offers a Kindergarten Transition Night in collaboration with representatives from the Shawnee Mission School District for parents of children entering kindergarten in the fall. The meeting is typically held in March of each year designed to help you understand the process of transitioning to a new school. Be sure to talk to your child's teachers and/or Family Educator/Family Support Advocate about this event.

2 ½ Transitions

1. The Family Support Advocate or Family Educator will review the Exit Transition Procedure and the Transition Flow Chart with the family.
2. The Family Support Advocate or Family Educator will begin the Transition Planning process with families.

3. If a child is transitioning to Head Start, the Family Educator will complete a Transition Form and turn into the Family and Community Partnership Coordinator (FCPC). Once reviewed, the Form will be added to the Head Start file.
4. Through the file sign off process, the Eligibility Recruitment Selection Enrollment Attendance Associate (ERSEA) will notify the classroom of new students and provide them with the Transition Form. After the start date, the Child's Observation Report (COR) will be updated by the Family Educator and will then be transferred to the classroom assigned.

Internal Transitions

1. Eligibility Recruitment Selection Enrollment Attendance Associate (ERSEA) will notify classrooms of Transitions via email. Included in the email will be the Family Support Advocate, Teaching team, Health and Nutrition Coordinator, Disability and Mental Health Service Specialist, Education Specialist and Kitchen staff.
2. The Eligibility Recruitment Selection Enrollment Attendance Associate (ERSEA) will type a letter to the family spelling out the dates and plan for transition.
3. The copy of the letter will be filed in the child's Education file.
4. Teacher will then complete a Transition Form, gather all personal belongings and pass onto the new classroom.
5. Teachers will notify the Disabilities and School Readiness Specialist, via email, when a child is leaving the classroom to transition the child in COR.

Our Policies: Our Rules

We are Electronic Cigarettes and Tobacco-Free

Growing Futures has an electronic cigarettes, tobacco, substance and alcohol-free policy, which states that smoking and the use of illegal substances or alcohol are not permitted anywhere on the property. We ask parents (and their guests) to follow this policy while in the presence of children indoors, outdoors, or while on field trips or other events.

We are a Violence-Free Program

Growing Futures promotes safe and healthy environments for all children and families enrolled. To ensure that our environment remains safe and comfortable for families, children, and staff we ask that you adhere to the following policies:

- All center staff and participants must understand that Growing Futures is a violence-free zone for children and adults.
- Visitors must refrain from using offensive language or threats of abuse at the center.
- There is to be no verbal, physical, or written abuse displayed toward any child or adult within the center or surrounding property.
- Any display of inappropriate behavior by a parent, guardian, or visiting adult will be addressed immediately.
- All members of the center staff are Mandated Reporters and by law must report any sign of physical or mental abuse by a parent, caregiver, or visiting adult upon any child to the Department for Children and Families (DCF). Whenever possible we will contact you first. (See our policy listed under Mandated Reporting Act/Abuse and Neglect for further information)
- Weapons of any kind are prohibited from the center/classrooms and the grounds.

The presence of any weapons will result in notification of the police.

Confidentiality Statement

We recognize that as you participate in our program, you share very confidential and private information with us. All forms and information provided by you, regarding your child (ren), and your family are considered confidential, and can only be viewed by appropriate staff and designated external consultants and reviewers. Other persons will not be given access to this information without your written consent unless it becomes necessary in order to ensure you or your child's safety and welfare. These records are secured both in locked file cabinets and are protected in our family data system.

Mandated Reporting Act/Abuse and Neglect Policy

All staff members are legally mandated by the State of Kansas to report suspected child abuse and neglect. If we have reason to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred or is occurring, we are required **by law** to report it to the Kansas Department of Children and Families. For this reason, we will ask you about all serious bumps, bruises, burns, injuries or observed neglect of a child's health or safety needs. *You may be asked to join a special meeting where we can discuss a plan for reporting and implementing a potential safety plan.*

Please let us know if your child has had an accident outside of the program.

Guidance and Discipline Policy

Policy:

Guidance and discipline are viewed as a learning opportunity and the joint responsibility of the staff and family. Developmentally appropriate activities and a daily schedule are provided to engage the children mentally and physically, which will lead to positive behavior. Only people who have a relationship with the child will set and follow through with limits and consequences, keeping in consideration children's different levels of ability to control their own behavior. The final goal of this policy is to promote self-regulation, which is one element of social and emotional development that enables children to form friendships, to communicate effectively, to use others as resources for problem solving, and to gain social competence.

Procedures:

1. Adults will use positive techniques to help children develop self-regulation, such as modeling expected behavior, redirecting children to acceptable activities, and intervening to implement consequences for unacceptable or harmful behavior.
2. A process of observing, anticipating and redirecting will be utilized to guide behavior.
3. Limits and consequences shall be clear and understandable to the child, consistently implemented and explained to the child at their level of understanding before and as part of the consequence.
4. Guidance and consequences shall be developmentally appropriate and logically related to the child's act and shall not be out of proportion to the particular unacceptable behavior. The child shall be made aware of the relationship between the act and the consequences. Firm positive

statements about behaviors or redirection of behaviors shall be the accepted techniques for use with infants and toddlers.

5. Direct service staff will develop consistent and clear rules, involving children, where possible, in the development of those rules.
6. Direct service staff will assist children to develop age-appropriate problem-solving skills by guiding them and by modeling how to solve problems and to resolve differences.
7. Direct service staff will use books, stories, puppets, and other experiences to reinforce positive social behaviors.
8. Direct service staff will utilize other resources (current curriculum books and supervisors) to develop plans for guidance and discipline specific to pre-school children, infants, and toddlers.
9. Preschool children shall have reasonable opportunity to resolve their own conflicts.
10. If a child needs to be away from the group or activity to regain control, the child will be redirected to another space, preferably with an adult, with the opportunity to engage in an activity. The child will be given the opportunity to re-engage in the original activity or with the group with the support of the direct service staff.
11. Direct service staff will talk with parents about child rearing practices that support the child, and that bridge the home and program environment to provide consistency for the child.
12. When there is a specific plan for responding to a child's pattern of unacceptable behavior, staff shall be aware of the plan and cooperate in its implementation.
13. Specific behavior management plans may be developed to meet the needs of a particular child if developed with the parent and a professional developmental/mental health consultant. This must be documented in the child's file. All staff working with the child shall receive training on implementing the plan.
14. The child's placement in the program may be terminated if behavior of the child continues to challenge the resources of the center such that the needs of the child are not being met and/or the safety of the child or other children are at risk.

To assist with this process Growing Futures has a Care Team consisting of individuals trained in crisis prevention and intervention. If a child is exhibiting unsafe behaviors, the care team supports the child, other children, and the staff. The care team will work in collaboration with the child's family to meet the needs of the child and family.

The following behaviors are prohibited by any adults in the center, including staff, parents, and visitors:

- Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear;
- Threats regarding or the actual withdrawal of food, rest, use of the bathroom, or activities;

- Children shall not be disciplined for toilet accidents.
- Abusive or profane language;
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment and any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing or isolating a child.
- Suspected substance and/or alcohol use

Attendance/Absentee Policy

Regular attendance is important and monitored to ensure enrolled children and families benefit from the program. Regular attendance helps your child to establish and maintain a consistent relationship with his/her teacher and classmates and is a part of school readiness. Good attendance also helps him/her to develop and feel comfortable in a school setting. Therefore, it is critical that children be on time and at the center every day. Of course, we recognize that some circumstances make it necessary for a child to miss occasionally and ask that you report absences to our Attendance Line at 913-649-9714 extension 282.

Excused absences are defined as the following:

- Family Emergency
- Transportation
- Planned vacation (up to 2 weeks) – please inform Classroom Teacher and Family Support Advocate in advance, a letter is required for extended absences.
- Illness
- Medical appointments (for the child) - if your child has already been present and must leave for an appointment they must return to the center by **11:30 a.m.**

If your child must miss a day, you are asked to contact the attendance line at 913-649-9714 ext. 282 by 8:00 a.m. As a safety measure if we do not hear from you, we will call to ask about your child's absence.

If your child consistently has unexcused irregular attendance or frequently misses a majority of the scheduled day, unfortunately, we may need to withdraw him/her from the program. This is due to our commitment toward continuous learning as well as our need to meet Head Start Performance Standards.

Arrival and Departure

Arrival

- **Early Head Start Center Based and Head Start Wrap-Around-Care** – In order to ensure that we meet both your goals and ours, it is extremely important for your child to arrive at our center before 8:00 a.m. each program day. Our center opens promptly at 7:15 a.m. Monday through Friday. A family style breakfast is served to allow children and staff to sit down together and engage in conversation about the day's learning and play opportunities. After breakfast, children and teachers begin the day's formal schedule.
- **Extended Day-** This session operates 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. or 8:30 a.m to 2:30 p.m Monday -Thursday. We ask that you respect arrival and departure times.

Children cannot arrive to our program after 8:30 a.m. unless previously arranged with your Family Support Advocate or an Education Specialist. Documentation will be required for any appointments. (But need to be in the building by 11:30 if pre-arranged).

Our program is structured so that each learning activity builds upon the one before it and leads to the one that follows. This is why we strongly encourage you to have your child at the program on time. At those times when this is impossible and you need to make alternate arrangements, please contact the classroom teacher and/or Family Support Advocate (in advance whenever possible). Staff will share this information and make their best efforts to accommodate you and your child.

Departure

- **Early Head Start Center Based:** A Work/School Verification form will be given to each family at enrollment and/or upon request. The forms must be completed and faxed/emailed in by the employer of each parent of the enrolled child in the program. Based upon hours of employment, a pick-up time will be assigned to the family. Work/School Verification forms will be reviewed and updated twice per school year.
- **Head Start Wrap-Around-Care (WAC):** Our center is open from 7:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. A late pick up fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed in accordance with the Late Pick-Up Policy outlined in the Family Handbook. You are considered late if the child is not picked up by 4:30 p.m. Late Pick-up fees will be added to your account on the day following the late pick up. After-closing costs are assessed only on WAC non-federally funded hours.

Kansas Department for Children & Families funds CANNOT be used to pay late fees and are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

- **Extended Day-** This session operates 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. or 8:30 a.m to 2:30 p.m Monday – Thursday. We ask that you respect arrival and departure times.

If a parent is late, has not contacted the center, and we are unable to reach you or any of your designated pick up persons by 5:00 p.m., we will contact the police and Kansas Department of Children and Family Services. For safety reasons, children enrolled in the program cannot be released to children under the age of 18.

Your child will **only** be released to individuals you have designated as “**Release Authorized**” on the emergency contact information and the Notification of Temporary Release form.

They will need to show some form of picture identification, such as a driver’s license, state ID, school ID, Military ID, or a passport. Additionally, staff will **never** release your child to anyone who appears to be intoxicated or incapacitated.

We cannot release your child(ren) to people who are not on the list. We will call you if someone shows up to pick up your child and we do not have him or her listed. If you are having someone come, who has never picked up your child before and they will not be a regular pick up person you must provide us with that permission in writing. The person will need to show current, valid photo identification in order for us to release the child.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access or granted limited access to the child by a court order, we will secure documentation to this effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the documentation. Without court documentation, we cannot restrict a non-custodial parent’s access to their child if their name is listed on the birth certificate. Please alert your Family Support Advocate immediately should you need this service.

We understand that on rare occasions your child may arrive or be picked up late due to unforeseen circumstances. However, if a pattern of lateness develops your Family Support Advocate will contact you to address the issue. If inconsistent pick up and drop off become a habit, a meeting will be scheduled with the Program Director and Family and Community Partnership Coordinator, before your child may return to the center. If our schedule does not match your needs, we will assist you in finding a more appropriate program. If for some reason you are late picking up your child, please contact 913-649-9714.

Site Entry and Visiting Policy

The center is a special protected place for children to learn and grow. It should be a safe and predictable environment for them. For this reason, we must be careful and mindful of the activity and traffic in the center. Our policy for building entry and visiting is the following:

- All adults entering the center are asked to push the building buzzer on the left brick wall and state why they are at Growing Futures to office staff. To further building security, please do not hold the door open for parents or guests in line behind you at the door. Allow the door to close and the next parent or guest to press the buzzer.
- Please be aware that you, or your designated person picking up your child, may be asked to show a picture ID to the front desk and/or classroom teacher and checked against the child's approved pick up list.
- If you are entering the building between 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., you will be asked to come to the office and sign-in. You will receive a nametag, please make sure your name tag is visible at all times while you are in the building. When you are leaving, we ask that you sign-out in the front office.
- When you are transporting your child to/from the center, please be sure to walk your child to his/her classroom.
- All children must be signed in and out at one of the computer stations and clipboard located in classrooms every day.
- All adults picking up a child must sign in and go to the classroom to pick up a child.
- Parents who bring other children to the center will be responsible to supervise them at all times.
- Children should remain by your side at all times and not left alone in the hallway.
- To ensure the safety of all the children, do not allow your child (ren) to run in the hallways of the center or in the parking lot.
- **No one** is allowed to use cell phones, including earpieces, in the hallway and classroom. Please complete your conversation prior to entering our center.
- **No pets are allowed in the building.**
- **Parents should park in the parking lot allotted for them in a parking stall.**

Emergency Contact Information Policy

Periodically we will ask you to update your child's enrollment form so that we can ensure accuracy in our records. Please notify us of any change in your address, telephone (work/home) numbers, emergency contact persons or telephone changes for them. **It is critical that we be able to get a hold of someone in case of illness or emergency with your child. Please let us know how to best reach you by phone or email.**

Clothing and Jewelry

Our primary goal is to ensure a happy, safe, and healthy start for the children in our care. For this reason, we ask that children not wear any dangling or hoop earrings, bracelets, or necklaces. We cannot take responsibility for lost jewelry. During play, these items can easily fall off and be lost or cause injury. Beads on shoestrings are also not allowed for this reason.

Due to messy play with materials such as paint and water, as well as possible spills from food, your child's clothing may need to be changed during the course of the day. **KDHE (Kansas Department of Health and Environment) licensing requires each child enrolled to have 2 changes of clothing (shirts, pants, underwear and socks) to be kept in your child's personal cubby at all times.** Clothing should be clearly labeled with your child's name. We also ask that you check the clothes periodically to adjust for seasonal and size changes. If you need assistance, please contact your Family Support Advocate.

Due to Universal Precautions, the center staff will not wash soiled clothing. Washing or rinsing soiled clothing increases the chances that staff and children may be exposed to germs that cause diseases. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and placed in your child's cubby to be taken home.

Early Head Start: If your child is wearing diapers or pull-ups, the program will provide diapers for children's toileting needs. The program will also provide infant formula and baby food.

Remember, as a KDHE licensed program, we go outside every day if the weather permits so please dress your child accordingly. For example, if it is cold your child will need boots, gloves or mittens, a scarf and hat. If you need assistance, please contact your Family Support Advocate.

Head Start: Head Start parents must provide pull-ups if necessary for their child during the program for their toileting needs.

Suggested Items to Bring

Fall/Winter

-Bring coverings to ensure head warmth: hats, scarves, ear muffs, etc.

-Dress warm and in layers. Winter weather changes rapidly. Layers keep your child protected and comfortable.

-Wear warm, sturdy shoes and bring gloves or mittens for going outside.

Spring/Summer

-Wear play clothes that can get dirty and worn. Outside play can be rough on clothes.

-Closed toe shoes are recommended. Flip-flops, sandals, high heels and open-toed shoes create difficulty running and opportunity for injury.

Personal Belongings

The center's overall policy is that children not bring personal belongings (toys, games, stuffed animals, etc.) to the center unless they are requested. This is to prevent the loss of these precious items. You can be assured that we will provide your child with all that he/she needs to have an active, productive, fun filled day in the program.

The following items should not be brought to the center:

- Money
- Medication (unless it is by prescription, given to the teachers, and approved by the Health & Nutrition Specialist)
- Toys (unless requested by the teachers for special occasions)
- Priceless or breakable items
- Sharp objects
- Candy, gum or food
- Weapons

Your Gifts to Us

Parents/caregivers can best show their appreciation to staff and volunteers through kind words (written or spoken). There is no better gift than for you to allow us to share in the development of your child and family. Please note that staff and volunteers cannot accept gifts or money from parents/caregivers. It would be our pleasure to accept letters, drawings or photos!

Accidents or Injuries to Children in the center

As always, safety is our first priority however, sometimes during normal development such as a toddler learning to walk or a preschooler learning through exploration, accidents and/or injuries will occur. In those situations, our staff's first priority is to attend to the child and then inform the parent or designee.

Health Gram reports will be written whenever a child is injured or when a mark on a child's body has occurred while in our care. Some examples of a Health Gram reporting would be: falls, bumps, scratches, scrapes, bites from another child, or any other injury resulting in medical attention or a call to 911. Nail cutting, splinters, and foreign objects in the eye, nose, or ears will not be removed by staff. Parents will be contacted. If the injury is serious, you will be contacted immediately. If it is determined that the child requires immediate medical care, staff will call 911 and a staff person will accompany the child to the emergency room until the parent arrives.

The parent will be notified any time there is an accident/injury with their child. If other children were involved (Child A was bit by Child B and Child A is injured) the other child's name will not be mentioned in the accident report form to protect the confidentiality of all families. The accident/injury form will be given to the parent at pick up.

On-going Health Documentation

It is mandated within the first 30 days of enrollment that each child has health coverage for medical and dental services while in our program. To ensure that our children are insured, we need to have a copy of their health insurance card. If your child does not have a source of ongoing care or coverage, we will assist you in resources for care and medical coverage. Please see the Health Specialist and/or your Family Support Advocate.

Head Start Program Performance Standards require staff to track health events of each child throughout the program year. This includes, but not limited to, well child exams, physical exams (annually), dental exams (semi-annually), immunizations, any doctor's visits, and referrals. A letter will be sent home reminding parents to take their child to their primary care provider to fulfill the health requirement(s) before the date listed in the letter. If the health requirement(s) or proof of a scheduled appointment are not turned into our office by the given date in the letter, that child cannot return to our center until we have received the needed documentation. It is best practice for parents to turn in a

copy of their child's health record after having a visit with their doctor or dentist. Please reach out to the Health & Nutrition Specialist if there are any questions.

*As a parent/guardian you are able to request a copy of your child's well-child exam, physical, dental exam, immunization.

Medical and Dental Home

Growing Futures works closely with parents, The Health Partnership Clinic of Johnson County, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Department for Children and Families and other agencies to ensure health services are provided and all children are enrolled in a "medical and dental home." Parents who receive Medicaid or private insurance are encouraged to use this source of payment for needed health services. All children are required to have an annual medical examination completed on file upon enrollment and an annual dental examination within 90 calendar days of entrance to the program. Contact your Family Support Advocate for assistance to obtain health insurance. The Health Partnership Clinic also offers medical and dental services on site at Growing Futures monthly. Appointments can be made by contacting your Family Support Advocate.

Well-Child and Immunizations

Growing Futures is a licensed center and as such, it is required by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) that all children enrolled in center-based services are up-to-date with all immunizations and well-child examinations at enrollment and throughout the program year. All children are required to have an annual medical examination completed in the last 6 months on file. Per Kansas Child Care Licensing Standards, please let your Family Support Advocate and Nutrition Specialist know if you need help obtaining the required health information.

If a child is exempt from one or all immunizations, then a certification from a licensed physician stating that the physical condition of the child is such that immunizations would endanger the child's life or health or a signed written statement stating that the parent/guardian is an adherent of a religious denomination whose teachings are opposed to immunizations.

All center and/or home based parents/guardians who have children who are not immunized against certain infectious diseases due to the age of the child, delayed scheduling, medical exemption, or religious belief exemption, such as MMR must sign a statement of risk. This will educate and inform the parents/guardians of the risk associated with vaccine-preventable diseases. If a child is diagnosed with an infectious disease such as MMR, any child who is not vaccinated may be excluded from the program until the Health Department and other governing positions give the all clear for return.

Sick Child in center – Medical Policy

Healthy children are ready to learn and in order to ensure that your child is ready to begin his/her day; a staff member will conduct a visual health check to identify signs and symptoms of illness in order to intervene early. If any of the symptoms listed below are observed, we will ask you to take your child home for the day. At home, if you notice any of the following please do not bring your child to the center and call to let us know the reason for your child's absence, by recording a message on the **Attendance Line (913) 649-9714 ext. 282.**

- A statement is needed to return to the childcare center when a child has been out sick 5 or more days or has had a communicable illness.
- The statement must be signed by a Health Care Provider.
- The Health Care Provider must be a (licensed physician, a nurse practitioner or physician's assistant who is working under the supervision of a licensed physician or a medical facility).
- Parents, please notify the center immediately when your child has been diagnosed with any communicable illness.

Children must be excluded from the Child Care center when any of the symptoms listed below are observed:	Children will be allowed to return to the center after:
<u>Red eyes draining thick mucus or pus</u> (Pink eye)	• Being examined by a Health Care Provider, a note is given to return to the center and 24 hours after treatment has started
<u>Extended cold or flu-like symptoms</u> (e.g. cough or nasal drainage) that is persistent and unusual for the child	• Being examined by a Health Care Provider, a note is given to return to the center or symptoms subside
<u>Difficulty breathing</u>	• Being examined by a Health Care Provider and a note is given to return to the center or breathing is normal for that child
<u>A sore throat with fever and/or swollen glands</u>	• Being examined by a Health Care Provider, a note is given to return to the center or symptoms subside
<u>Diarrhea</u> -Child passes 2 or more loose stools within 24 hrs. -Child has a fever along with loose stool -Passing a loose stool every 1-2 hrs. or more often -Loose stool that cannot be contained in the diaper -Child is unable to control loose stool until he/she gets to the bathroom.	• Being examined by a Health Care Provider and it is determined diarrhea is not related to a contagious condition • And a note is given to return to the center or Child has not had diarrhea within the past 24 hours without the use of anti-diarrheal medication.

<u>Fever</u> 100.4 degrees (F) or higher, taken with temporal (forehead).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being examined by a Health Care Provider, a note is given to return to the center or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child has been without a fever for 24 hours or more without the use of fever reducing medication
<u>Abdominal Pain:</u> Pain that is continuous for 2 or more hours or intermittent abdominal pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being examined by a Health Care Provider, a note is given to return to the center Or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child has been without abdominal pain for 24 hours or more without the use of pain relieving medication.
<u>Vomiting</u> (Two or more times within the past 24 hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being examined by a Health Care Provider and it is determined the vomiting is not related to a contagious condition, a note is given to return to the center or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child has not vomited within the past 24 hours
<u>Enteroviruses (Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease)</u> Fever and blister-like eruptions in the mouth and/or a rash (usually on palms and soles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with fever and rash should stay home from center until fever free • If symptoms continue, being examined and treated by a Health Care Provider and a note is given to return to center
<u>Croup</u> (spasms of the airway that cause difficulty breathing and a cough sounding like a seal's bark.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being examined and treated by a Health Care Provider and a note is given to return to the center
<u>COVID-19</u> -100.4 -Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing -Chills -Muscle pain -Sore throat -Immediate loss of taste and/or smell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 days with no fever and symptoms improved and 10 days since symptoms first appeared • Tested positive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 10 days have passed since test or Being examined by a Health Care Provider, a note is given to return to the center

<u>Cold sore/Skin Sores</u> Sores that are on exposed body surface that cannot be covered and are weeping fluid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesion and drainage can be completely covered and contained with a dressing
<u>Head lice</u> Growing Futures follows the Shawnee Mission School District Head Lice Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine screenings for head lice are not conducted. If head lice is identified at the center, the parent will be notified of the need for treatment. The students will be checked upon return to the center for the presence of live lice. Children will not be allowed to return to the center if live lice are present. Children will be individually checked at regular intervals for up to two weeks until nits are not present or nits are no longer viable/hatching.
<u>A rash of unknown cause</u> Rash of unknown cause that spreads quickly, with fever, or behavioral change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent or caretaker gives child care staff a relevant explanation that is consistent with the symptoms that the child is showing or being examined by a health care provider and a note is given to return to the center
<u>Draining/irritated wound</u> that cannot be completely covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for wound
<u>Any of the reportable communicable diseases</u> (ex, Pertussis [Whooping Cough], Chicken Pox, Measles, Mumps, Meningitis etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being examined and treated by a Health Care Provider, a note is given to return to the center.
<u>Impetigo</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being examined and treated by a Health Care Provider, a note is given to return to the center and Child has been taking prescribed medication 24 hours or more
<u>Ringworm</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being examined and treated by a Health Care Provider, a note is given to return to the center and child has been taking/using prescribed medication 24 hours or more
<u>Scabies</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being examined and treated by a Health Care Provider and a note is given to return to the center
<u>Strep throat</u> (Scarlet fever)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being examined and treated by a Health Care Provider, a note is given to return to the center and child has been taking prescribed medication 24 hours or more
A condition that prevents the child from participating comfortably or child is drowsy, Irritable/ crying persistently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptoms subside
Any illness which calls for greater care than the staff can safely provide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symptoms subside

A medical condition that needs more clarification from a Health Care Provider.	•Symptoms subside and being examined by a Health Care Provider and a note is given to return to the center.
•To aid in the <u>prevention</u> and spread of communicable diseases Daily Health checks are done when children arrive at the center.	

If a determination is made that your child is too ill to remain at the center, the parent or the emergency contact person will be messaged by the HNS and then called by the teacher or FSA. For the comfort of the child, sick children should be picked up as soon as possible after the parents are notified of the illness.

If it is determined that the child requires immediate medical care, staff will call 911 and a staff person will accompany the child to the emergency room until the parent arrives.

See Kansas Department of Health and Environment on Guidelines for Exclusion of Children Who Are Ill as Recommended in *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Standards: Guiding for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs (Third Edition)*

Medication

To ensure that proper medication is being given to children, we will only give prescription or non-prescription medication with written authorization from the child's physician and the parent. The parent must complete the form titled "Authorization for Dispensing Medication to Children or Youth" and have a scheduled meeting with the Health and Nutrition Specialist prior to the first day of medication administration. Prescription medication will be given only as prescribed by a physician/dentist and will be dispensed based on their orders. The label of prescribed medication must include:

- A full pharmacy label
- The child's first and last name
- The date the prescription was filled
- Name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription
- The medication's expiration date (we will not accept expired medication)
- Administration, storage, and disposal instructions
- All information on the label must be legible.
- Medications must be in the original container as given out by the pharmacist.
- Medications must be designated for your child
- Ask your pharmacist to divide your child's medicine into 2 bottles, each with its own label, so one can be provided to the center and one can be kept at home.

Parent permission and a note from your child's doctor are also required in order for us to give your child over-the-counter medications and products. Parent permission is only required for our sunscreen, skin ointments, and creams, as long as they are not different than the ones we provide. If different, a doctor's note must be obtained. You will be asked to fill-out the same form referenced above and meet with the Health and Nutrition Specialist prior to the first day of medication administration. Examples of over-the-counter are: cough, cold, fever medications, sunscreen, skin ointments, and creams.

Anaphylaxis/Asthma

If your child has been diagnosed as having anaphylaxis or asthma, there are additional forms for you to complete and review with the Health and Nutrition Specialist prior to physician orders for medication to start. Please be sure to inform the Health and Nutrition Specialist if you require this information. Paperwork is required to be updated annually. It is imperative that children diagnosed with asthma, turn in an Asthma Action Plan completed and signed by a physician. The Asthma Action Plan and medication are required for children to start in the center.

Center Closings

At the start of each program year or at the time of a child's enrollment, a program schedule including specific dates for center closings will be given to parents/caregivers.

Weather Related Closings

If the Shawnee Mission School District 512 is closed due to weather conditions, then Growing Futures will also be closed. Please listen to the local radio and television stations for a list of center/school closings. If the center is closed due to inclement weather, remote programming will be provided.

If the center is closing for any emergency, you will be contacted by text.

Emergency Closings

As always, our primary concern is the health and safety of the children and it is for this reason that if at any time we cannot operate safely, the center will be closed. Parents/caregivers will be called and asked to come and pick up their children as soon as possible.

Withdrawal from Program/Withdrawal Policy

Growing Futures is a diverse and inclusive organization that is committed to supporting families and collaborating with children in their learning. At times, despite our best efforts and commitment to children and their families, we may not be able to adequately support a child with complex needs or particular challenging behavior. Growing Futures will make every reasonable effort to support a child and their parents/guardians, including utilizing available support services, meeting with parents/guardians to discuss new strategies, and facilitate transition to other appropriate service programs if needed. If efforts are exhausted, two week's written notification of withdrawal will be provided to the parents/guardians. In extreme situations, where safety of all children is compromised, Growing Futures reserves the right to give immediate notice of withdrawal of in-person programming and will provide virtual support in locating alternative resources and options.

Termination of Care

Growing Futures staff want all children to be successful in our learning environments. The health and safety of all children is a priority. A temporary suspension may be implemented when there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated, there is chronic low attendance or no communication from you as their parent/guardian. Should your child exhibit behaviors that are a safety risk to him/herself and other children in the classroom we require a parent meeting to establish a written plan to address the behavior issues. During temporary suspension virtual learning may be provided to continue to engage with you and your child. Additional resources will also be offered.

If you are not up to date on fees for the hours wrapped around the Head Start funded day, your child's attendance will be reduced to 3.5 hours per day also requiring a written plan for ongoing services. In addition, we will review enrollment opportunities that might be a better fit for your child and family.

Grievance Procedure/Questions and Concerns

Growing Futures strives to provide the very best service to children and their families. Strong, healthy relationships with parents and community members help us to continually improve. Therefore, we welcome comments about our services whether they are positive or negative.

If at any time you are dissatisfied with the services you receive at Growing Futures, please take your concern directly to the staff person with whom your disappointment arises. If a satisfactory result is not reached, contact that employee's supervisor, then the Program Director, Human Resources, and finally the Executive Director. If these procedures have been followed with no resolution, the matter may be brought to the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors within 10 days of the Executive Director's decision. The Chair of the Personnel Committee will review and may ask for a meeting. We also take these additional internal steps to resolve issues:

The Program Director informs the Executive Director about any complaint that:

- Is already covered by existing Head Start policies or procedures,
- Threatens to disrupt services,
- That involves a conflict with a family which needs further resolution,
- Might damage the reputation of the organization,
- Has been made by a community organization or agency.

Emergency Preparedness

1) Fire Emergency:

Fire Drills are conducted every three weeks following guidance from the Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office.

2) Tornado Emergency:

Tornado drills are conducted monthly from April to September following guidance from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Child Care Licensing requirements.

3) Lockdown and Evacuation Procedures:

Lockdown and Evacuation drills are conducted annually with students and may require leaving the center property and moving to Overland Park Elementary School located at 8150 Santa Fe Drive.

4) Pandemic Response:

In response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic of 2020, Growing Futures Early Education Center, Inc. created a plan to provide care and services to all enrolled children and families. Adaptations to normal operations include:

a) Drop off and Pick up procedural changes:

- (1) Following guidance from the State of Kansas and the Johnson County Health Department, all parents will be expected to wear a face mask during drop off and pick up processes. If you are in need of a mask to begin the program year, please contact your Family Support Advocate. (Masks may not be available upon last minute request due to limited supplies).

- (2) Schedules for drop off and pick up will be assigned to families in the Extended Day program. Schedules for drop off and pick up will be arranged through parent request and availability for Wrap-Around-Care and Early Head Start participants. Any changes in parental needs for drop off and pick up must be arranged through your Family Support Advocate.
- (3) Families will ring the doorbell upon arrival and temperatures should be taken at the door.
- (4) Temperatures of children are to be taken at drop off and periodically throughout the day. Temperatures of staff are taken at arrival to the center.
- (5) Pick-up procedures include parents exiting their car and standing by it until their child approaches the gate to the parking lot. Children will be escorted at all times by staff members of Growing Futures.
- (6) Communication with classroom teachers will be sent through Child Observation Record (COR) to your email address on a daily basis. Longer conversations may be had through zoom meetings or phone calls.
- b) Parents and other visitors must make an appointment before entering the facility in an effort to manage possible exposure. All parents and visitors must wear a mask and have their temperature taken prior to entering the facility. If you need a mask, please contact your Family Support Advocate.
- c) Children ages 2 and above will be offered masks to wear during their participation in center-based activities. Each child will be issued 4 masks which will be laundered daily.
- d) All staff members will wear masks when in the center. Each staff member will be issued four masks to use throughout the day. These masks will be laundered daily.
- e) Children or staff members who have a temperature of 100.4⁰ will not be allowed to enter the facility.
- f) Please see the section “Sick Child in center—Medical Policy” for more information.
- g) Emergency Closure:
Growing Futures follows guidance from the State of Kansas, Johnson County Health Department, the Center for Disease Control, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment concerning responses to the pandemic. It may occur that Growing Futures closes the center for quarantine if the number of COVID-19 cases increase in the area.
- h) Virtual Learning and Attendance:
During program closures, other than planned federally recognized holidays or Winter and Spring Breaks, Growing Futures staff will continue to provide virtual learning activities. These will arrive through COR to your phone or email address. Please make sure to open and respond to the messages as attendance will be maintained through these contacts in addition to virtual home visiting activities. All children are expected to maintain a minimum of 85% attendance.
- i) Parent Committee activities will continue through virtual platforms.
- j) Policy Council meetings will be conducted using Zoom, a virtual meeting platform.
- k) Other adjustments to regular operations may occur as COVID-19 or other pandemics continue in order to keep all children, families and Growing Futures staff safe and healthy.

APPENDIX A

Introduction to the Policy Council

The Policy Council serves as a link to the Parent Committee, the Grantee agency, governing boards, sub-committees and the larger communities that provide Head Start Services. All program options are represented on the Policy Council. Parents participate in establishing policy and collaborative decision-making through the Policy Council and/or Parent Committee.

The Policy Council works with management Staff and the governing body to review, approve and/or disapprove:

- Funding applications
- Procedures for collaborative decision-making about long and short range program goals
- The composition of the Policy Council and selection process;
- The annual and on-going Self-Assessment process;
- Criteria for recruitment and enrollment of children;
- Personnel policies; and
- Following policies for hiring or terminating staff.

The Policy Council also establishes procedures to work with the Agency in resolving community complaints about the Head Start Program. The Policy Council assists the Parent Committee in planning, organizing and coordinating program activities for parents with the assistance of staff. The Policy Council typically meets monthly (other than December or July) on the third Thursday evening of the month with dinner, childcare and interpreters provided.

Program Calendar

At the beginning of each year, every family will receive a yearly calendar. You will receive one at annual parent orientation or by a Family Support Advocate.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on 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.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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CCL 037
Rev. 8/2013

Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Bureau of Family Health
Child Care Licensing Program
1000 SW Jackson, Suite 200
Topeka, KS 66612-1274
Phone (785) 296-1270 Fax (785) 296-0803
Website: www.kdheks.gov/kidsnet

Guidelines for Exclusion of Children (or Staff Working With Children) Who Are Ill As Recommended in *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs (Third Edition)*

When formulating exclusion policies, it is reasonable to focus on the needs and behavior of the ill child and the ability of staff in the out-of-home child care setting to meet those needs without compromising the care of other children in the group.

Children with fever are managed differently in child care. The presence of fever alone has little relevance to the spread of disease and may not preclude a child's participation in child care. A small proportion of childhood illness with fever is caused by life-threatening diseases, such as meningitis. It is unreasonable and inappropriate for child care staff to attempt to determine which illnesses with fevers may be serious. The child's parents or legal guardians, with the help of their child's health care provider, are responsible for these decisions. Parents should be notified anytime a child has a fever.

A facility should not deny admission to or send home a child because of illness unless one or more of the following conditions exists. The parent, legal guardian, or other person authorized by the parent should be notified immediately when a child has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion from the facility, as described below:

- 1) The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in facility activities;**
- 2) The illness results in a greater care need than the child care staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children; or**
- 3) The child has any of the following conditions and poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others:**
 - A. An acute change in behavior including lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, uncontrolled coughing, noticeable (spreading) rash, or other signs or symptoms of illness until medical evaluation indicates inclusion in the facility.
 - B. Fever (temperature above 101 degrees Fahrenheit orally, above 102 degrees Fahrenheit rectally, or 100 degrees or higher taken auxiliary (armpit)) and behavior change or other signs and symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea). Oral temperature should not be taken on children younger than 4 years (or younger than 3 years if a digital thermometer is used). Rectal temperature should be taken only by persons with specific health training.
 - C. Uncontrolled diarrhea, that is, increased number of stools, increased stool water, and/or decreased form that is not contained by the diaper until diarrhea stops; blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools.
 - D. Vomiting illness (two or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours) until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines the illness to be non-communicable, and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
 - E. Abdominal pain that continues for more than two hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms of illness.
 - F. Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider or health official determines the condition is noninfectious.
 - G. Rash with fever or behavior change, until a health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease.
 - H. Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
 - I. Untreated scabies, head lice, or other infestation.
 - J. Untreated Tuberculosis, until a health care provider or health official states that the child can attend child care.

K. Known contagious diseases while still in the communicable stage (chicken pox, streptococcal pharyngitis, rubella, pertussis, mumps, measles, hepatitis A).

Early Head Start Biting

Growing Futures' policy on biting is designed to keep all children and staff safe in the classroom and provide as much support to children and families as possible.

Biting is a common but upsetting behavior of some toddlers. Biting behavior can also occur at the preschool age and can be very problematic and unsafe for others. It is important for staff and parents to address biting when it occurs.

Preventive Care:

Children bite for many different reasons. In order to respond effectively, it is best to first explore the reasons why a child is biting. A child may bite as a means of relieving stress and tension, or expressing his/her needs, wants or feelings such as frustration, anxiety, anger, etc. It is important that the staff model statements that the child can use to communicate their feelings and needs. For example, "You feel mad when Joey takes your truck," or "I can tell that you want me to pay attention to you." Modeling appropriate communication can help prevent problematic biting behavior from continuing.

Teaching staff will reinforce desired behavior in the classroom through the acknowledgement of pre-social behavior such as showing empathy, comforting others, taking turns with a toy, or helping others.

Staff will:

- Not label, humiliate or isolate a child who bites.
- Discourage play that involves "pretend" biting or play that is rough and unsafe.
- Help the child make connections with the others through appropriate play and communication.

Interventions and Procedures:

The classroom staff will seek consultation from the Education Management Team and/or Mental Health Specialist on any recurring biting behavior in the classroom. When children experiment with biting, staff will direct the child to a more suitable option that allows for sensory-motor exploration through the variety of toys, appropriate objects, or mediums to touch, smell, and/or taste. When needed, the Mental Health Specialist will be brought in to observe and assist the classroom.

When a child bites another child, staff will intervene immediately in a calm and reassuring manner. Staff will use a warm, but firm tone of voice, to communicate that biting is not acceptable. Examples may be, "I do not like when you bite friends," or "biting is not safe for others." Staff will ensure that they have the child's full attention by observing nonverbal cues, such as eye contact when conveying these messages. It is important that the child who bit understands the consequences of their behavior. Staff will point out how the biter's behavior affected the other child in ways such as, "Your friend is crying because you hurt him with your teeth." Staff will encourage children (preschool age), to explain how it affected them.

If there appears to be a consistent pattern of biting between two children, staff will attempt to separate the children in different groups for a short length of time. If a child continues biting over several weeks, staff should seek additional support and consultation from the Management team to determine if a further evaluation for development concerns is necessary.

Staff will work with parents to implement strategies that support each child. Staff may schedule a meeting with their direct supervisor, or Mental Health Specialist to identify additional needs of the child and develop a support plan, if necessary.

I have read and understood the Growing Futures policy on biting.

My Notes:

[illegible]
