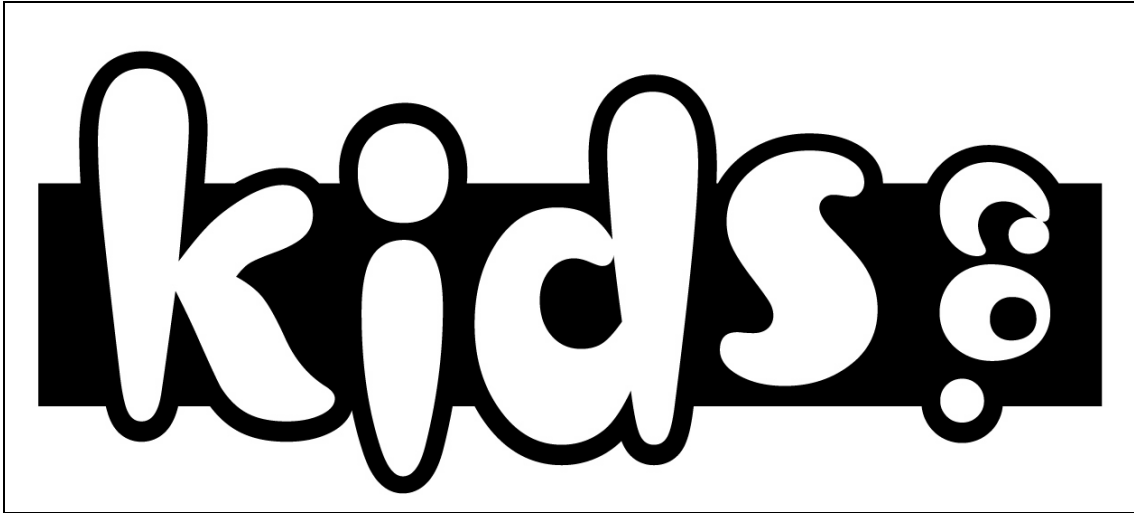


FAMILY HANDBOOK



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*Providing the opportunity for a
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Male and female children are equally important so female and male pronouns will be used alternately throughout this handbook.

To help eliminate any confusion, Evergreen Children’s Association and Kids Co. are one in the same. The legal name of the organization is **Evergreen Children’s Association** and our commonly used/trade name is **Kids Co.**

WELCOME TO KIDS CO.

Evergreen Children's Association dba Kids Co. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that serves the community by providing high quality child care. We have several Kids Co. centers located throughout Seattle and on Mercer Island. Kids Co. is a grassroots organization founded in 1989, for the sole purpose of providing high quality, developmentally appropriate early learning and after-school programs. All of our programs are licensed and meet quality standards as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Council on Accreditation (COA), the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) or the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC).

Kids Co. centers provide licensed child care for preschool through school-age children. The principle goal of our centers is to provide a safe, well supervised, clean and caring environment for your children. We offer opportunities for planned and free play activities that promote the cognitive, social and emotional development of children. We are knowledgeable about what children need for optimum growth at their particular level of development and we seek to provide it. As your child's care givers, we role model and teach loving, caring ways to relate to others. We demonstrate fairness and the importance of listening to what someone else has to say. As your child develops both friendships and new skills, we will provide safe choices which allow them, insofar as it is possible, to experience the natural consequences of their decisions.

In our effort to learn about and respectfully acknowledge differences amongst our children, staff, parents and community, Kids Co. strives to foster the highest levels of multi-cultural understanding through ongoing education. As teachers of young children, we accept our responsibility to role model compassion, patience, critical thinking and decision making in order to achieve mutual respect and understanding for the people we serve. A major component of our efforts is taking a pro-active approach to incorporating anti-bias theory and practices throughout our programming. We place particular emphasis on the following four goals: 1) nurture each child's construction of a knowledgeable, confident self-identity and group identity; 2) promote each child's comfortable, empathic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds; 3) foster each child's critical thinking about bias; and 4) cultivate each child's ability to stand up for her/himself and for others in the face of bias.

DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AND VOLUNTEERING

Kids Co. staff cares for approximately **1,000 children** annually. Creating welcoming, supportive, family-trusted environments for every one of these children is our singular focus. We believe high quality child care is achieved through a commitment to three organizational strategic priorities and we direct all charitable gifts to:

- **Priority One:** Make an uncompromising commitment to the ongoing implementation of best practices in child care throughout our operation.

In Motion: We survey parents annually, asking them to rate the quality of the care we provide and to let us know what service enhancements they would like to see offered. In the most recent survey, parents indicated they would like to see more homework support. Kids Co. center staff responded by adding homework time and increasing communication with parents to let them know more about the learning support we offer.

- **Priority two:** Recruit and retain exceptional child care professionals for the children and families we serve.

In Motion: Kids Co. offers a tuition reimbursement program for employees taking college-level classes in subjects that promote their professional development and growth in the field.

- **Priority three:** Provide uninterrupted care in the form of tuition assistance to families experiencing financial hardship.

In Motion: In the span of five years—from 2005 to 2010—the need for tuition assistance escalated dramatically, mushrooming from \$80,000 annually awarded to \$274,000. In 2010, 24 percent of the children attending Kids Co. (237) required a tuition assistance in order to enroll.

Add a Smidge: Many families choose to support Kids Co.'s work with children above and beyond the tuition they pay. One easy way many parents do this is to add a small donation to their monthly payments. Parents are also invited to attend Kids Co.'s annual special event and are included in the list of those receiving quarterly direct mail appeals.

Clearly, the decision to make a gift is a personal choice and we want you to know there is no expectation. However, we also know that if we do not create opportunities for families to make a charitable gift to Kids Co. the priorities identified above will have less of a far-reaching impact. The contributions we receive from parents are a significant validation of the care we give the most precious people in their lives--their children!

Kids Co. also seeks the philanthropic support of community stakeholders, corporations, and foundations—people with a vested interest in the ensuring high quality care beyond school time for all of our community's children.

A Gift of Time: Volunteering at the center where your child or children are enrolled is another great way to connect with Kids Co. Parents have chipped in to volunteer in many imaginative, helpful ways. We have had parents read to kids—*some in a foreign language*—help make repairs and paint, and introduce children to new foods and cultures. If you have a desire to support Kids Co. in this way, speak with the program director at your center.

Learn More: Kids Co. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit registered with the State of Washington and is governed by a board of directors committed to advancing the organization's mission to *"provide and advocate for quality child care that enriches and nurtures all children, supporting their success in school and in life."* For current information about Kids Co.'s development initiatives or to obtain a copy of our most recent annual report, visit www.kidscompany.org/sharing. An organizational profile and recent 990 is also posted on GuideStar (www.guidestar.org), under Kids Co.'s legal name, Evergreen Children's Association.

ADMISSION

We serve children between the ages of 30 months to 12 years (ages served vary at each center; please refer to the site directory). ***All families will be admitted and no family will be discriminated against on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic status, political ideology, race, color, religion, national origin, age, Vietnam era or disabled veteran status, marital status, ancestry, military status, genetic information or the presence of any physical, mental or sensory disability or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law.***

Kids Co. complies with the guidelines for the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) and makes every reasonable effort to accommodate persons with disabilities. Some of our facilities are equipped/staffed to provide children with toilet training. We are limited to providing parent support of toilet training using pull-on style diapers. At all of our centers we will make accommodation for children that have special needs in this area. For all children with special/unique needs we attempt to make reasonable accommodations before denying or terminating care. Examples of reasonable accommodation include but are not limited to: revising Kids Co. policies to be inclusive of all children; removing physical barriers; and providing staff with additional training. Please talk to the director about your child's individual needs.

Parents/Guardians have free access to all areas of the center at all times. We encourage you to visit us before admission in order for you and your child to become familiar with the facility, the staff and the other children. This also gives us the opportunity to discuss your child specifically

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Children and staff at Kids Co. have the right to a safe, nurturing, respectful environment. They have the right to personal opinions, beliefs and the ability to express their ideas. Children and Staff have the responsibility to create an atmosphere of respect and safety for all by following the community guidelines as established and communicating with others when issues arise.

COMMUNICATION

Kids Co. recognizes that there is no one best way for our staff and your family to stay in touch, however, we require that all families keep us up to date on your contact information including a valid email address (when available). More and more, Kids Co. offers families opportunities to participate in electronic communications such as e-mail newsletters, curriculum calendars, notices about hazardous weather, and much more. Without your current email address, we can't get this valuable information to you! Kids Co. will never share your email address with anyone without your permission.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

1. Complete the **enrollment packet**, which includes all the necessary forms including the immunization form required by Washington State.
2. Pay the annual, non-refundable registration (**\$50.00 for each new child, \$25.00 for each returning child**).
3. Pay the **\$100.00 deposit** for each child enrolled. This deposit will be refunded upon receipt of a **30 day written notice** of withdrawal (see withdrawal policy).
4. If your child attends a Kids Co. Preschool Program, you must pay a **one-time fee** of **\$30** for a mat/cot and sheet for naptime.

*Enrollment is on a continuous basis. For school-age children, enrollment is continuous from one school year to the next. There are separate enrollment forms for summer. For preschool children, enrollment is continuous until they enter the school-age program or withdraw from the program. Changes to your child's schedule or complete withdrawal are subject to the policies outlined in **this handbook** and the **Tuition Agreement**. On an annual basis, we will ask you to review the contact and health information on file to make sure it is current.*

All information given in our enrollment packet is kept strictly confidential. Information in your child's file will not be shared with anyone other than program staff and our state licensor. We do not give out phone numbers or contact information to other parents, staff or other individual without specific consent. Prior to releasing information, we will determine if the reason to release information is valid, utilizing legal counsel as needed. We will obtain informed, written authorization, will give a copy of the signed authorization to the parent or legal guardian, and will maintain a copy in the child's file.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

A minimum of **30 days written notification** must be given for withdrawal from the program. Tuition will accrue for 30 days from the date written notice is received. If 30 days written notice is given then your deposit will be applied to the balance due on tuition for 30 days. If **less than 30 days written notice** is given, tuition will accrue for 30 days after your child's last date of attendance and your deposit will be forfeited.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

Hours of Operation - 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

Care options vary by site; please see your program director for details. Any changes in your choice of programs or your child's schedule requires written notice on the 1st of the month with changes effective on the 1st of the following month. For example, if you would like your child to switch from attending M-F to M,W,F in October, the change of schedule form must be received by September 1st. Additions to your child's schedule may be added earlier if space allows. Change in schedule forms are available from the director.

CHANGE OF DAYS OR TIMES CANNOT BE GUARANTEED BUT WILL BE MADE ON A SPACE AVAILABLE BASIS.

Extra coverage is provided for early school dismissal days where applicable. In addition, winter, mid-winter and spring break programs (also called day camps) are provided. Use of these programs will be charged as extra hours based on what you sign up for. Summer program information for school-age summer day camp will be available in late winter/early spring.

Parents/Guardians should inform the center in advance of the approximate time of arrival and departure for their child. Please let us know if your schedule should change. This enables us to schedule our staff accordingly. Parents/Guardians are required to sign-in and sign-out their child(ren) at drop-off and pick-up times on the sign-in sheet located at the center. **State licensing requires the time of drop-off and pick-up and a full signature.**

Kids Co. Family Handbook

Only authorized individuals 16 years and older are allowed to pick up your child. When authorized individuals are under 18 years old, the parent is responsible for determining the responsibility level of the individual, the safety of the route to be taken and whether the younger child listens well and follows directions.

If any authorized pick-up person's conduct leads our staff to believe it is unsafe to release the child (i.e. inebriated, disorientated, confrontational, violent or other risky behavior), we will contact another person from the pick up list or call the police as required by law. All persons 18 years and older must provide **picture ID** when picking up your child. This could be asked at any time, by any staff person despite the number of times the person has picked up or their relation to the child.

Child Locator Fee: When a child does not come to Kids Co. as scheduled, a staff person must spend time looking for that child. When one staff member has to concentrate all of his/her efforts to locate a child, the rest of the program suffers because we are left short-staffed during the time one person is away from the center conducting a search. In an effort to minimize the need to locate children, parents will be charged a **\$10 fee** for failing to notify Kids Co. that their child is absent. In order to avoid this fee, please contact the center at least **1 hour before your child is expected to arrive**. Excessive failure to notify may result in suspension or termination of enrollment in Kids Co.

Early Drop-Off Fee: You will be charged **\$1.00 per minute** if you drop off your child earlier than the time your child's program is scheduled to begin (unless previously arranged with the director, see Extra Hours Policy). This fee will be added to your account.

Late Pick-Up Fee: You will be charged **\$15.00 for the first one to fifteen minutes, and \$1.00 per minute for each additional minute** if you pick up your child later than the time your child's program is scheduled to end (unless previously arranged with the director, see Extra Hours) or later than 6:00 PM. This fee must be paid at the time of pick-up or will be added to your child care account. You will be asked to sign a late pick-up form.

FAILURE TO PAY THESE FEES MAY RESULT IN TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT.

Once an attempt has been made to contact all emergency contacts and authorized pick-up people, if any child is still at the center by **6:30 PM**, our staff is required by law to call **Child Protective Services** to take the child until the parent is located.

HOLIDAYS & OTHER SCHEDULED CLOSURES

We will be closed for the following nationally observed holidays:

New Year's Day	President's Day	Independence Day	Veteran's Day	Christmas (2 days)
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Memorial Day	Labor Day	Thanksgiving (2 days)	

There are some holidays where public school custodial support may not be available and may result in Kids Co. having to close for the day. These closures will be posted at the sites with as much notice as possible. Alternate care may be available at one of the Kids Co. sites that will remain open. If this type of closure should occur, please discuss your care needs with the program director.

Christmas, New Years Day and Independence Day holidays will vary depending on how they fall within the week. All closures will be posted at the center in advance. ***Evergreen Children's Association dba Kids Co. does not adopt or promote any particular religion but we may recognize various aspects of religions such as celebrations and rituals and provide time off for our staff to participate in their family's celebrations.***

We will be closed 2-3 days each June between the end of the regular school year and the beginning of our summer program to plan and prepare for the summer months. We will also be closed 2-3 days before the first day of public school for planning and training purposes for the new school year. In addition we will be closed for 1 day in August for an All Staff In-service and preschool only will be closed 1 day between Jan-March for our annual Preschool Staff In-service.

NO CREDIT WILL BE GIVEN FOR HOLIDAYS, VACATIONS, KIDS CO. CLOSURES, OR ILLNESS.

PUBLIC SCHOOL CLOSURES

During the school year there are several early dismissals, holidays, teacher planning days and the possibility of public school teacher labor action (i.e. strikes, walkouts, etc.) when the public schools close. On these dates, there is no credit for absences. However, when care is offered and you would like your child to attend Kids Co. on these days, **there will be an additional charge for any hours beyond your regularly scheduled time slot** (please see your tuition rate sheet for extras hours charges). This fee pays for the additional hours of care and the additional staff needed.

STRIKE POLICY

Purpose: Kids Co. is in the unique position of partnering with both public school staff and with parents in support of keeping Kids Co. children healthy, safe and ready to learn. These wonderful partnerships, although important to the success of each child, put Kids Co. in the precarious position of being “in-the-middle” when it comes to issues that result in school-time being missed. This policy establishes direction and clarification for all parents, staff and children of Kids Co. centers in the event that Public School teachers walk out, sick out, strike, etc.

Policy: If Public School teachers should take action over labor disputes such as staging a walk out, strike, etc., based on the situation at hand, Kids Co. may choose either to close the center for the first day or to only be open during our normal operating hours. In the event that the walk out, strike, etc. should extend beyond one day, we will do our best to remain open during our normal operating hours and make every effort to provide care during the extra hours that result from the absence of school teachers. This will depend on our ability to staff our centers appropriately.

We will strive for the best solution to offer the greatest amount of quality care. This might mean combining staff members at one center and requiring parents who need child care to use that particular center. It might mean providing care for less children than we normally serve. In this event, parents are asked to call Kids Co. daily to check on service availability.

HAZARDOUS WEATHER POLICY

Purpose: This policy establishes direction and clarification for families of Kids Co. centers in the event of hazardous weather. **Please understand that our first concern is the safety of our children and our staff.**

Procedures:

1. On any day when the weather is hazardous (ice, snow, strong winds, etc.) or threatens to be hazardous, we ask that you watch or listen to local news broadcasts and and/or visit www.schoolreport.org for a status report on the school where your Kids Co. center is located. Closures, delays or limited service will be announced for the school. Kids Co. follows the school closures/delays for the first day of hazardous weather. Beyond the first day, we will assess the hazards and determine the hours of care we can offer. We will update our voice mail frequently with the most current information. If school is not in session (i.e. Winter Break), Kids Co. staff and administration will determine the closure/delay based on the current conditions at EACH center. If schools close early on a regular school day and children are sent home due to weather, Kids Co. centers may or may not be open, check with your child's program to be sure of program closures that day.
2. If the local news broadcasts announce a delay or closure of a second or subsequent day you **MUST** call the center directly to see if there is space available for your child. Only those who have called and registered for that day can be accepted. This allows us to provide service to the families who really need care and still meet Washington State licensing standards for staff-to-child ratios. There may be times when care will be offered at a different center.
3. The Kids Co. website www.kidscompany.org, and our Facebook page www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Kids-Co/106313686083892 are other resources for current information regarding closures. We will update both with important weather related information.

NO CREDIT WILL BE GIVEN IN THE EVENT WE HAVE TO CLOSE FOR HAZARDOUS WEATHER.

NUTRITION

Kids Co. will provide a nutritious breakfast each morning. Snacks will be provided in the morning and afternoon. Snacks and breakfasts are balanced to provide at least 1/3 of the **RDA** for young children and based on licensing and USDA guidelines. If your child requires a special diet, please discuss this with the director at the time of enrollment. We will make every effort to meet these needs.

Please be aware that Kids Co. centers do not serve peanut products in the meals and snacks we provide. However, parents do provide lunches for their children that may contain peanut or other nut products. We will make every effort to accommodate the needs of children with allergies; however, we cannot guarantee that our centers are "Nut-Free". Each center follows different meal-time procedures based on the children enrolled, which may include having a table designated to accommodate specific food allergies. Please talk to your center director for more information or to talk about your child's allergies.

PRESCHOOL & EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS: Kids Co. will provide snacks in the morning and afternoon. Parents are required to provide a nutritious sack lunch. **No soda pop, candy or gum is allowed at the center.**

SCHOOL-AGE: All children will be required to bring a nutritious sack lunch on no-school days. **No soda pop, candy or gum is allowed at the center.**

Parent provided lunches are required to include a balanced meal including a meat/meat alternate, veggie, fruit and starch. An example of a nutritious lunch is: apple sauce, carrot sticks, ham and cheese sandwich on wheat bread and milk. Please limit cookies/other sweets and foods that need to be heated.

If your child forgets her lunch we will call you to bring one. In an emergency only, we will provide something nutritious for your child to eat. Because our budget does not cover the cost of lunches you will be charged \$10.00 for this service. Please note that this is not an alternative to providing a lunch for your child.

Sample Snacks/Breakfasts (menus will be posted)

A typical breakfast consists of:	French Toast	A typical snack consists of:	Mini Bagel w/ cream cheese
	Orange Wedges		Apple Juice
	Milk		

Some of the Kids Co. Centers participate in the USDA food program. In order for us to do this, all parents are required to fill out an Enrollment/Income Eligibility Application for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. This provides a reimbursement for our costs to provide food, and your participation is mandatory in order for us to receive this source of funding. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

BIRTHDAYS: If your child wishes to bring a treat to share at snack time for his birthday, please talk to his teacher in advance in order to estimate how many children to plan for. Also, one of our regulating agencies, the public health department, requires that all treats, brought from home, are store bought items.

CLOTHING

Accidents can happen for various reasons. For the comfort and health of your child, Kids Co. centers require all children age **seven** and under to have a complete change of clothing at the center at all times. This includes pants, shirts, socks and T-shirts. Potty-training children should have at least 2 extra pairs of underwear.

We do take the children outside regardless of the weather, so it is important that they are **dressed appropriately for the weather conditions**. In our attempt to help keep children healthy, during cold weather, children are required to wear a coat to be able to play outside. Children without coats may have to stay indoors for the day. All items belonging to your child must be permanently marked with his/her name. For the safety of your child, we recommend that you label all belongings on the inside. That way, strangers cannot address your child by name.

The center cannot be held responsible for lost or stolen items.

The center keeps a small supply of extra clothing for emergencies. If your child is sent home in these items, please wash them and return them as quickly as possible so they are available if needed again. The Health Department will not allow us to rinse out soiled clothing (fear of cross-contamination), so you will receive soiled clothing in a plastic bag.

Remember, children will be exposed to active outside activities as well as particularly messy art activities inside. It is important that they come dressed in play clothes. Also, please be sure your child is wearing “active” shoes such as tennis shoes or other shoes they can run, jump and play in. **Flip flops are not allowed.**

FOR NAPTIME

Each child below school age should have a small blanket at the center for naptime (some children like to have a pillow, too). This should be taken home each week for washing if the center does not provide this for you (some do not have facilities available). If your child needs a special toy to make nap time easier, you may bring that as well. These items will be kept in your child's cubby except when in use at naptime.

HOMework TIME AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT

All of our school-age programs offer homework time for at least 20 minutes most of the days of the week (excluding breaks and summer). Homework times vary at each center depending on the afternoon schedule. We provide basic materials and a quiet atmosphere for children to get their homework started. We often coordinate with classroom teachers to be sure that each child has their homework sheet for the day, though we expect children to be responsible for what they need. We encourage children to do their work on their own, but staff will help children to understand directions and assist when they need some guidance. We cannot make sure that children complete their homework. If children do not have homework for the day we encourage them to read, work on a puzzle or do another quiet activity.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

MEDICATION MANAGEMENT: Written parental consent is required to administer any medication. All medication must be in its original container and properly labeled with the child's name; date prescription was filled or medication's expiration date; and legible instructions for administration such as manufacturer's instructions or prescription label. Children may not carry medication in their backpacks or administer medicine to themselves.

NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION: The following medication can be given with written parental consent, only at the dose, duration and method of administration specified on the manufacturer's label for the age or weight of the child needing the medication:

- (1) Antihistamines
- (2) Non aspirin fever reducers/pain relievers
- (3) Decongestants
- (4) Anti-itching ointments or lotions, intended specifically to relieve itching
- (5) Sunscreen
- (6) Cough Drops

A physician's written authorization is required for non-prescription medication that: 1) is not included in the above list; 2) is to be taken differently than indicated on the manufacturer's label; or 3) lacks labeled instructions.

Parents must fill out a medication administration form and specify the day(s) that the medication is to be received. Medications that need to be administered on a long-term basis will need to have a health care plan completed (see program director for details).

All unused medication will be returned to parents or will be disposed of properly.

ILLNESS AND ACCIDENTS

The goal of our illness policy is to prevent the spread of communicable disease among children and staff and to make sure each child gets the care he needs. These guidelines are consistent with the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health's Child Daycare Health Handbook. We ask you adhere to the following guidelines.

You must keep home any child with the following symptoms:

1. Diarrhea, more than one loose stool per day.
2. Vomiting, twice or more in the past 24 hours.
3. Rash, any not associated with heat or allergic reactions to medicine.
4. Drainage from the eye, redness of eyelid lining, swelling and discharge of pus.
5. Appearance/Behavior, unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, difficult to wake, confused, irritable.
6. Sore throat, especially with fever or swollen glands.
7. Head lice, nits or scabies.

Each child will be observed upon arrival for any signs of illness. **Children are not allowed to remain at the center if any of the above occurs or if they have a fever of 100 degrees or more.** Licensing requires that your child be free of **symptoms and/or fever for 24 hours** before returning to Kids Co. If a child becomes ill while at the center she will be isolated from the rest of the group until she is picked up. Please arrange for prompt pick up of your child so as not to jeopardize his health or the health of the other children and staff.

Another way we try to stop the spread of illness is by requiring that staff and children wash their hands upon arrival at the center, before eating, before participating in food activities, and after toileting.

Please be sure to contact Kids Co. if your child will be absent. This will help avoid unnecessary searching and phoning. Be sure to notify your child's elementary school of his absence too.

Also, please inform us if your child has come in contact with any communicable diseases.

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT IF YOUR CHILD IS TOO SICK TO GO OUTSIDE,
YOUR CHILD IS TOO SICK TO COME TO THE CHILD CARE CENTER.**

Major injury: In the event of a major injury, center staff will administer first aid and fill out a report for the parent. If medical attention is needed, the parent and the child's physician will be notified and consulted for proper actions to take. If necessary, we will contact 911 and first aid will be administered until medical help arrives. The child will then be transported to the nearest hospital unless other arrangements have been made.

CONCUSSION INJURIES

Washington State law requires all recreation and sports organizations and schools to notify parents about the dangers of concussions and the importance of removing a child from play if they are suspected of a head injury. Since Kids Co. programs offer sports and active play, we offer the following information:

Concussions are one of the most commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and recreational activities. A concussion is caused by a blow or motion to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Concussions can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. They can occur in any organized or unorganized sport or activity and can result from a fall or from players colliding with each other, the ground, or with obstacles.

Continuing to play with a concussion or symptoms of head injury leaves the child or adolescent especially vulnerable to greater injury and even death. Therefore, it is important that a youth that is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a sport or recreational activity be removed from play immediately. The youth should not return to play until he or she has been evaluated by a licensed health care provider and has received written clearance to return to play.

Kids Co does the following to prevent and treat concussions and other head injuries:

- Children are supervised and remain within visual or auditory range at all times;
- Staff are trained to recognize symptoms of a head injury (child appears dazed or stunned, seems confused, moves clumsily, loses consciousness-even briefly, shows personality or behavior changes, becomes nauseous or vomits, has double or blurred vision, or becomes dizzy);
- Children are required to use helmets when they ride bikes or other "wheels" (no skateboards);
- Children are reminded of the safety rules of the sport or recreation activity; and
- Parents are notified immediately in cases of suspected injury and appropriate medical treatment is sought. In the event the parent cannot be reached immediately, staff will call 911.

SAFETY & SECURITY

Kids Co. staff properly supervises children at all times. This includes times when children may be in transition from one activity to another, outside, traveling on a field trip, in a public place or in the school. Children are never out of sight and/or auditory range of staff. Walkie-talkies are used to supplement staff communication. Door chimes are used at some centers to indicate when the door is being opened. When restrooms are located out of sight or auditory range, children are escorted in groups and are not allowed to go in pairs or on their own. Staff maintain appropriate child to staff ratios at all times.

INFORMATION REGARDING CHILD ABUSE

All Kids Co. staff is given specific training about the detection and reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect. Our staff is aware of signs of abuse and is required by law to report suspected cases **immediately**. Referrals to CPS are made without conferring with parents. Please see the Statement for the Prevention of Abuse in your enrollment packet for more information about our policies and procedures that staff receives upon hire.

EMERGENCY/DISASTER POLICY

Kids Co. programs follow the Emergency/Disaster plans at each of our host schools. Emergency/Disaster drills take place at least once a month and are recorded on the Emergency/Disaster Drill Log. An evacuation plan is posted in the center. Out-of-state contacts are included in each child's enrollment form and are important for our staff to know in the event of a major emergency. **In the event of a major emergency, families can call our Disaster Information line at 1-877-KIDSCO1 (1-877-543-7261)** for updated information. Our Facebook page will also have updated information as it becomes available if access to the internet is available. Talk with your center director about where to be reunited with your child after an emergency occurs. Lastly, we ask that you do NOT call the center immediately unless absolutely necessary so that phone lines can be used for outbound calls to emergency services or to other staff members. For more information, our entire Disaster Policy is available at the center for families to review.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

It is very important that you inform the center staff or director about changes in address and telephone numbers for yourself and your designated emergency contacts. Keeping the information current will ensure fast notification in the event of an emergency.

LOCKDOWN

In the event that an unsafe situation occurs on or near the premises of the schools in which we are located, Kids Co. will follow the guidance of the school and law enforcement officials to institute a lockdown of the facility. In the event that children are outside on the playground when an unsafe situation occurs, we will bring all children inside immediately and lock the doors. A semi-lock down is sometimes advised in which we keep all children on-site and lock the doors. A full lockdown means that in addition, we will turn off the lights, pull down shades or curtains to shield windows and keep the children sitting in a group together with staff until notified by police that it is safe and the situation is no longer a threat. Staff may not be able to answer calls to the center during this time, as phone lines may be needed for emergency purposes. Parents will be notified if a lockdown occurs.

DISCIPLINE/CHILD GUIDANCE POLICY

Discipline is a way of teaching children appropriate forms of behavior. **It is not punishment.** It is not enough to tell children what behaviors we find inappropriate, we must also teach them acceptable ways of handling difficult situations. There are many ways we attempt to accomplish this.

Prevention through careful planning is the best approach to discipline. Establishing a warm and loving relationship with the children can eliminate negative behavior through positive means. This is accomplished by:

1. Creating a warm and loving atmosphere.
2. Using prevention techniques (e.g. careful planning of activities and the environment, adhering to a consistent daily routine).
3. Noticing the positive behavior of each child.
4. Offering choices to children.
5. Being a role model by dealing with situations in a calm, controlled and caring manner.

There may be times when intervention is necessary. We discuss the situation with the child on a level he can understand. We then redirect the child to a positive behavior. If the child persists in disruptive behavior we offer the choice to correct the situation or to accept the consequences of the behavior. This may involve being restricted from play for a few minutes ("quiet time").

If a problem persists over a period of time parents will be involved in developing a plan of action (stated in the Behavior Management Policy). **Children are unique in their need for discipline and every effort will be made to meet these needs through positive, respectful means.**

We look at each child as an individual with individual needs and at different developmental stages. We strive to help children develop a respect for themselves and for others by seeing them as **worthy human beings** and dealing with them sincerely. We set up our environment to minimize stress, to promote trust and cooperation and we constantly model the positive types of behaviors we are trying to teach.

Although we try to review each situation on its own merits, we believe that consistency of discipline measures is more effective and in the best interest of each child. Therefore, as part of our child guidance policy, please be advised that if your child is suspended or expelled from school, she will not be allowed to attend Kids Co. during that time as well.

Biting is another behavior issue that should be addressed. Although biting is not common beyond the toddler stage, it can happen for various reasons in children preschool age and older. As stated above, every consideration is taken to help children manage their own behavior. If biting becomes a behavior choice for a child, in an effort to help the child doing the biting and to protect the other children from being bitten, when a child bites 2 or more times in a day, the parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified and asked to take their child home for the remainder of the day. It is very important that each child understand that biting is a very serious action and it is not acceptable at Kids Co. A biting pattern that cannot be broken may result in a longer than one day suspension up to termination of enrollment.

Under no circumstances will corporal punishment, ridicule or name-calling be used as forms of discipline. Additionally we prohibit: aversive stimuli, withholding nutrition or hydration, inflicting physical or psychological pain, forced physical exercise to eliminate behaviors, punitive work, punishment by peers, and group punishment for individual behavior.

Physical Restraint: We are committed to preventing situations where the use of physical restraint is necessary, and we will do everything possible to de-escalate the situation, including but not limited to: using a soothing quiet voice, moving away from the child, removing the child from the situation and validating the child's feelings. In most cases, physical restraint is not needed; however as a last resort it may be used when a child poses a threat to him/herself or the safety of others. Parents will be notified immediately in the event that physical restraint was necessary. Repeated behaviors where restraint is needed will not be tolerated.

Additionally, in an effort to keep all of our children safe while in our care and to eliminate as much possibility for accidental harm or injury, Kids Co. is a "drug and weapon free" program. We have a policy of **NO TOLERANCE for threatening language, illegal substances, weapons or toy weapons on Kids Co. premises or while participating in any Kids Co. activity on or off-site.** If such an item is found on your child or in your child's belongings, he will be removed from the group and you will be called immediately to take your child home for the remainder of the day. Your child will also be suspended from attendance at Kids Co. for one additional day. Failure to comply with this policy may result in your child's enrollment being terminated.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Purpose: This policy establishes a program of progressive steps to assist Kids Co. staff and parents as they guide children in overcoming negative behavior issues. **The successful implementation of this policy depends upon the cooperation between parents, child and center staff.**

Step One: The teacher or director will inform the parents of the child's inappropriate behavior. They will also document what the child did, what was said to the parent and what decision was made based on the interaction. Hopefully the behavior will cease or improve at this step.

Step Two: If the child's inappropriate behavior continues beyond step one, the staff will continue to document the situations and a third party observer will be brought in for the express purpose of observing the environment to give feedback aimed at environmental changes. The director will also arrange a meeting with herself and the parent(s). In this meeting a contract will be drawn up by the parent(s) and director explicitly stating required behavior changes and target dates. The contract may include evaluation of the child by a third party to help pinpoint the child's needs as well as identify possible resources for assistance. The observation of the child requires parent permission. The child will be brought in only after staff and parent(s) meet and reach an agreement. **All parties will be required to sign this. If this contract is developed for a child that is unable to read and/or write, the director and parent(s) will go over the expectations with the child in lieu of having the child sign it.**

This will be a team effort to turn the behavior around and to give appropriate and helpful structure to the child.

Step Three: After every effort has been made to work with the parent(s), child, any third party observers, etc. and behavior modification does not occur in the time frame defined in the contract, enrollment will be terminated. Depending on the behavior we are attempting to change, as little as one week's notice may be given. If the child's behavior is dangerous to himself and/or others immediate dismissal will be required.

****Please note that Kids Co. reserves the right to discontinue enrollment without engaging the Behavior Management Policy.***

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

We believe that parents provide the most important influence in a child's life. The more involved parents are in our program and the more frequent the communication between parents and teachers, the greater will be the child's opportunity for development. Our first step is to have parents attend an orientation/open house in the Fall of each year. **We encourage all parents and children to attend an orientation/tour.** At the orientation or tour families can learn about our facility, visit and meet the classroom teachers, discuss expectations, hear about available resources, get access to an interpreter if needed, and review enrollment documents.

Our teachers are available throughout the year via email, telephone, and in person conferences. We will make every effort to work with family schedules and teacher schedules to allow for scheduled parent teacher conferences (where applicable, two or more times per year) particularly for our preschool and early learning program participants. Parents will receive individual feedback verbally about their child as well as progress reports, portfolios or other assessment reports.

We have found that parents/guardians who spend time in the program strengthen the relationship between the families and the staff at Kids Co.. This also sends a very positive message of caring and support to your child. Please arrange volunteer time in advance with your Program director. All regular volunteers must complete a Washington State Patrol and Dept. of Early Learning Background Check.

Parent/Guardian Conduct: While we encourage and enjoy parents/guardians to spend time in their child's program, we also have an expectation that all adults and children in the center abide by the center rules and guidelines. We ask that parents/guardians of the children in our program take special care to be courteous and respectful in all of their interactions whether with children (including their own child), staff, or other parents. If there is a situation where the conduct of a parent/guardian is not consistent with the center rules or is disrespectful, the program director may ask that parent to refrain from the behavior or to leave the center. Weapons or firearms of any kind are not permitted in the center or on the grounds. In addition, there is no smoking permitted at Kids Co. or on the school grounds at any time.

If at any time a staff feels a parent/guardian is out of line or dangerous to anyone, he/she will report it immediately to the director. We ask that parents/guardian help us to make our centers a home-away-from-home; a place where children and staff feel warm and welcomed each day.

STAFF

Our directors and teachers are typically university/college educated, have an early childhood/child development background and are experienced in working with young children. They are provided with in-service workshops and training, including 1st Aid/CPR certification. All staff members meet the licensing requirements of the State of Washington, Department of Early Learning. Most important, they share a love for children and are dedicated to providing high quality care for your child. All lead staff receives STARS/MERIT (the State of Washington registry system) certification which includes 20 hours specific training plus at least 10 hours of continuing education each year.

TUITION

Evergreen Children's Association dba Kids Co. is a non-profit corporation. The fees charged to the parents are set where our income and fundraising efforts offset our monthly expenses for space, toys, operating supplies, staff and administrative costs. **The cost of our program does not vary with individual daily absences, illness, holidays or vacations so we do not make tuition adjustments.** Tuition is evaluated annually and parents will be given at least 30 days notice of tuition changes.

Our Tax ID # 91-1450148

Tuition rates vary by center and time slot. Please see your tuition rate sheet for rates that apply to your center.

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month. If payment is not received by the 1st of the month, a \$25.00 late fee will be charged to your account. If fees are not paid in full by the 10th of the month, your child's enrollment will be suspended beginning the 15th and your child will not be permitted to attend. **There is a \$25.00 NSF fee** for checks that do not clear. Failure to pay in full by the end of the month **may result in termination of enrollment.** Finance charges of 1% per month, 12% per annum will be applied to past due balances.

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT): Payment by EFT is available as an option for paying child care tuition and fees. For families who elect to pay their tuition via EFT, the transaction will be made on the 10th of the month tuition is due. If the 10th falls on a weekend, the transfer will be made the next business day. For failed transactions, Kids Co. will charge a **\$25 processing fee** in addition to charging your Kids Co. account a late payment fee.

All families that have difficulty keeping their account current will be required to pay their bill via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) or may be asked to provide a deposit of a higher amount to keep in file. Payment agreements can be made, see the program director for the appropriate form.

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

WE ACCEPT HSD (City of Seattle) and DSHS (Washington State) CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES. Please ask the director for information about these programs.

In addition, Kids Co. offers a **Schedule B reduced tuition rate** to those families that qualify. Please refer to your tuition rate sheet and income guidelines for further qualifying information. We also offer **Special Case Subsidies** for those that may have extenuating circumstances that require tuition assistance beyond the Schedule B or other subsidy programs can accommodate. Please ask your center director for an application or see our website for more information. Special Case Subsidies are granted on a limited basis for families with compelling need for tuition assistance. Our ability to offer scholarships may change from year to year. A fully completed application is required. Recipients may be asked to participate in an evaluation process that may consist of a written or telephone survey or interview. In our effort to provide tuition assistance to as many families that need it, 100% scholarships for tuition are not available.

Scholarships that are not renewed on time or incomplete will be subject to the regular tuition charges and may mean the family is no longer eligible to receive assistance. Families will be asked to utilize other subsidy and scholarship options prior to receiving Special Case Subsidy from Kids Co.

SUMMER PROGRAM

During the **summer**, Kids Co. offers a wide range of activities including field trips, arts and crafts, sports, games, science activities, etc. A summer brochure will be available in late winter/early spring explaining the summer program more thoroughly. The summer program for school-age children will be based on a weekly fee (fees, schedules, and activities will be addressed in the summer brochure).

FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION POLICY/EXPECTATIONS

Our field trip transportation policy is to utilize public transportation when feasible, and to coordinate the use of private vehicles driven by parent volunteers (only very rarely and with appropriate seat belts/restraints, valid driver's license and adequate auto insurance) when public transportation is not possible. For some trips, school district buses are used. Field trip attendance lists and staff to child ratios will be strictly followed. Parents will be informed of field trip dates, times, and locations in advance. Children will be expected to follow all safety rules of the field trip venue and transportation. Children who are not able to follow directions or follow safety rules may be asked to stay behind and parents may need to find alternate care for that day.

CONCERNS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

Kids Co. welcomes any and all suggestions for improvement. If you have specific concerns please direct any concerns first with your child's teacher. We ask that these types of conversations do not occur in the classrooms and in front of the children. If you feel your concern has not been addressed or you would like to contact a supervisor, talk to the director or assistant director at the center. If you have feedback you would like to share with our administrative leadership, contact the Director of Programs at the Kids Co. Administrative Office at 206-781-8062 ext. 25. You can make a complaint or grievance without fear of retaliation or interference. You will receive timely notification of the resolution and an explanation of any further appeal, rights or recourse.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. I want to enroll my child for 3 days a week. Can the days vary each week?

A. No. You must choose the same 3 days each week for your child to attend. This is the only way we can staff appropriately and make sure we are within state guidelines for staff to child ratios.

Q. There are several days when the Seattle Public Schools close for in-service training. Will you provide care on those days?

A. Yes. We do our best to provide all-day care on those days for all the children enrolled in our programs. The only reason care may not be available is if we have difficulty getting the proper amount of staff to provide quality care. Your director will let you know the number of children that can be served on school closure days. Children enrolled in our programs will be charged for care provided beyond their regular time slots. Please see the EXTRA HOURS portion of your Tuition Rate Sheet for details (in the left-hand side of your packet).

Q. After school I only need care from 3 to 5 PM. Can I get a break in tuition?

A. No. Our fees are based upon time slots due to staffing and budget concerns. Your child will always have care available until 6:00 PM even though you normally pick her up earlier.

Q. Does Kids Co. provide child care during Winter Break and Spring Break when the public schools are closed?

A. Most of our centers remain open year round and we continue to provide care during most public school breaks/closures. At certain centers it depends on the needs of the families. Depending on the situation, we may be required to pay the Seattle School District (our landlords) extra money to remain open and it is sometimes not financially feasible for us to do that. Please check with your director regarding your location. During these times enrolled families will be billed for extra hours of care used beyond their regular time slot. Drop-in hours for not regularly enrolled children are available as well. Please refer to the Tuition Rate Sheet for details.

Q. What if Kids Co. is closed on a day my child is normally scheduled to attend? Can I switch days that week?

A. No. You must keep the same schedule each week because of our staffing and licensing requirements. All closures are clearly stated in this handbook. Please plan ahead of time and be aware that you will not have care available that day and that you will not be able to switch and use another day.

Q. What if the weather report is for snow and bad weather? How will I know if my center will provide care on those days?

A. Our policy is to announce all closures, delays and limited service availability on our website and center voicemail. You can find out if your school is closed by going to www.schoolreport.org. We will update our voicemail, Facebook page and website regularly, so please check back frequently for the latest information.

Q. I have a flexible work schedule and may need to change my child's schedule weekly. Can I do that?

A. No. To change your child's schedule you must give written notice by the 1st of the month prior to the change (forms are available from the director). This allows us to continuously provide all our families with uninterrupted quality care. We cannot change schedules weekly.

Q. What if I have to withdraw my child from the program and cannot give the center 30 days notice? Will I lose my deposit?

A. You must give a 30-day written notice of withdrawal (forms are available from the director). Once that notice is received and the tuition is calculated for 30 days from that date, your deposit will be applied to the balance due. If adequate notice is not received, tuition will accrue for 30 days from the last day your child was in attendance and you will also forfeit your deposit.

Q. What if we don't plan on using child care during Winter and/or Spring breaks, can we get credit for these hours?

A. Expenses, including salaries, need to be paid whether your child chooses to attend during these times or not. No credit will be given for absences.

If you have any additional questions about our programs, policies, etc., please contact the director at your center.

**THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING KIDS CO. AS YOUR CHILD CARE PROVIDER!
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS IN SCHOOL AND IN LIFE.**

