



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURTS

Child Care Center Parent Handbook



Special Operations Division
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SECTION 1 – MISSION AND HISTORY

1.1 Mission

The District of Columbia Courts' Child Care Center ("The Center") strives to provide outstanding childcare through the use of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) combined with other best practices. The Center supports and encourages children to learn through play. The Center is a safe, clean, and healthy environment that welcomes children who come to court with their parent or guardian.

The Center provides services without regard to race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex, physical handicap, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, source of income, and place of residence or business.

The Center prides itself on its inclusivity. Staff work closely with parents to ensure that children of all ability levels can fully participate in program activities. All staff are trained yearly in a variety of Special Education and Accommodation courses specifically for this purpose. If your child has a disability or developmental delay, please let us know how we can best accommodate the needs of your child.

1.2 History

The Center was founded by the Friends of Superior Court in 1974. The Friends of Superior Court was a voluntary group of individuals who were concerned about the welfare of children who came in contact with the court system. The Friends of Superior Court operated the Center until the mid-1980s when the Court assumed responsibility for the Center's operation. We are among the few courts in the country that offer free, licensed, and highly structured childcare services to children of parents and guardians who have business in the courts.

SECTION 2 – CUSTOMER SERVICE

2.1 Service Hours and Location

The Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., except holidays. The Center is closed from 1:00-2:00 p.m. for the lunch hour. Parents or guardians must pick up their children and take them to lunch during the lunch hour. Children must be picked up at the end of the day by 4:45 p.m.

The Center is housed in the Moultrie Courthouse located at 500 Indiana Avenue, NW, Room C-100, on the C-Level.

The Center has calming colored walls, age-appropriate furniture and bathroom facilities, computers, games, books, and developmentally appropriate toys.

2.2 Eligibility

Children between 2.5 and 12 years of age are eligible to attend the Center, but children must be toilet trained. "Toilet trained" is defined as wearing underwear and having the ability to attend to personal hygiene needs independently after using the toilet. Children wearing diapers or pull-ups do not meet eligibility requirements. These guidelines are posted and available for review in the Center. These guidelines are also posted on the DC Courts' website and intranet.

The Center does not exclude children who have special needs or disabilities from participating in the program unless their presence would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of her/himself or others or require a fundamental alteration of the program. If a child has an Individualized Education Program, a copy should be provided prior to or at the time of enrollment.

2.3 Public Customers

The Center serves children who accompany a parent or guardian having business in the Court. Children may use the Center while the parent or guardian attends to court business. This allows jurors, witnesses, litigants, and other court users to be able to participate in court proceedings and conduct business with the court without the challenge of having to find alternate care for their children. Childcare services are free of charge.

If an adult accompanying a child does not speak English, the Court will provide interpretation services to assist that parent or guardian with the registration process and other needs. A brochure with additional information is available.

2.4 Court Employees

Children of court employees may use the Center on an emergency basis 25 times per fiscal year. Any additional days beyond the 25 must be requested in writing and are subject to approval by the Director of the Special Operations Division. Each employee is given a receipt to help track utilization during the fiscal year.

Court employees pay a fee for the service. The fee for the first child is \$20. For each additional child, the fee is \$10 per child. Payments may be made in cash or by credit/debit card. Checks are not accepted.

2.5 Denial of Service

Service may be denied if a public customer does not submit required health documents after their first visit or an employee does not provide a current certificate after notification of a lapsed certificate. Service may also be denied if a child is too young, not toilet trained, ill, or demonstrating behavior problems.

2.6 Staffing

Staffing includes a director, an assistant director, contractors, or volunteers. The Center is licensed by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). This license allows up to 16 children between the ages of 2.5 and 12 years old to utilize the Center.

2.7 Holidays

The Center is closed on the following holidays:

- New Year’s Day
- Martin Luther King Jr’s Birthday
- Inauguration Day
- President’s Day
- D.C. Emancipation Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- 4th of July
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

2.8 Daily Schedule

8:30am	Center opens-staff greetings and hand washing
8:30–9:30am	Free play
9:30–10:30am	Group activities
10:30-10:45am	Morning snack (parent provided)
10:45-12:30pm	Activity Centers (art, gross/fine motor, books, computer, dramatic play, math, science)
12:30-1:00pm	Clean up

1:00-2:00pm	Lunch break (on your own*)
2:00-2:30pm	Activities/rest preparation
2:30-4:00pm	Rest Period
4:00-4:15	Afternoon snack (parent provided)
4:15-4:45pm	Self-directed activities
4:45pm	Children are picked up
4:45-5pm	Preparation for next day

*Children eat their lunch away from the Center. The Center is closed for one hour. The Center does not provide meals.

This schedule is subject to change based on the daily needs of children in the Center.

2.9 Registration Process

The Center has a computerized registration process. Each child must be registered to participate in the program. Registration documents must be completed by public customers during their first visit. These forms are required by OSSE.

Contact information is gathered for parents or guardians who bring children to the Center. First time visitors must complete the *Authorization for Emergency Treatment* form and the *Registration Record for Child Receiving Care Away from Home* form. In addition, they must provide information for the computerized registration forms. Members of the public must submit completed health certificates and dental screening forms at the time of their second visit if not provided during their first visit. Forms are available on the Court's webpage and in person at the Child Care Center.

Parents and guardians are required to give the name and number of an emergency contact other than themselves.

Each person enrolling a child must sign a *Registration* and an *Admission* form prior to leaving the child in the Center.

A court employee must pre-register his or her child and provide all required documentation including a health certificate and dental screening form prior to the child's first visit to the Center.

2.10 Parent or Guardian's Rights

A parent or guardian may withdraw their child at any time during the day. Children may not be picked up by anyone other than the persons listed on the intake documents keeping in accordance with all custody and visitation documents as issued by the courts.

If a parent has a concern or grievance, it should be brought to the attention of the Center Director or Assistant Director. A phone meeting will be set up to address the concern. After meeting with Center staff, the parent may contact the Director in the Special Operations Division if they feel further intervention is needed.

SECTION 3 – DAILY OPERATING PROCEDURES

3.1 Opening Process

Families and their children are admitted when two or more staff members are present. All sign-in procedures occur in the Reception Area of the Center. After signing the registration documents, the child may enter the classroom. Once in the Center, the child is asked to store belongings in one of the cubbies and then wash his/her hands. Children who are new to the Center are encouraged to explore the surroundings. This gives staff an opportunity to develop a sense of the child's interests and social-interaction comfort level.

3.2 Electronics

Parents are advised that children are responsible for any electronics brought to the Center. If an electronic device requires charging during the child's time in the Center, the device must be given to the Center staff. Children may not insert charging cords into outlets or use a device while it is charging.

3.3 Lunch

The Center does not provide meals. The Center closes for lunch from 1:00 to 2:00 pm daily. Children may return to the Center at 2:00 pm or thereafter.

If a child is not picked up by 1:00 p.m., staff will contact the Court location provided on the registration form. If this is unsuccessful, staff will page the parent or guardian. If the page is unsuccessful, staff will contact the emergency contact person.

3.4 Rest Period

Children have a 1½ hour rest period from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Children are not required to nap. However, they are expected to rest. Children are provided a cot with a clean sheet, pillow, and blanket to use during this time. After rest period, bed linen is bagged daily for laundering. A parent or guardian may provide bedding if they wish.

3.5 Transportation and Outings

The Center does not provide transportation or take children on outings.

3.6 Closing Procedures

If a parent or guardian fails to pick up a child by 4:45 p.m., staff will contact the location listed on the registration form. If unsuccessful, staff will then page the person. If unsuccessful, staff will then contact the emergency contact person.

If staff has not been notified of a delayed pickup and they are unable to reach the emergency contact, staff will contact the Child and Family Services Agency at 202-671-7233 as explained to the parent or guardian at registration.

After all children have left the Center, chairs are stacked, computers are turned off, and equipment and toys are disinfected.

SECTION 4 – HEALTH AND SAFETY

4.1 Medical Policies

- a. Parents must provide a current health certificate and dental screening form. Children under 3 years of age are not required to have dental screening forms. Forms must clearly indicate whether the child has any known allergies or physical conditions of which staff need to be aware.
- b. Children should only be brought to the Center when they are well. A child who has recovered from illness must be free of fever and contagious symptoms for 24 hours before attending the Center.
- c. Staff will not administer medication. Administration of medication is the responsibility of the parent or guardian.
- d. In the event of a medical emergency, staff will assess the situation and contact the health professional and parent or guardian. For treatable injuries, staff will address the injury and notify the parent or guardian.
- e. If a child becomes ill, the child will be placed on a cot in a quiet area until the parent or guardian is notified and the child is picked up.

- f. A parent or guardian must notify the Center if a child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease and the child was at the Center during the time that he or she was contagious. This will allow the Center to promptly notify other parents and guardians of any reports.

4.2 Sanitation and Disinfection

- a. Toys and equipment are sanitized daily using a bacterial disinfectant solution and air dried, according to OSSE guidelines. (The sanitizing solution consists of 1 TBSP bleach per quart of water. Items are soaked for 5 minutes, rinsed, and air dried.)
- b. Cots are sanitized after each use with disinfectant spray and left to air dry.
- c. Classroom equipment, including tables and chairs, are wiped down and disinfected daily.

4.3 CPR and First Aid

Staff is certified in First Aid and CPR.

4.4 Child Abuse Reporting

Staff is required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

SECTION 5 – DISCIPLINE

Staff utilizes positive, age-appropriate methods of redirection that involve communicating with a child about rules and expectations.

If a serious situation arises, staff will contact and ask the parent or guardian to return to the Center immediately.

SECTION 6 – EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

6.1 Fire Drills

OSSE guidelines require that the Center maintain a record of fire drills throughout the year. One per month is recommended; however, if there are 12 per year, the Center is within the guidelines. Missed fire drills are made up during the year. The Center also is required to conduct drills in the event of hurricanes, tornados, earthquake, shelter-in-place, biohazard, and active shooter.

6.2 Evacuation Plan

In the event of any emergency requiring evacuation, staff and children will exit via C Street, NW and cross the street to the plaza between the United States District Court for the District of Columbia and the Canadian Embassy. The

evacuation route is pictured on the back of the Child Care Center brochure. Parents and guardians are alerted by the system that alerts court occupants to evacuate the building. If this route is blocked, there is an alternate route that is available to the center.

If the C Street NW exit is not accessible, staff and children will exit via 6th Street NW, cross C Street NW (secondary evacuation route) and meet at the muster point in the plaza between the United States District Court for the District of Columbia and the Canadian Embassy.

Staff will take personal cell phones and contact lists to contact parents and guardians to inform them of the pickup location. If the building is cleared for reentry, children will return to the classroom where they can be picked up.

6.3 Emergency Contingency Plan

If the Moultrie Courthouse must be evacuated for an extended period, the Center will be closed, and the children will be taken to the Multipurpose Room of the Court of Appeals (430 E Street, NW, #009) where an authorized adult will be called to pick them up.

(Ask Child Care Center staff if you wish to see the Continuity of Operations Plan, or COOP.)

DC Courts' Child Care Center
500 Indiana Avenue, NW, #C-100
Washington, DC 20001
(P) 202-879-1759 or 1684

I, _____, have been provided with access
(Print First and Last Name)

to the DC Superior Court Child Care Center Handbook containing
policies and procedures of the DC Superior Court Child Care Center.

Signature: _____

Date: _____