



CHARLESTON COUNTY COMMUNITY EDUCATION KALEIDOSCOPE PARENT HANDBOOK 2009-2010

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide quality care for students enrolled in the program by developing cooperative working relationships among staff, parents, and school. We will operate a program founded upon interaction between the staff and the students and provide age-appropriate activities which focus upon the physical, social, and educational needs of our students.

Dear Parents:

The Charleston County Community Education Program would like to take this opportunity to welcome your family to the Kaleidoscope Program. We all share a common goal - to create a relaxed, trusting, intimate atmosphere where our children are encouraged to pursue their own interests, develop friendships, and grow in confidence, independence, and respect for themselves and others.

The parent handbook outlines what you may expect from the Kaleidoscope Program and what the program expects from you in return. We welcome your suggestions for future handbooks. Please be aware that the program reserves the right to amend policies at any time. It is recommended that you reference the Registration Agreement for current administrative policies pertaining to your child's enrollment and check with your site supervisor for policies pertaining to the care of your child.

We hope your family's experience with the Extended Day Program will be fun, enriching, and delightful.

Tom Widlowski
Community Education Interim Director
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Visit our website at www.charlestoncoce.org

Kaleidoscope Programs are part of the Charleston County Community Education Program

Co-sponsored by



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GOALS FOR OUR CHILDREN:

1. To create an atmosphere where children are encouraged to pursue their own interests, develop friendships, and grow in confidence, independence, and respect for themselves and others.
2. To provide a caring staff, who show respect for children and promote self esteem.
3. To provide children with a variety of developmentally age-appropriate activities.

GOALS FOR PARENTS:

1. To assure parents that their children are in a safe, healthy environment that meet children's emotional, social, and physical needs.
2. To encourage two-way communication between parents and the Kaleidoscope program staff.
3. To encourage parent involvement in the on-going development of the program.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We believe in a strong partnership between parents and staff. The following avenues for parental involvement are in place to encourage input in decision-making, planning, and facilitating communication between parents and the program:

1. Parents may request a conference with the Site Supervisor any time to discuss their own child or the program in general.
2. Parents may serve on the Advisory Council or join one of its committees. Parents may also attend council meetings.
3. We always like to know what you think. If you have a question, concern, or suggestion, please leave a note, talk to the staff or call the Supervisor at any time. We send out evaluation surveys from time to time to obtain feedback on how we're doing.
4. Evening functions are held several times each year (open house, family night, etc.) so families have a chance to meet informally with each other and the staff.
5. You are ALWAYS welcome at the Kaleidoscope Program! You're welcome to join the children for lunch or snack. You're welcome to go along on any field trip. You're welcome to just come and spend time with us!

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

There is always room for program improvement. The Kaleidoscope Parent Advisory Council is actively involved in program development, long-range planning, and evaluation. The Advisory council welcomes parents to attend meetings and be part of program growth. Meeting dates are posted on the parent bulletin board. The Parent Advisory Council is the best mechanism available for parent input regarding program policies.

FAMILY ORIENTATION AND COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

The site supervisor and family will discuss pertinent matters regarding the placement of the child in the program. Parents will be given an overview of program operations and be issued a Parent Handbook. The Parent Handbook serves as a visual orientation to the program. More information is also available on line at www.charlestoncoce.org

Each program has a parents' bulletin board and resource area. Parent newsletters, photos of program activities, menus, calendar of coming events and activities, art work, etc. are posted for your information and review. We encourage staff to converse with you informally about your child's interests.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

- * The program offers children a wide choice of developmentally appropriate activities. Interest centers and clubs may include art, books and records, sewing, crafts, creative dramatic play, games, science, manipulative and constructive toys, and food preparation.
- * The children spend time outdoors every good weather day throughout the year to engage in active play and should be properly attired.
- * Visitors and volunteers are used to enrich the program in areas of art, dance, drama, service learning, crafts, and science.
- * We operate in a shared space environment. We cannot be responsible for the loss of items brought to the program. Please use discretion in bringing items or money to the program.

STAFF/RATIOS & GROUP SIZES

The maximum staff to child ratio is 1:12 for grades K-1, and 1:15 for grades 2-6. Group sizes (number of participating children) do not exceed thirty (30) children for activities.

CHILDREN'S RECORDS

A completed, current, registration form must be on file in order for your child to attend. If medications are to be administered during the program, a CCSD Medical Permission Form must accompany the registration form. Please inform the staff immediately of any changes.

ACTIVITY RELEASE FOR MEDIA

Your student's school often has the opportunity for positive media coverage of special events in the life of the students while they are at school or are participating in school sponsored events. The school district encourages media coverage so that the citizens of Charleston County may learn about the awards and accomplishments of the students. The school keeps your release form response on file. The program will utilize that response for accepting or denying any media/activity release.

PROGRAM USAGE AND FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

We are pleased that you have chosen to use the services of the Kaleidoscope Program. One advantage that many parents enjoy is that the program is available on an as-needed basis. We realize that, as working parents, job schedules are about as varied as the occupations we choose. We are happy to provide flexibility in making program services available to you; however, we must have advance notification regarding which children are expected to be in attendance at the program on any given day. Site supervisors are directed to abide by the fee schedule and administer any late fee charges. Regarding fee schedule: **pay by this Friday for the days you plan to use the program next week.** This gives us the opportunity to create attendance rolls for the next week, schedule staff, and have the ability to go look for registered children in the event they do not show up at the program on an assigned day. Remember, you are committing to these days and will be charged for them, no credits or refunds.

PAYMENT ENVELOPES

Payments must be placed in the "Program Payment Envelope" provided by the program. Envelopes are available at the parent sign-out area. Complete all information on the envelope. A locked slotted box is present for you to deposit your weekly payment. Again, payments are due no later than "this" Friday for the days you plan to use the program "next" week.

LATE FEES

Kaleidoscope Programs close at 6:00 PM, according to the designated clock at the program. A parent arriving after 6:00 PM must pay a fine of \$1 per minute. The fine is to be paid immediately and is to be made payable to Wando Community Education (WCE). Please be mindful that our staff has family, work, and educational commitments too.

FEES

There is an annual registration fee of \$25 per family. This fee is due upon enrollment. Current rate sheets are available from your site supervisor.

CASH PAYMENTS

Please do not put cash payments in payment envelopes. If you must pay by cash, make payment in person. If you do not receive a receipt upon making cash payment, immediately contact the Community Education Director.

AVAILABILITY OF SUBSIDIES

There may be some cases where a family is in need of program services but is of limited financial means to pay in full for them. Where this condition is verified, arrangements for a reduction in the fee structure will be made. Depending on the program, various alternative funding sources such as ABC (Advocates for Better Care) and grant funding sources may be available to help assist families.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation for field trips is provided by a variety of means depending on the program location: First Student, the contracted CCSD bus service, C.E. program buses, activity buses, and vehicles from the PRC fleet are used to transport children. Staff does not use personal vehicles to transport children. Your site supervisor can inform you which means of transportation is used at your location.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are part of the full day and summer programs. Children are expected to go on all scheduled field trips. If you do not want your child to attend any scheduled field trips, please make arrangements for alternative care. Staff are required to go on field trips. Your Site Supervisor will provide advance notice of any field trip, describing the dates, enrollment deadlines, time, mode of transportation, destination, and the activities of each field trip.

MEALS & SNACKS

A USDA approved snack is served in the afternoon after school. Programs serve 100% fruit juice or milk. Snack menus are posted on the parent bulletin board. As part of helping children become more responsible, we do ask that children help in preparing, serving, and cleaning up after the snacks. When the program is open full days and during the summer, children are required to bring their own bag lunch.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

We do not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, or national origin in our enrollment policies. Parents or guardians must complete a registration form prior to having their child attend the program. Each new school year (August) requires a new registration per family. Depending on space availability and staffing, programs may limit the number of children allowed to enroll.

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

The program provides reasonable accommodation for special needs children. Prior to admission, appropriate CCSD personnel will be contacted to review pertinent information and provide recommendations for placement.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Due to the differing nature of after school programs and the expanse of geographic areas within the county, sites may have different hours of operation. Full day programming is available on teacher workdays, in-service days, and most holidays during the school year. These days coincide with the CCSD Operational Calendar (www.ccsdschools.com). Kaleidoscope programs are operational on all days during the school year when "*School Offices are Open*". Consult with your site supervisor to verify any variation in hours of operation.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Parents are required to firmly commit, and pay, for the days they want their child enrolled for the following week. Fees will be assessed for the days you have scheduled your child to attend. No refunds will be given for days missed. Check with your site supervisor regarding availability of daily or partial week attendance. We do not accept drop-ins.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REFERRAL

In the event that it is necessary for the school to bring a child to the program for supervision, the following applies: A designated school staff person will log the child in at the program and supply emergency information for that child. If the school logs a child into the program, the child is considered to be in attendance. Fees will be assessed at the before 4:00 rate. If the child stays later than 4:00, the daily rate will apply.

ABSENCES

When your child is going to be absent from the Kaleidoscope program, call the program BEFORE his or her normal arrival time. It is very important for you to do this, otherwise we must assume your child is "lost in transit" and send out a search party!

ARRIVALS

Parents register their children for specific days of attendance. Please provide advance notice if you know your child will not be attending on a scheduled day.

IF A CHILD DOES NOT SHOW UP

If a child who is pre-registered does not show up for the after school program we:

- Inform the program supervisor.
- Verify that the child attended school that day and did not leave early.
- Talk with the child's teacher or front office staff.
- Check bus departure area.
- Contact parents.
- Conduct search.

For summer, full day, and morning program, parents are to sign their child in each day at the sign-in area.

DEPARTURES

Parents must "check out" with a staff member and record the child's departure on the sign-out sheet. We will release a child to either parent unless there is a written restraining order. Parents need to inform the staff, in advance, if someone else is going to pick up their child up other than those people listed on the registration form. We will request photo identification to verify that the person is approved to pick up the child.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

If the Charleston County Schools are closed due to weather, the Kaleidoscope Program will also be closed! Limited time, lack of available personnel, and limited access to phone lines may make it impossible for us to notify you to make alternative plans. Listen to local television and radio stations for school closings and up-to-date bulletins.

EMERGENCIES

In case of an emergency, programs are staffed so one staff member may attend to the needs of an individual child, yet maintain program ratios. Each staff person is required to receive First Aid training.

If a serious accident occurs which is beyond the scope of staff to administer treatment, EMS will be called and staff will contact you immediately. After 911 is called, the paramedics will decide on the appropriate action. If they decide emergency treatment is needed, they will take the child to the medical facility. You are responsible for the medical charges.

ACCIDENTS/INJURIES

If a child has a minor accident or injury, staff will administer 1st Aid treatment. A CCSD Accident Report will be completed and forwarded per CCSD policy. Examples of “minor accidents” would include insect bites, bumps, bruises, scrapes, etc. If a serious accident occurs (such as a deep cut, chipped or loosened tooth, hard blow to the head) which needs medical attention, parents will be contacted immediately.

SICK CHILDREN

A child should not attend the Kaleidoscope Program with any of the following symptoms: FEVER, UNDIAGNOSED RASH, VOMITING, DIARRHEA, SEVERE COLD OR SORE THROAT

If a child becomes ill at the Kaleidoscope Program, the staff will have the child rest in a quiet area of the room, isolated from the rest of the children, and will contact you to pick up your child. If you cannot be reached, the staff will call the emergency backup people on the registration form.

You should contact the Kaleidoscope Program if your child comes down with a communicable disease. When a communicable disease has been reported, a notice will be posted on the Parent Bulletin Board. In the case of a communicable disease, your child may not return to the program until your physician has made this recommendation.

MEDICATION

Staff can only administer prescription medicines that are in the prescription bottle and are accompanied by a note from your doctor. You must fill out a CCSD Medication Permission form and have your physician sign it. Staff will keep a log of dispensations of medications.

CHILD ABUSE

Staff are legally required to report any instance of observed or suspected child abuse or neglect including a parent who is intoxicated when picking up a child from the Kaleidoscope Program.

DISCIPLINE

The staff of the Kaleidoscope Program respects the dignity of the children in all their dealings with them. Most children respond to a confident and friendly manner in adults. School rules are also in effect for the extended day program.

Physical contact in disciplining a child is avoided and is used only if it is necessary to restrain a child from harming himself or another. Corporal punishment is not allowed! In correcting a child's behavior, the staff says and shows the child what he or she should be doing rather than focusing on the unwanted behavior. The staff also explains the reasons for the rules the children are asked to follow.

If the staff is unable to resolve a serious problem with a child's behavior (such as aggressive, abusive, disturbing, or destructive acts), the site supervisor will request a conference to discuss the problem with the parents and try to establish a joint plan for dealing with the problem. If there is still no change in the child's behavior, the supervisor will inform the parents, in writing, that the behavior is still a serious problem and will invite them to another conference and may include the community school director and principal. If the problem still cannot be resolved, the director and site supervisor will give the parents a notice of dismissal in writing, allowing them two weeks to make other child care arrangements.

TIME OUT

We believe in accentuating, recognizing, and rewarding positive behavior. Use of time out is not a first choice, but a last resort when a child is harming another or in danger of harming themselves. It should be used as a cooling/calming down period after a frustrating experience. Time out should last no longer than it takes the child to achieve that goal, ten minutes maximum. The purpose of time out is to provide an opportunity for a child to clear their mind and rejoin the group in a more productive manner.

DISMISSAL OF A CHILD

The site supervisor may require a parent to take his or her child out of the program if:

1. The parent refuses to follow the Kaleidoscope Program policies as described in this handbook and in the registration agreement, which is signed by the parent (s) when registering for the program.
2. The child is unable to adapt to the Kaleidoscope Program rules (see “**Discipline**” above).

CELL PHONES

Kaleidoscope programs follow all CCSD policies, including that on the use of cell phones. “No student may use a cell phone or other portable communication device on school property...”