



# McKnight Children's Center

## Parent Handbook

Revised 7/2011



## **NONDISCRIMINATION OF SERVICES**

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons without disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any student (and/or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with:

St. Paul's Preschool/McKnight Center  
600 Fox Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Department of Public Welfare  
Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Western Region  
301 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 410, Piatt Place  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Pa Human Relations Commission  
301 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 390, Piatt Place  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of Civil Rights  
Suite 372, Public Ledger Bldg.  
150 South Independence Mall West  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Department of Public Welfare  
Western Field Office  
Room 702 Pittsburgh State Office Bldg  
300 Liberty Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

## **FAMILY CULTURAL POLICY**

McKnight Children's Center will make every effort to meet the needs of your child physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially within our abilities based on our staffing, ratio, and facility resources. We will work with families in making necessary plans to accommodate your child in our program.

To that end, we encourage our families to share with the staff your preferred child-rearing practices and any information you wish to share about your linguistic or cultural background.

We look forward to working with you at every stage of your child's development to ensure a warm, secure environment for your child to grow and learn.

Please let the staff know if you need any materials translated into your preferred (home) language.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

McKnight Children's Center will provide a warm, loving environment in which children can learn and grow. Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex. We will reach out to the community to be inclusive, non-judgmental and accepting.

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS**

We believe that all young children can benefit from a developmentally appropriate program designed to help them reach their full potential. We believe that each child is unique, special and capable of learning. McKnight Children's Center staff strives to provide each child with skills and self-confidence they need to succeed.

McKnight Children's Center offers a quality drop-in child care program for infants, toddlers and preschoolers that facilitates and nurtures the individual needs and abilities of each and every child.

McKnight Children's Center strives to meet these goals for each child:

1. Offer a curriculum that encourages social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth.
2. Teach the child to relate to others, to value friendship, and to respect all people.
3. Provide a safe, comfortable environment for these early learning and growth processes.
4. Help each child learn to develop self-discipline and independence and to deal with his/her emotions in an appropriate manner.
5. Provide a well-balanced schedule of activity and quiet times.

## CURRICULUM

Depending on when children arrive throughout the day, each child can participate in periods of group activity, individual play, outdoor play, and quiet times. All activities are developmentally appropriate and meet each child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive needs. The imagination and curiosity of every child is valued.

### GENERAL CURRICULUM AREAS

1. **Art**-We use a variety of materials so the child may experience the joy of creating by cutting, gluing, coloring and painting. Art may also be used for instructive purposes such as identification of shapes, learning to follow oral instructions, sequencing steps and learning various skills, such as cutting and pasting. Activities are geared to the child's level, and are concerned with the process of creating, and skill building, not necessarily a picture perfect final product.
2. **Music**-Music is used to express emotions, reinforce subject material, and as a source of joy. We use tapes, CD's records, rhythm instruments, scarves, ribbon sticks, singing, clapping, and body movement.
3. **Group Time**- This is a period of approximately 15 minutes, which serves as a vehicle for teaching a wide variety of subjects. It often includes finger plays, stories, games, songs, and discussion centered on a topic. Monthly and weekly themes will be posted for your information.
4. **Small Muscle**-Through manipulative table toys, games, and other activities, small muscle coordination grows. A variety of small motor toys are offered and changed weekly to coordinate with any themes.
5. **Large Muscle**-Children receive large muscle coordination through outside play, going for walks, or indoor play in the large motor area in the Social Hall. Depending on the weather, children are offered large muscle play two times a day.

## ENROLLMENT

McKnight Children's Center is a state licensed, drop-in facility. We accept children between the ages of 6 weeks and 5 years.

The center operates from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday from the third week of August until the third week of May.

We are open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during the summer months (June, July) from 8:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. if there are enough children registered.

## **HOLIDAY SCHEDULE**

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

Labor Day (Sept. 6)	President's Day (Feb. 20)
Election Day (Nov. 8)	Easter (April 5-9)
Thanksgiving (Nov. 23-28)	Election Day (May 15)
Christmas (Dec. 21- Jan. 2)	
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Jan. 16)	

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURE**

**We will only close in the case of severe weather.** In the event that the center should have to close due to severe weather, the announcement will be made on the websites of WPXI, KDKA, and WTAE television stations. **Please look for "McKnight Children's Center"**. The announcement will be seen on WTAE and KDKA newscasts. Parents can also call the Ferguson office to listen to the answering machine (412-486-5591).

The child care will open at our regular time even if the local school districts are delayed.

## **ADMISSION**

**Before** a child is enrolled in the McKnight Children's Center, the office must receive the following:

- Completed application (Registration checklist)
- Child Health Report
- Emergency Contact / Parental Consent Form
- Two copies of the agreement form (one copy for your files)
- Registration fee of \$25.00 / child or \$35.00 / family (for children registering from September through December)
- Registration fee of \$12.50 / child or \$17.50 / family (for children registering from January through August)

**A new registration fee and updated forms are required each August or September.** If your child will be attending preschool in the fall, they will pay only the preschool registration fee and no additional child care registration fee. This fee covers September through August.

## FEE SCHEDULE

Hourly rates for child care of one child:

Infants, 6 weeks to 18 months:	\$5.25 / per hour
Toddlers, 18 months to 3 years:	\$5.00 / per hour
Preschoolers, 3 to 5 years:	\$4.50 / per hour

**A minimum of 1/2 hour is charged.**

The person picking up the child will pay fees on a daily basis. Payment can be made in advance. Please make checks payable to "St. Paul's Preschool".

A "no show" fee of \$5.00 will be charged if reservations for child care are not cancelled with a minimum of 24 hours notice prior to the reservation.

When paying for childcare services, you may pay in advance or pay the full amount due on the day that services are rendered. **No account should ever carry a negative balance.**

For those families paying in advance, a notice will be placed in your child's mailbox once the account reaches a \$25.00 remaining balance. If your family is carrying a negative balance, a written notification of this past due amount will be placed in your mailbox. **Once this notification has been issued, a \$2.00 per day late fee will be charged in addition to the past due balance, until the account has been paid in full.** This late fee is indicated on the Agreement form that must be signed when enrolling your child.

## TERMINATION OF CARE

In the event that you find it necessary to cancel your child care, you must give a written and dated notice of cancellation to the office **two weeks** prior to such termination of services.

**The McKnight Children's Center reserves the right to dismiss any child for disruptive and/or damaging behavior.** If, after a period of time and conferences between the parent, the Child Care Coordinator and Director, a child is unable to adjust to the routine of the center and is causing disruptive and/or unsafe damaging behavior to persons and/or property, the child will be asked to leave. This policy is without regard to race/sex/creed/color/religion and is instituted so that we can ensure the children attending the center a safe and comfortable atmosphere in which to grow and develop.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

When a child becomes ill, he/she will be isolated from the other children, and the parent will be notified to pick up the child **within an hour**. If the parent cannot be reached, we will contact the person indicated by you on your child's emergency contact form

A parent will be contacted to pick up a sick child when the child exhibits any of the following symptoms at the center:

- Fever of 100 degrees F or higher
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Rash, that is unexplained, except for diaper rash
- Pink Eye (conjunctivitis) when the eye is red or pink with white or yellow eye discharge. Other symptoms are matted eyelids, eye pain, and redness of the eyelid or skin surrounding the eye

If your child has been ill the previous 24 hours or has had a temperature, we ask that he/she **not** be brought to child care. Children with heavy colds should be kept at home to prevent infection of other children and staff. **Children must be fever-free (without Tylenol) for 24 hours before returning the child care.**

If your child contracts any communicable disease, please inform the center. If your child is exposed to a communicable disease while at the center, a notice will be posted and a communicable disease informational letter will be sent home with your child.

### **MEDICATION**

In order for a caregiver to administer a prescribed medication at the McKnight Children's Center, the parent must fill out a Medication Permission form. All medications (including diaper cream and sun tan lotion) must be labeled with the child's name and be in the original container.

### **ACCIDENTS**

Whether indoors, in the Social Hall, on the playground, or on a walk outside the center, the children are watched carefully. Accidents, though, occasionally occur. Any accident is reported to the parent verbally and the parent will receive a completed Accident Report.

**For medical and dental emergencies,** the following procedures will occur:

- An Emergency Medical contact/parental consent form will be given to each child's parent or guardian to be filled out before the child begins child care. One will go into the child's file and the other will go into a room binder that will be used for emergency situations where the facility needs to be evacuated. These binders are carried everywhere throughout the day with the children in each group.
- One of the group supervisors will pull the child's emergency form from the child's file or binder and proceed to the hospital. The child care coordinator and the preschool director will be immediately notified of the situation. An

ambulance will be called if the child cannot be removed and taken to the closest medical facility unless the driver feels it is necessary to go to a trauma center.

- Another staff member will pull the child's file and will begin to call the child's home number, then parent/guardian's work number and will then proceed to the other emergency names and numbers given on the form. The staff member will continue to call all numbers until someone is reached.
- The staff member will inform the parent or emergency person as to what happened and where the child has been taken and who has accompanied the child to the hospital.
- At the end of the incident, the staff member who remained behind will fill out an accident form and leave it with the child care coordinator or the preschool director (to be given to the parent), and a copy will be placed in the child's folder. A copy will be sent to the Pennsylvania DPW department.

**In cases of minor accidents**, which do not require emergency procedures, the following steps will be taken:

- A group supervisor will bring the child to the office to administer the necessary first aid and inform the director of the situation.
- If it is felt the accident warrants, a call will be made to the parents to let them know what has happened. If no call is needed, the parent is to be notified immediately upon arrival of picking the child up that an accident involving their child has taken place and inform the parent of what happened. A copy of the accident report will be given to the parent.

### **EVACUATIONS**

Should it be necessary to evacuate the McKnight Children's Center, the children will be taken to the Ross Township Community Center. Directions are available in the office. Parents will be called in this situation and informed of what caused the evacuation and where their child can be picked up.

The staff receives yearly fire safety training and conducts monthly fire drills. They are instructed in procedures for exiting the building and insuring the children's safety.

### **NUTRITION**

A mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack is offered to the children. We also have frequent trips to the water fountain whenever children are thirsty. The McKnight Children's Center will accommodate any special dietary needs of the children enrolled. Please advise the center if your child has food allergies.

Lunch is our busiest time of the day! If you would like your child/children to enjoy lunch with us, please plan to arrive at child care by 11:15 a.m. (Children finishing the morning session of preschool will be arriving at 11:30 a.m.) All children who are in child care at this time must have a lunch.

Please provide a lunchbox for your child, clearly marked with their first and last name, and place it on the cart upon arrival. Lunches will be stored in the refrigerator until it is time for the children to eat.

Infant lunches should also be placed on the cart, not stored in diaper bags. We will refrigerate as needed. Infants will be fed according to their individual schedule and will be held while bottle feeding. A daily record of what your child eats will be given to you at the time of pick up. Bottles are warmed in a crock-pot.

For foods that need to be served warm, please place in a Thermos. We purposely leave uneaten foods (that will not spoil) in the lunchbox so that parents can see what the child has or has not eaten. It may also be a great snack for the drive home!

Children are offered sandwiches, etc. first before desserts. Please limit sweets to one.

*Parents often ask for lunch suggestions, and over the years we have compiled the following:*

- Choose foods that are easy to serve in order to speed the serving process. Foods wrapped in foil, Baggies, or waxed papers “open” more easily than Saran Wrap.
- Children enjoy foods that are cut into bite-size pieces, especially fruits. Not only do the children like feeding themselves, but also we are concerned about children choking on foods while eating in a group setting.
- **Children younger than 4 may not be served the following foods: hot dogs, either whole or sliced into rounds, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, spoonfuls of peanut butter, large pieces of carrots that cannot be safely swallowed whole, whole and large hard pretzels.**
- Other suggestions include: cheese and crackers, raw veggies cut into bite-sized pieces, canned fruit in plastic containers, small pretzels, yogurt, plain pasta noodles, food in individual serving containers, chicken salad, baloney, deviled ham, cream cheese and jelly, egg salad, granola, breads, graham crackers, tortilla pinwheels, string cheese, pudding, Jell-O, small sized juice boxes
- Toddlers tend to be messy, so please include a bib IN their lunchbox/bag.
- **Food discouraged in child care:** hard candy, **chewing gum**, Tootsie Rolls, Life Savers, Smarties and M & M’s.
- Water, juice and milk are all good drinks. **Absolutely no carbonated drinks, please.**

## REST PERIOD

A rest period is part of the daily schedule for each age group. The child is encouraged, but not forced, to sleep during this time. All children are supervised during naptime. We have mats for older children, and they may bring a labeled blanket or labeled cuddly toy to be used during this time. Each child should bring his/her fitted crib sheet. This size sheet fits perfectly on your child's nap mat.

Infants will be placed on their backs for sleeping, unless written instruction is given by the physician because of medical reasons.

## GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

The staff strives to create an atmosphere of acceptance for and to enhance the self esteem of each child. When discipline is needed, we never use any type of physical punishment. Discipline will use positive guidance, redirection, modeling, problem solving and logical consequences.

Children want and need limits. Young children can learn how to meet their own needs while being considerate of the needs of others. **Helping them learn this may be our greatest and most important job.**

The better a child feels about himself, the better he will be able to see the needs of others. Staff stresses (with exact examples) good behavior. As a child learns how to behave he will make mistakes and will learn to analyze why the mistake was made.

We believe that:

- All children need limits, which are consistently enforced.
- Children need opportunities to learn to accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions.
- Positive behavior should be reinforced in order to redirect inappropriate behavior.
- Punishment is not to be used in connection with rest, food, or toilet training.

## ITEMS FROM HOME

Our center is equipped with appropriate toys. Toys brought from home can often become "lost" with the center toys. We do not allow the children to play with guns or violent toys of any kind. We ask that children do not wear rings and necklaces, as they are not safe on playground equipment or in the Social Hall Large Motor area. These items can be choking hazards. If such items are brought to the center we cannot be responsible for them. Therefore, we ask that you refrain from bringing these items.

## OUTSIDE PLAY

The McKnight Children's Center has two enclosed play areas with a variety of outdoor toys. We take the children outside frequently, so please be sure your child has

appropriate outdoor wear. Tie shoes and tennis shoes work best. Dress shoes and flip-flops are dangerous when climbing on the equipment. Sun-screen should be applied before your child arrives. Children staying all day will have sun-screen reapplied once the parents complete a permission form. The labeled lotion (your child's name) will be placed in a locked cabinet.

To insure the safety of children in the parking lot, please drive slowly, and never leave your child in the vehicle, or leave your vehicle idling in the parking lot.

### **CHECKING IN AND OUT**

Please bring your child into the center when you arrive. Coats may be hung on the racks at the end of the hall, and lunch boxes are to be placed on the labeled cart. Labeled book bags and diaper bags need to be placed in the appropriate basket. Please fill in the daily sign-in sheet completely. **Make sure it is completed legibly.** Please list any special instructions pertaining to that day on the child's daily sheet.

Please come into the center to pick up your child. Children are released to the individual listed on the daily sign-in sheet. If an individual arrives to pick up a child who is not listed on the pick-up list or the daily sign-in sheet, a phone call will be made to clarify to whom the child may be released. If the person picking up the child is not the same person who brought him/her or is not familiar to us, photo identification and a verbal response from the parent will be required.

A caregiver will assist you and calculate the daily fee. Your signature is required on the sign-in sheet upon departure to verify who has picked up the child. If a situation arises that the person picking up the child is not capable to safely take the child, the McKnight Children's Center has the right to deny pickup and will make other arrangements to have the child transported safely to their destination.

The McKnight Children's Center closes promptly at 5:00 p.m. **A late charge of \$5.00 per five minutes per child will be charged for those who arrive after 5:00 p.m.** If an emergency occurs and you will be late, please call the center at 412-364-6438 to inform us. **A phone call does not exempt the party from the charge of the late fee.** Excessive tardiness will not be tolerated and dismissal from the child care program will be discussed.

### **PARENTS PROVIDED ITEMS AND PERSONAL ITEMS**

Food, drink, utensils (fork/spoon), diapers and wipes are provided by the parent. McKnight Children's Center will provide a morning and afternoon snack. These snacks typically are animal crackers, Cheez-its, goldfish crackers and Cheerio's for the younger children.

Please pack an extra set of clothing, socks, shoes and underwear in each child's bag. If your child wears Pull-ups, please insure they wear clothing that allows them to use the

Pull-ups and that can be changed easily if necessary. An extra sweater or sweatshirt should be packed during the winter months.

Please label all of your children's belongings including backpacks, coats, diaper bags, bottles, pacifiers \* and lunch boxes. Please do not keep medicine or other items that are a danger to children in your diaper bag. We reserve the right to inspect all bags for items that are unsafe for children. These items **must** be locked in an inaccessible cabinet.

*\*Pacifier must be on a strap so it can be attached to your child's clothing.*

### **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

All staff that is employed at the McKnight Children's Center is mandated under Pennsylvania State law to report all suspected child abuse. The reporting procedure is:

- All observations and/or suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the child protective services agency no matter where the abuse might have occurred.
- The director will call Childline/1-800-932-0313 to report suspected abuse or neglect.
- The director will follow the direction of the child protective services agency regarding the completion of written reports.
- If the parent or legal guardian of the child is suspected of abuse, the director will follow the guidance of the child protective agency regarding notification of the parent or legal guardian. Reporters of suspected child abuse would not be discharged for making the report unless it is proven that a false report was knowingly made.
- Staff who are alleged perpetrators of child abuse may be suspended or given leave pending completion of an investigation.
- Parents/legal guardians of other children in the program will be contacted by the director so they may share any concerns they have had.
- It is important to note that no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Caregivers found guilty of child abuse will be summarily dismissed or relieved of their duties.

### **SUPPORT AND EVALUATION SERVICES**

If you feel your child may be delayed, either in speech or with development, the following services are available to you.

Please note, McKnight Children's Center does not endorse or recommend any specific agency. They are provided for our families' information only and the center does not

take any responsibility for advice or suggested programming done by any of the agencies listed below.

These materials can be provided in the family's primary language, if their knowledge of English is limited.

**DART** - Call 412-394-5904 to arrange a **free** screening/evaluation. Once your child is eligible for Early Intervention Services, you will most likely have more questions regarding the program. For these as well as questions regarding your child's IEP, talk to a DART Special Education Supervisor. If you don't know who your child's Special Education Supervisor is, call 412-394-5736.

**CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL** – a thorough evaluation for a variety of delays and issues. General Information – 412-692-5325  
Child or to schedule an appointment, call 412-692-5560.

#### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES**

(This is a list of the ones of which we are aware of in the local area. These programs may be able to give you additional information. Again this is provided for your information only and McKnight Children's Center does not endorse or recommend any specific agency.)

**NORTH HILLS OUTREACH CENTER** – Assistance with housing issues, food and nutrition, financial planning, referrals for medical services. 412-487-6316

**NORTH HILLS YOUTH MINISTRY** –Counseling services, parenting programs, referrals to the appropriate agencies for community resources for children and families. 412-366-1300

#### **PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL SERVICES – EARLY INTERVENTION**

##### **NORTH HILLS PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES**

4068 Alpha Building – corner of Mount Royal and Duncan Ave 412-492-0644

**ALLEGHENY INTERMEDIATE UNIT** – ( ask for behavioral evaluation) 412-394-5700

**CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL** 412-692-5325

**THE WATSON INSTITUTE** 412-741-1800

**EASTER SEALS** – special needs, workshops on disability awareness  
412-281-7244

**SCHOOL DISTRICTS** – Call your local school district. Many times they can suggest appropriate agencies.

If you have a need, please contact a group supervisor, the child care coordinator or the director and we will try to find more information for you.

### County Assistance office (CAO) Department of Public Welfare

The Department of Public Welfare (DPW) helps parents pay for child care. DPW manages the subsidized child care program for low-income working families and families receiving cash assistance. The subsidy fund help eligible parents pay for their child care cost. **For more information, call the Child Care Works helpline at 1-877-4-PA-KIDS or visit: Child Care Works.**

### CCIS

**CCIS agencies offer information to all parents on selecting child care which meets their family's needs, as well as helping parents pay for child care.**

#### **Allegheny County – City**

Phone number – 412-255-1281 or Toll-free phone number – 1-800-392-3131

#### **Allegheny County – Northeast**

**Phone number – 412-246-4540 or Toll-free number phone number – 1-800-392-3131**

#### **Allegheny County – South**

**Phone number – 412-349-0303 or Toll-free phone number – 1-800-392-3131**

The preschool office has a list of zip codes served by each area.

### **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**

A federal tax benefit for families or individuals working full or part time and earning a low to moderate wage

Questions on Tax forms OR eligibility? Contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 or visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) (search Earned Income Tax Credit)

## Pennsylvania Tax Back/Tax Forgiveness

Working families may get back some or all of their state income tax back using the state's Tax Forgiveness program.

You must file a PA-40 Personal Income Tax return and complete PA Schedule SP  
A state tax benefit for low to moderate income workers – please check the website or call the PA Department of Revenue.

Contact the PA Department of Revenue with questions at 1-800-362-2050 or [www.revenue.state.pa.us](http://www.revenue.state.pa.us).

## CHIP – PA's Children Health Insurance Program

If your child(ren) need health insurance, CHIP is worth looking into. CHIP covers everything from regular checkups, immunizations and well-baby visits to emergency care, prescriptions, and dental – just to name a few. Call 1-800-986-KIDS or visit [www.state.pa.us](http://www.state.pa.us), PA Keyword: CHIP

## SUMMARY

Child care should delight and excited children and increase their developmental growth. We appreciate you choosing McKnight Children's Center for your child. We welcome your comments. If you have a concern you should follow the steps below:

- Contact the staff member on duty and relay the concern to him/her.
- If you are not satisfied with the response you can contact the child care coordinator, Tina Ciao at 412-364-6438.
- If you are still not satisfied with the response, you can contact the preschool director, Laurel Webster at 412-486-5591.
- If you are still not satisfied with the response, you can contact the minister at St. Paul's UMC at 412-486-7006.