



# FAMILY HANDBOOK 2025-2026

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## Welcome

We are happy you are here! Southern Kennebec Child Development Corporation (SKCDC) is a non-profit agency governed by a fifteen-member Board of Directors. The agency operates Head Start, Early Head Start, and Child Care programs in licensed facilities in southern Kennebec County, sponsors family child care providers for participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and is an authorized Car Seat Distribution Center.

*Our mission is to improve lives and opportunities for children and families.*

We recognize that children's support systems are unique and varied. Throughout this handbook, we will refer to both parents and legal guardians as "family".

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with some basic information about SKCDC services, activities, policies and procedures. Please contact staff if you have questions or would like additional information.

## Statement of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

You belong at SKCDC.

At SKCDC, our mission is to improve lives and opportunities for children and families. In order to achieve that, we strive every day to make diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) a part of everything we do.

We work to create comfortable, safe, and joyful environments, which welcome children, families, staff and community partners.

At SKCDC, we recognize the individuals who contribute to our dynamic culture and strive to ensure diversity is celebrated, inclusion is nurtured and everyone feels a sense of belonging.

We work collectively with others who are committed to DEI in our community.

SKCDC is committed to engaging in a journey of ongoing work, learning opportunities and advocacy in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

# SKCDC Early Care and Education Programs Options

## Head Start

Head Start serves children ages 3-5 years. The hours and number of days vary by program option. Head Start's approach strengthens children's school readiness in partnership with families. There is no fee for Head Start services.

## Public Preschool Partnerships

Partnerships between SKCDC Head Start and public-school systems offer developmentally appropriate preschool programs for children and families. Preschool partnerships follow the public-school calendar. Transportation is provided by the public school. Children must be 4 years old by October 15<sup>th</sup>.

## Early Head Start - Center Based

Early Head Start Center Based programming serves infants and toddlers ages 6 weeks – 3 years old and operates 6 hours per day, five days per week for 48 weeks per year. There is no fee for Early Head Start Services.

## Expectant Family Program

The expectant family program is for families who are pregnant and anticipating the need for Child Care or Early Head Start services after the baby is born. The 50-week program (year-round) provides prenatal home visiting services and a postpartum nurse visit.

## Home-based - Early Head Start and Head Start

The Home-based program offers services for children birth - 5 years old, through weekly home visits and monthly Family Socializations for families and their children. Early Head Start Home-based (ages 0-3) and Head Start Home-based (ages 3-5) operate 50 weeks per year.

## Child Care

Full day year-round child care services for infants, toddlers and preschoolers are available at one center in Augusta and in Gardiner. Families, based on their eligibility, utilize DHHS child care vouchers, ASPIRE, the Child Care Affordability Program (CCAP) or pay the full private fee for child care services. Some free services are available.

## SKCDC Early Care and Education Programs

**AUGUSTA**                    Webster: Head Start Preschool and Extended Day Classrooms  
Children 3 to 5 years old

Magic Years: Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start  
Year-Round Child Care available  
Children 6 weeks to 5 years old

**CHELSEA**                    Public Preschool Partnership  
Children 4 years old by Oct. 15

**GARDINER\***                Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start  
Year-Round Child Care available  
Children 6 weeks to 5 years old

\*SKCDC's **HOME-BASED program** welcomes expectant parents and children ages birth to 5 years old from all communities in southern Kennebec County. Monthly Family Socializations occur at the Gardiner center.

Head Start classrooms serve up to 15 children, and Early Head Start up to 8 children. Hours of operation vary by location. You can learn more about each site, including locations and phone numbers, on our website: [www.skcdc.org](http://www.skcdc.org).

Call 582-3110 or email [info@skcdc.org](mailto:info@skcdc.org) for more information.

## People to Know

**MANAGERS** support families and staff around individualized supports as needed  
**CENTER SUPERVISORS** support the center as a whole, providing guidance and support to all staff and families

**FAMILY SERVICE COORDINATORS** partner with families to identify and work toward hopes and goals, connecting them with community resources and advocacy opportunities

**LEAD TEACHERS & ASSISTANT TEACHERS** work together to build a supportive nurturing learning environment, plan classroom activities, and support children's learning and development in partnership with families

**HOME VISITORS** partner with families through the home-based program, providing support to families and their children in education and family well-being

**COOKS & CUSTODIANS** provide nutritious meals and activities for children, and ensure a safe and clean environment

## SKCDC Management

If you have a question about any policy or need more information, please speak to the staff at the center or the Home Visitor. Families are also welcome to call a Manager or Director for assistance.

### **Agency Director**

Cristina Salois 582-3110 ext. 101

### **Operations Director**

Sue Sidelinger 582-3110 ext. 103

### **Finance Director**

Clay Hoffman 582-3110 ext. 102

### **Human Resources Director**

Stephanie Boynton 582-3110 ext. 116

### **Project Director**

Debbie Vinci-Hall 582-3110 ext. 105

### **Early Childhood Program Manager – Gardiner & Webster**

Annette Camden 582-3110 ext. 110

### **Early Childhood Program Manager - Magic Years & Chelsea PreK**

Marilee Page 582-3110 ext. 108

### **Inclusion Manager**

Mudiwa Muposta-Giroux  
582-3110 ext. 107

### **Family/Community Services Manager**

Crystal Connors 582-3110 ext. 113

### **ERSEA (Enrollment) Manager**

Michaela Stone 582-3110 ext. 111

### **Health/Nutrition Manager**

TBA 582-3110 ext. 109

### **Information Systems Manager**

Owen Aaron 582-3110 ext. 106

### **Quality Assurance and Data Manager**

Vonnie Coron 582-3110 ext. 114

## Family Engagement

Families are the “forever” people in a child’s life. Families and staff are partners in the child’s learning process. Families are valued as their child’s first and primary educator. SKCDC supports family engagement in:

- Active participation in the process of goal development for their child.
- Sharing information about their child, family, culture, beliefs, traditions and values.
- Sharing the families’ talents and interests.
- Participation in ongoing formal and informal communication with the staff.
- For Home-based participating in 90-minute weekly Home Visits, regularly scheduled Discovery Days and Community Events.
- Ensuring their child’s regular attendance.

One way we help our staff and families communicate throughout the day is by using a tool called Remind. Remind is a simple but secure mobile app that allows our teachers to send text messages, pictures, and videos of your child’s activities throughout the day. The best part is that this communication can turn into collaboration, allowing families a simple way to contact their child’s teacher directly with questions or comments! If you would like more information on Remind please ask your child’s Teacher.

## Volunteers

Donations of time and materials benefit the whole program and are an essential part of the overall program budget. In kind contributions from families and the community are always welcome, such as participation on committees, supporting a lending library or toy/clothing exchange, helping to interview when new staff are hired, participating in group socializations, and much more.

## Family Support Services

The program works to build partnerships with families. Assistance to families is offered through support, information, and advocacy. Staff support and encourage families in their role as nurturer, teacher, and advocate. Families are given the opportunity to work with staff to develop goals through an assessment and partnership process. This helps families to identify strengths and goals, address challenges and concerns, and work to achieve goals. Staff offer resources and referrals. All families can participate in this process.

## Whole Family Approach

SKCDC implements the *Whole Family Approach* across the Agency. Whole family, or two-generation (2Gen), approaches build family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives together. The approach recognizes that families come in all different shapes and sizes and that families define themselves. <https://wholefamilyguide.org/what-is-whole-family/>

## Parent Powered

Parents and caregivers are an important part of the learning team. To make that role a little easier, we have partnered with Parent Powered. Each week they will send you three short text messages. The messages will give you easy ways to connect with your child and support their learning. You will also receive 1-2 messages per week with information on community resources to support you and your family. Every message is aligned to your child's age or grade. And each tip is built around everyday routines. No supplies needed, just the people, places, and things around you! This is a free text messaging service that you will be automatically enrolled in, and you are able to opt out at any time.

## Community Connections

Throughout the year, SKCDC collaborates with individuals and organizations. Some examples include: visits from local librarians, firefighters or policeman, and presentations by area artists and musicians.

## Policy Council

The Policy Council is the decision-making group for SKCDC Head Start and Early Head Start and is comprised of families and community representatives. Families are elected to the Policy Council in October by the families at their center or Home-based family group/committee. The Policy Council is a link between the family committees, public/private organizations, Board of Directors and the community. The Policy Council is involved in all major decisions about the operation of the program including planning programs and budgets, hiring staff, and evaluating the program. Additionally, the Policy Council elect individuals from its membership to serve on the SKCDC Board of Directors.

All families are welcome and encouraged to attend center/program meetings, Policy Council and Board of Directors meetings.

## Attendance

Children learn best when they attend on a regular basis. The specific hours and days your child attends are determined at the time of enrollment. **For all children, research shows that regular attendance is vital for positive school readiness outcomes.**

If your child is going to be absent on a day he/she is normally scheduled to attend, please call to inform the center/home visitor as early as possible. If we do not hear from families regarding absences, we will call the family on the same day to check in. The

Head Start program requires us to make a home visit if we are unable to contact you. We are here to help.

## Transportation

Families are responsible for transporting children to and from programs. We assist families in accessing community-based transportation services and financial supports. Transportation stipends are available for eligible families.

\*In the Home-based Program, home visitors are available to assist with transportation to and from Discovery Days and Community Events, as well as on an individual basis in some circumstances.

***\*In Public Preschool Partnership locations, transportation is provided by the school district, in accordance with the district policies.***

To ensure the safety of children - when transporting children to or from school, we request that no vehicles be left running and that children are not left unattended in vehicles. Please let us know if you need assistance at drop off or pick up time.

The Maine Child Safety Seat law requires that all children up to 8 years of age and 80 lbs. ride in approved car seats or booster seats when riding in a car. The law also mandates that children under the age of 12 weighing less than 100 pounds be in the back seat of the vehicle. We will ensure that families receive information on available resources for car seats/booster seats.

Children with identified disabilities, may be eligible for transportation to and from school. Transportation reimbursement may also be available through Child Development Services or Maine Care.

## Calendar and Snow Days

In snowy weather, child care remains open, except in extreme emergencies.

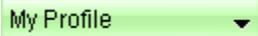
Head Start programs may close on storm days and home visits may need to be rescheduled. Watch WCSH6 or call the SKCDC main office at 582-3110 for storm closures. You can also access the text alert service at [www.wcsh6.com](http://www.wcsh6.com) for texts to be automatically sent to your phone about school closing.

When a family enrolls with SKCDC, the primary family is automatically signed up for phone, text and/or email alerts about school closings from One Call Now. If the family wishes to add phone numbers or email addresses, they need to go to the One Call Now Self-Service Portal on the website: [www.mycallnow.com](http://www.mycallnow.com). First time users will need to

click on the "signup" button. Once signed up you will be able to log in and



contact info,  for the class your child is enrolled in, and update



If a family does **NOT** want to receive alerts from One Call Now, they can go to the website [www.onecallnow.com/opt-out](http://www.onecallnow.com/opt-out) and submit the form or call 1-877-698-3262, option 5 and follow the prompts. The staff can help, if needed.

All programs are closed for State and Federal holidays and for required Staff Professional Development Days. **Public Preschool Partnerships please review your school's calendar for details and additional closed days.** SKCDC programs are closed for the following:

### Closed Weeks

June 30-July 4, 2025  
December 22-26, 2025

### Holidays

September 1: Labor Day  
October 14: Indigenous Peoples' Day  
November 11: Veterans Day  
November 27: Thanksgiving Day  
November 28: Thanksgiving (Friday)  
December 25: Christmas  
January 1 and 2: New Year's Day and day after  
January 19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
February 16: Presidents Day  
April 20: Patriots Day  
May 25: Memorial Day  
June 19: Juneteenth  
July 4: Independence Day

### SKCDC Professional Development Days

All SKCDC programs are closed for staff professional development days in August, October, January, and April. Dates to be announced.

## Emergency Procedures

If your child is injured or sick at school, we will contact you at home, at work, or use the emergency contact person(s) the parent or legal guardian has identified on the Emergency Contact Information form. Staff will provide immediate first aid. In emergency situations, we will contact EMS via 911.

Please keep us updated with current phone numbers for use in emergencies.

## Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted monthly in each classroom using varying days and times. All children and adults present participate. Each classroom has at least two exits and staff practice using different exits during drills.

## Building Evacuations

***\*Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.***

Emergency Evacuation Floor Plans and the Classroom Emergency Response Aid which contains emergency phone numbers are posted in each room utilized by children with two (2) means of exiting identified by Route #1 and Route #2. In and Out of Neighborhood evacuations are practiced during the program year.

In the case of an emergency evacuation, we will notify the family where to go. A parent or legal guardian (or a person listed on the Emergency Contact Information form) must pick the child up at the reunification site. Individual site evacuation plans are discussed and reviewed with the family during enrollment. The parent or legal guardian will report to the assigned reunification site and give the name of their child. The person picking the child up must present a picture ID to ensure the person requesting the child matches the name on the Emergency Contact Information form. Staff will bring the child to that person.

To ensure security and proper evacuations of facilities during an emergency, all visitors are required to sign the volunteer/consultant Sign in/Sign out sheet. Staff consistently monitors people entering or leaving our sites.

## Safety

### Releasing Children and Late Pick-Up Policy

***\*Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.***

Staff will not let a child leave the center with anyone unless the parent or legal guardian has given the program permission in writing. A photo ID of the person authorized to pick up the child may be required before staff release a child.

Staff will not accept children before the center opens in the morning. A parent or legal guardian or approved person must sign their child in, and stay with the child until s/he is safely in the classroom and the child's teacher or other classroom staff has been informed that they are there.

Children must be picked up by a parent or legal guardian, or approved person by the established closing time. If that person is late, they and the center staff will be required to write the pickup time and initial the Child Sign In/Out sheet, acknowledging they are picking up past the closing time. If the staff has not heard from a parent or legal

guardian or approved person at the time of closing, they will contact that person at that time. If there is no response, the staff will contact all persons on the emergency pickup list. If there is no response from anyone after 30 minutes, the staff will notify the Police Department that the parent or legal guardian or approved person are unreachable.

If a parent or legal guardian or approved person is late in picking up the child more than once, the family will be offered case management, and a goal with action steps will be developed to ensure the child is picked up on time every day.

If a family is unable to comply with the program opening and closing schedule and/or they do not meet the action steps and goals previously developed, they will be offered another program option that better meets their needs, pending availability.

### **Pedestrian Safety**

Pedestrian Safety education materials are provided to all families. The staff plans opportunities for children to practice pedestrian safety throughout the year.

### **Smoking**

SKCDC's centers, Pre-K Partnership sites, playgrounds and vehicles are tobacco free zones. Smoking is not allowed during home visits. We require that all home visits be smoke free to provide children, families and staff a healthy learning environment.

Every effort is made to reduce children's exposure to secondhand smoke.

### **Safety on Home Visits**

The family shall provide a safe environment for scheduled home visits with staff. When there are unsafe conditions in the home, such as: icy walkways, unsecured animals, unsecured weapons, threatening behavior, cigarette smoke, toxins, or other unsafe or unhealthy conditions, we will work with the family to provide home visit services in an alternative place, while working with the family to support a safe, healthy home environment.

### **Weapons**

SKCDC does not allow weapons on agency property, except by authorized law enforcement personnel. Persons in possession of a weapon (e.g., guns, knives, etc.) are prohibited from SKCDC properties. Persons determined to be in possession of a weapon will be required to leave the property.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

If there is reason to believe a child has been abused or neglected, we are required, as mandated reporters, to contact the Department of Health & Human Services, Child Protective Services.

We follow the state law in prohibiting identified sex offenders from unauthorized

presence on our properties, which by statute are defined as “sex offender restricted zones.” Please inform the staff of anyone in your household who is prohibited or restricted from contact with children.

We are always available to help support families who are dealing with the many challenges of raising children.

## Confidentiality

### Photo Permission

With parent or legal guardian written permission, staff is authorized to take pictures in the classrooms and at family/center events for the following purposes: portfolio samples, classroom labeling, educational projects, news articles and social media. Only a child’s first name will be used in news and social media. With permission, families may be authorized to take pictures during family/center events. **Pictures taken by families must not be posted on the internet or sent by email to any other individual.** Staff must ensure that any child for whom photo permission has not been received is excluded from all pictures taken.

### Boundaries

At SKCDC we respect the boundaries of families we serve and their right to privacy. This extends outside the classroom and into the community and the world of social media. Employees are expected to avoid sending or accepting requests to/or from families on social media.

### Records

We keep a record of services received by parent or legal guardian and their child. A parent or legal guardian may arrange to see these records at any time. Records are not sent to public schools or any other agency without written consent from the parent or legal guardian. We make every effort to share information and to provide opportunities for involvement with both biological families. SKCDC adheres to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Acts regarding confidentiality of client records. In circumstances involving children’s safety, personal identifying information on a parent or legal guardian, may be required to be released to DHHS.

It is necessary that records are kept up-to-date at all times. Please inform the staff in writing of changes in address, phone numbers, place of work, emergency numbers, new doctors or service providers, dates of immunizations, etc.

### Consultants

During the year, various consultants come into our classrooms to support children and staff. Your child’s development will not be discussed unless you provide written permission.

## Child Care Fees and Schedule

**\*Fees are due on Monday of each week and are assessed for the full week, including holidays.**

AGE	RATES
Infant Program - 6 weeks to 12 months	\$275.00 a week
Toddler Program - 12 months to 36 months	\$250.00 a week
Preschool Program - 36 months to kindergarten	\$267.00 a week

Child care fee subsidies are accepted. Subsidy participants may be required to pay a weekly fee, based on their income, as determined by the Office for Family Independence or the Office of Child & Family Services.

ASPIRE, CCAP, and TANF Transitional voucher participants who access child care in SKCDC programs must designate that their child care subsidy be paid directly to SKCDC.

Parent or legal guardian must sign a written fee agreement for services.

If 15% of the child population at any one time is diagnosed with pandemic type illness, the agency will suspend the childcare fees for up to 2 weeks for families of children who are less than 6 months of age and the parent chooses not to send their child to the program. An extension may be possible depending upon a continued 15% diagnosis.

**NOTE:** *Fees are reviewed annually and are subject to change with written notice.*

## Health and Wellness

### Serious Injury, Illness, Accident, or Emergency

In accordance to the Child Care Facility Licensing Rule, when any serious injury, illness, accident, emergency, or death occur, SKCDC management or staff will complete a Child Incident Reporting Form, which is used to notify families of incident. SKCDC is also required to notify the Department of Health and Human Services of the incident.

### Communicable Diseases

SKCDC is committed to the health, wellness and safety of the children who attend our programs. Effective procedures such as routine hand washing and regular practices of cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting prevent and reduce the spread of communicable diseases to other children, adults, and their families throughout the program and community. If your child is ill, please call the center or your home visitor to notify staff of the need for center exclusion or visit cancellation.

**\*Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.**

### **Children are temporarily excluded from the center if:**

- 1) The child's illness prevents them from participating in the daily routine of the classroom as they typically would.
- 2) Having the child participate poses an increased risk to the child, other children, or the adults with whom the child comes in contact.
- 3) The illness requires more care than the staff is able to provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children in the group.

### **When can a child return to the center/home visits after being ill?**

Staff will work to accommodate a child and family through any illness or injury for a swift return to their normal daily routines. Children may return to the program if the exclusion criteria (listed above) are resolved. Generally, children must be symptom free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications before returning to our care depending on the diagnosed illness or injury and/or a physician's recommendation. If families have questions about their child's illness and/or want to discuss if they can return to our care, they may call the Health/Nutrition Manager (phone number is at the front of the handbook).

There may be additional exclusion criteria for specific conditions as determined by specific SKCDC policies, the Maine CDC, the child's health care provider, and recommendations in Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, American Academy of Pediatrics. Note: If there is a difference between SKCDC policies and the recommendations of others, the Health/Nutrition Manager should be consulted.

## **Immunizations**

SKCDC requires a child's immunization records within 30 days of the child's first day of attendance. SKCDC has an agreement in place for access to the State of Maine Immunization system (ImmPact) to review patient immunization reports. Immunization records may be accessed or obtained for children who apply to enroll in our program or one of our collaborative programs, unless otherwise indicated by a signed refusal to access any medical records.

Immunization exemptions will only be allowed if the child has a medical reason for an exemption, as determined by their Maine-licensed physician. The exemption statement must be written and signed yearly by a family and a physician. Religious or philosophical exemptions will not be accepted, per Maine state law.

If your child is currently not immunized or is behind on immunizations, you must obtain documentation from your child's healthcare provider stating that your child is in process of becoming fully immunized before they will be allowed to participate our programs.

Many immunizations are not considered “complete” until a series of doses have been given over the course of several months to years depending on the vaccine. Your child’s healthcare provider will work with you to create an immunization “catch-up schedule” based on your child’s age and immunization status. The immunization “catch-up schedule” must include the dates of scheduled appointments on which your child is scheduled to receive required immunizations. If, for any reason, your child does not continue to obtain the necessary vaccines according to the catch-up schedule given by their provider, your child’s attendance at our programs will not be permitted until the immunization requirements are met.

**In the event of a disease outbreak:**

Children who are not vaccinated because of the exemptions noted above, or are not old enough to receive immunizations, are excluded from the program until the outbreak no longer exists or until the child receives the necessary immunization.

## Medication

**Families can request that staff give medications at the center when:**

- The dosage times cannot be adjusted to permit home administration, or
- The child has a chronic medical problem such as asthma and/or an allergy which requires emergency medications.

**For medication (prescription or non-prescription/OTC) to be given at the center:**

- The medical provider must provide documentation of the treatment/medication needed.
- The documentation must include the child’s name, name of the medication, dosage information and the length of treatment.
- The Health/Nutrition Manager has spoken with the parent or legal guardian to complete the Individual Health Plan and Authorization to Dispense Medication Forms.
- The Health/Nutrition Manager has reviewed the plan with staff and staff has been trained to administer the medication/treatment.

With the exception of Emergency Medications (i.e., Epi Pens), new medications must be given at home by the parent or legal guardian and monitored for 24 hours before the child’s entry is permitted.

**NOTE:** For the health and safety of the child, the child will be excluded until all the above criteria are met.

***\*To ensure the integrity of non-prescription medications, SKCDC will purchase all non-prescription medications.***

***\*In the Home-based Program, parents or legal guardians will be responsible to***

*administer medication or treatments to their own child if necessary.*

*\*Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.*

## Transportation of Medication

All medication must be transported by the parent or legal guardian and documented as “accepted” by SKCDC staff in the “Daily Medication Procurement Log” at drop-off. For the health and safety of children, medications will not be transported by children in their backpacks. When children are transported by someone other than the parent or legal guardian, parents or legal guardians are responsible to bring the medication to and from the center or make appropriate arrangements with the transporter to safely transport the medication.

*\*Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.*

## Sunscreen, Insect Repellent, and Diaper Cream Policy

SKCDC will apply the following non-prescription topical preparations to children with the permission of the parent or legal guardian.

- **Diaper Rash Cream/Ointment**: Desitin - supplied by SKCDC.
- **Insect Repellent**: 30% DEET, for children ages 12 months and older - supplied by SKCDC.
- **Sunscreen Lotion**: Hypoallergenic, fragrance-free, SPF 30 or higher, for children ages 6 months and older - supplied by SKCDC.

\*In the Home-based Program, non-prescription topical preparations are provided for families to apply on their children.

\*If a child cannot use products provided by SKCDC due to allergic reaction and/or parental or legal guardian preference, **a note from a medical provider will be needed**. The Health/Nutrition Manager will meet with the parent or legal guardian to complete the Individual Health Plan.

## Sun Safety Policy

SKCDC has “Sun Safety” practices in place to protect your child from excessive sun exposure. SKCDC provides Sunscreen Lotion SPF 30 for children over 6 months of age who have a signed general permission form from a parent or legal guardian. If your child requires a different brand of sunscreen due skin sensitivity, a doctor’s note is required.

If your child is under 6 months of age, you must consult with your physician regarding the use of sunscreen and provide written physician permission on the

type of sunscreen that can be used for your infant.

Children are allowed and encouraged to wear hats and/or sunglasses during outside activities.

## **Insect-Borne Disease Safety**

SKCDC recognizes there is a risk of exposure to insect-borne disease in central Maine. Insect repellants help prevent the spread of diseases by keeping mosquitoes and ticks away.

To reduce the risk of insect-borne disease, the following methods are implemented:

Written parental/guardian permission is obtained at enrollment and updated annually to allow staff to apply repellant to children's exposed skin.

Repellants should be washed off with soap and water at home at the end of the day. Children are encouraged to wear shoes, socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time. Wearing light colored clothing increases the likelihood that ticks will be spotted. Staff visually scans children's clothing and skin after being outdoors for the presence of ticks.

There are many types of insect repellants available. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends the use of a repellant that contains 30% DEET on children 12 months of age and older. The concentration of DEET varies from product to product. Products with more than 30% DEET are not recommended for children. Please discuss any questions with your Primary Care Provider.

## **Diapering Policy**

Many children in program settings are not toilet trained and diaper changing is necessary. SKCDC will purchase and provide the same diapers the parent or legal guardian uses at home for use at the centers. Staff receive training in techniques to reduce the spread of germs when handling any body fluids or items contaminated with body fluids, as well as training in SKCDC's Diapering Procedure. Diaper changing guidelines are posted in all changing areas at programs. Parents or legal guardians of infants and toddlers are given daily updates regarding diaper changes and any concerns that may arise. Older toddlers and preschool children are supported through the process of toilet learning. Staff is available to offer support and strategies to families as well. Please feel free to discuss your questions and concerns with staff.

## **Meal Times**

Children in full day programs receive breakfast, lunch, and a snack. Children in part day programs receive breakfast and lunch. Families who attend Home-based Discovery Days and Community Events are provided a snack or lunch. Infants are fed on demand. Breastfeeding is supported as the most appropriate first food for infants. Formula fed infants are fed the same formula at Early Head Start as the parent or legal guardian is feeding the child at home. Staff and the parent or legal guardian work together to plan individual infant feeding schedules and to introduce new foods.

When age appropriate, meals are served family style. Children learn to serve themselves and to pour their own milk. They are encouraged to try new foods and to help with food preparation as part of the curriculum.

To protect children, families, and staff from food-borne illnesses, SKCDC has a practice of "No Food In and No Food Out". We do not allow food to be brought into the center and/or leftover meals to leave the center.

Snacks for family meetings and center-sponsored activities will be provided by SKCDC.

**Free & Reduced-Price Policy:** All participants of SKCDC become enrolled in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) in which meals meet standard nutritional requirements based on age-appropriate dietary guidelines set forth by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Meals are served at no separate charge.

### Special Diets/Allergies

SKCDC's Health/Nutrition Manager is available to meet with families on request. If a child has food allergies or food sensitivities, or is on a special diet for cultural or religious reasons, the Health/Nutrition Manager will speak with the parent or legal guardian to complete a Nutrition Accommodation Plan. If a child's treating therapist recommends a feeding plan, staff will work to make those accommodations.

***\*Public Pre-K Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.***

### Oral Health Care

Tooth-brushing with fluoride toothpaste happens daily when it is appropriate and safe in the current public health setting. For infants and toddlers whose teeth have not erupted; staff wipes the child's gums daily.

### USDA Non-Discrimination Policy

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the

alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**  
[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## Maine Civil Rights Statement

The Maine Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, religion, ancestry or national origin. Complaints of discrimination must be filed at the office of the Maine Human Rights Commission, 51 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0051. If you wish to file a discrimination complaint electronically, visit the Human Rights Commission website at <https://www.maine.gov/mhrc/file/instructions> and complete an intake questionnaire. Maine is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Early Childhood Education

SKCDC believes in providing a safe, healthy, nurturing and inclusive environment that encourages young children's growth, development and school readiness skills. SKCDC's early childhood programs are designed to support each child's development in the social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts domain areas. This is accomplished through child centered experiences that recognize children learn individually, in sequence and at their own pace, and with their interests in mind. Materials and equipment are selected with considerations of the children's development and interests. Teachers refer to the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards (MELDS) and Infant Toddler MELDS when planning activities implementing curriculum for the children in their care. We believe that it is essential to meet children where they are at and partner with families as the most important educator. Family members are the "forever" people in a child's life. We are partners in the learning process.

## Rights of Children

1. Children must be free from emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. Each child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the child.
3. Each child has a right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards in this rule.
4. Each child must be provided child care services without regard to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex or family composition.
5. Children must be treated with dignity, consideration and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes the use of developmentally appropriate practices by the Child Care Facility.
6. Each child has the right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for the child in conjunction with community or state agencies by the Child Care Facility.
7. Each child has the right to developmentally appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.
8. Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to Child Care Facility policies and practices.

### **Sample Daily Schedules**

Please find below two sample daily schedules. Most daily schedules will have these components; however, times will vary classroom to classroom.

#### Preschool Daily Schedule

9:00 am Read Aloud  
9:10 am Breakfast  
9:40 am Intro to Centers  
10:50 am Tell me about it  
11:00 am Small Group/Math/Story Telling/Let's Find Out About It (LFOAI)  
11:15 am Outside  
12:00 pm Songs, Word Play, and Letters (SWPL)  
12:15 pm Lunch  
1:00 pm Departure

#### Early Head Start Daily Schedule

7-8:30 am Hellos/Free Play  
8:30-9 am Breakfast  
9-9:30 am Diapers/Bathroom  
9:30-10 am Activity/Curriculum  
10-11 am Outdoor Play  
11-11:30 am Diapers/Bathroom  
11:30-12 pm Lunch  
12-2 pm Rest Time  
2-2:30 pm Diapers/Bathroom

2:30-3 pm Snack  
3-4 pm Outdoor Play  
4-4:30 pm Diapers/Bathroom  
4:30-5 pm Free Play/Goodbyes

## Curriculum: Preschool

In Head Start classrooms, the PreK for ME curriculum is used. PreK for ME is a research-based, whole-child curriculum intended to support any preschool teacher in providing a rich, play-based, intentional curriculum that is aligned to Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards, as well as the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. When implemented with fidelity, Pre-K for ME builds social-emotional, executive function, language, literacy, math, and vocabulary skills. In addition, students' conceptual knowledge around various topics is enhanced - an important component for school success.

### The Pyramid Model

SKCDC also uses the Pyramid Model. The [Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children](#) is a positive behavioral intervention and support framework early educators can use to promote young children's social and emotional development and prevent and address challenging behaviors.

## Curriculum: Infant Toddler

SKCDC uses the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos, which emphasizes essential aspects of responsive care:

- Building a trusting relationship with each child
- Providing individualized care
- Creating environments that support and encourage exploration
- Recognizing the importance of social-emotional development
- Building a foundation for lifelong learning
- Developing partnerships with families

## Curriculum: Home-based

In the Expectant Family Program, SKCDC utilizes the Partners for a Healthy Baby: Before Baby Arrives Curriculum, which emphasizes:

- Establishing trusting nurturing relationships
- Enhancing parent or legal guardian/child interactions
- Conducting risk assessments for prenatal health and mental health
- Ensuring healthy outcomes for the mother and for the child in the early months of life

The Home-based program also uses Partners for a Healthy Baby Curriculum and the Creative Curriculum Learning Games, which assist families to plan developmentally appropriate activities for the child with an emphasis on strengthening the parent-child

relationship using daily routines and materials readily available in the home environment.

### **Program Approach: Preschool**

Each child is unique, learning in his or her own way. Activities are planned to meet the individual needs of each child. Children may choose small or large group activities or a child may also choose to do an activity alone. Young children learn best through a combination of direct instruction and self-directed exploration supported by an adult. The child development environment is set up with interest areas. Each of these areas gives the child a chance to discover new things, learn to solve problems, create wonderful artwork, make choices, and to develop a sense of competence. The Teacher visits each family in their home and schedules family conferences during the year in order to share the child's progress, develop goals with the family, suggest things families can do at home with their child, and listen to families' ideas for program activities.

Children go outside to play every day except during extreme weather. In the winter, snow pants, boots, hats, and mittens are needed. Families' are asked to please send slippers or shoes for their child to wear inside. Children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes and safe, sturdy footwear with a closed toe. Sand, water, paint and play-dough are a part of a child's play world. Families should send an extra set of clothes to be kept in their child's cubby. If at any time you need help with clothes or supplies for your family, we can help.

### **Program Approach: Infant Toddler**

The emphasis is on the individual developmental needs of each child and the provision of the utmost security, love and nurturance for each child in the program. SKCDC provides a primary caregiver model to support infant's emotional security. Each infant's eating/sleeping schedule is honored to allow for their optimal development.

In order to offer an environment in which children can explore freely, we ask that everyone remove their shoes before entering a classroom serving infants. Booties are provided outside of the classroom or stocking feet may be worn.

The consistent daily routine for toddlers helps them become familiar with and secure in their surroundings. Daily activities include group time, large motor activities, stories, a variety of creative exploration and fine motor activities, and time for free play each day. Classrooms are language rich, providing many opportunities for enhancing literacy development. Children are given assistance to identify and use appropriate strategies to work through emotions and feelings. Learning social skills is encouraged throughout the day as teachable moments present themselves. We encourage cooperative play while fostering independence and responsibility. When signs of readiness for toilet learning are shown, we provide guidance to help with proper toilet habits.

## Program Approach: Home-based

The Home-based program offers child development services through weekly home visits and monthly Family Socializations and Community Events for families and their children. The Home Visitor assists families to plan developmentally appropriate activities for their child/children with an emphasis on strengthening the family-child relationship using daily routines and materials readily available in the home environment. Families connect goals for their child's development by planning activities for the Family Socializations. Family Socializations occur monthly at a licensed facility equipped with materials to promote school readiness and parent-child interactions by utilizing the Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI) philosophy approach. Home visitors collaborate with families in providing developmentally supportive environments for their children by expanding on families' knowledge and understanding of their children. Children's development is enhanced when families recognize and act on their own important roles in supporting their children's developmental agendas. The primary role of the home visitor is to support and enhance family-child relationships.

## Outdoor Time

During outdoor time, staff must be positioned as such to be able to maintain line of sight supervision of all children at all times. Children in attendance for more than four hours and over the age of twelve months shall have a minimum of one hour of active play outdoors daily. When weather presents a risk to children, in accordance to Child Care Weather Watch and the Air Quality Index, gross motor activity will be substituted for outdoor time. When children use equipment or activities that present risk of head injury (e.g. bikes, scooters), appropriately fitted helmets must be worn. Please refer to *SKCDC Helmet Policy* for more information. Infants and toddlers spend at least 30 minutes outdoors in the morning and in the afternoon when the weather and their individualized schedules permit. Staff will work with the center team to ensure coverage is provided and children are provided the opportunity to spend time outside; i.e. sleeping children. There are no more than eight children placed on an infant/toddler playground at one time and no more than four children assigned to each caregiver. There are no more than twenty preschool aged children placed on a playground at one time.

## Rest and Relaxation Time

Each infant, toddler, and preschooler are provided with their own crib, cot or mat, as appropriate. Preschool full day classrooms have a designated rest and relaxation time. Preschoolers in full day programs who do not sleep have a rest period based on their individual needs. The daily program includes plans and activities for children who do not nap.

## Toys from Home

Children in full day programs may bring in a rest time cuddly that remains in their cubby, except during rest time.

Generally, bringing toys from home is discouraged. It can be hard for young children to share a favorite toy or treasured possession. Classrooms may have a “show and tell” time on occasion.

## School Readiness Goals

School Readiness Goals are the outcomes that have been established for the learning and development of children. These skills are what we would hope to see most children demonstrate upon their entrance into kindergarten and are skills that will support their long-term success in school. It is important to note that children grow, learn and develop at different rates and these goals *are not* intended to be a list of everything that a child must know before entering kindergarten.

Children’s growth and development is assessed throughout the year. Along with family input, this information is used to plan curriculum and develop individual goals for children. We use an observational assessment tool that allows staff and families to gather information on children’s developmental progress from six weeks to five years old. The intent of this assessment process is for Teaching staff and Home Visitors, in partnership with families, to learn where each child is developmentally, to help each child strengthen and build upon the skills that they have already acquired, and to help each child move further along the continuum of development. The staff and families look at the areas where a child is doing well and also at the areas where a child might need a little extra help. This information is used to guide instruction and support curriculum development.

## English Language Learners

SKCDC welcomes new Mainers and we are committed to partnering with community organizations to support providing services to everyone in our communities. SKCDC uses Proprio to support language interpretation services.

## Screenings

All children receive screenings within the first 45 days of their enrollment, including vision, hearing, developmental, and social emotional. Staff will discuss the results of each screening with families, and determine if next steps are needed. Families are welcomed to share their children’s strengths, and if they have any concerns with their child’s development. Staff can work to support families in completing next steps, if applicable.

## Children with Disabilities

Research overwhelmingly shows that inclusive classrooms result in greater social and academic outcomes for *all* children. To plan and provide the best possible program for children with disabilities and special health care needs, SKCDC staff work in partnership with families and with Child Development Services (CDS), Maine’s provider of early intervention and early childhood special education services. Our locations welcome CDS therapists and special educators to provide evaluations, services, and support on

site. For children who may need special education services but have not yet been identified, SKCDC staff assist families with referrals and provide guidance as needed through the evaluation process.

## Consultation

Therapists, special educators and/or other consultants may be in the classroom or home working with children and helping staff to learn new skills to support children's success. These consultants may also be available to work with family groups or individually. Please ask the Teacher, Home Visitor or Family Service Coordinator for more information.

## Animals in the Classroom

***\*Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local school district.***

SKCDC recognizes that exposure to live animals presents a wonderful learning opportunity for young children but we are also aware of the need to ensure the health and safety of children, adults and animals. We limit live animals who reside in our classrooms to fish. This allows children to observe and take some responsibility for the care of another living creature, but also recognizes that many children have health considerations that would preclude having any animals with fur or feathers as classroom pets. Additionally, reptiles, amphibians and chickens (including eggs) are known to be carriers of salmonella and are not allowed in our classrooms due to potential risk of contamination. Staff ensures that containers are kept clean and odor free and that all related tasks are completed by adults only. Close supervision is ensured at all times.

## Holidays

***\*Public Preschool Partnerships follow the policies and procedures of the local public-school district.***

Families are encouraged to share their traditions and culture within our curriculum framework throughout the year. While holiday celebrations or activities do not typically occur in the classroom, children will participate in seasonal activities such as harvest time or spring planting.

## Preschool Child Guidance Practices

SKCDC's [Child Guidance Practices](#) outlines expectations for adults relative to pre-school child guidance. Staff follow these practices for effective child behavior management. They are rooted in solid early childhood principles and are based on a model of trust and respect for the individual. SKCDC adheres to the Maine Department of Education Rule Chapter 33: Governing Physical Restraint and Seclusion. Preschool staff are trained and have been certified in "Safety Care"™ Behavioral Safety Training, per these regulations.

It is important to keep in mind that expectations of children are developmentally appropriate and approaches are individualized for each child. Staff are more likely to meet with success if they use available resources, meet often with and keep families informed through daily contact i.e., daily notes, communication logs, phone calls and personal contact. Families are also kept informed through home visits, parent or legal guardian/teacher conferences and regular discussion of goals and progress. Remember, what works with one child may not work with another, and what worked yesterday, may not work today.

Constructive Methods of Guidance include:

Establishing consistency, setting limits, positive reinforcement, positive guidance, behavior specific directives, active listening, redirection, withholding attention, choices, humor, natural consequences and taking a break. For a more detailed description of these techniques, please ask for a copy of the [Child Guidance Practices](#).

### **Infant/Toddler Guidance Practices**

Families are their child's first and primary educator. We encourage families to participate in home visits and conferences with their child's Teacher or Home Visitor, share information about their family's culture, share their talents and interests, and participate in ongoing formal and informal communication.

SKCDC's classrooms use a primary caregiver model. Each child and their family have a designated primary caregiver (Early Head Start Teacher) who will have the primary responsibility of meeting the child's and family's needs. This model enables children and their primary caregiver to establish and maintain a warm, secure relationship which promotes children's growth and development. This model further enhances our ability to form partnerships, and to develop meaningful and supportive relationships with families. For a more detailed description, please ask for a copy of the [Infant Toddler Guidance Practices](#).

### **Expulsion and Suspension Practices**

SKCDC will not expel or unenroll a child because of a child's behavior. When a child exhibits persistent and serious challenging behaviors, staff will explore all possible steps and document all steps taken to address the concerns, and then facilitate the child's safe participation in the program. We have practices in place to document ongoing behaviors in order to identify patterns and to best support children in being successful in the classroom. Families are involved in the efforts to support their child's success.

SKCDC prohibits or severely limits the use of suspension due to a child's behavior. Such suspensions may only be temporary in nature. A temporary suspension will be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.

## General Resources

### **Developmental Screening Resources:**

Child Development Services First Step: 207-795-4022; 5 Gendron Dr. Lewiston 04340

Child Development Services Midcoast: 207-594-5933; 91 Camden St., Suite 108, Rockland 04841 or PO Box 1114 Damariscotta 04543

Child Development Services PEDS: 207-877-2498; 325 E KMD, Waterville 04901

Website: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/cds>

Help Me Grow Maine: 1-833-714-7969; <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-development>

Edmund Ervin Pediatric Center: 207-623-6500; 6 E. Chestnut St., Augusta 04330

Website: <https://www.maine-general.org/locations/locations-profile/eepc/>

### **Department of Health and Human Services:**

207-624-8090; 35 Anthony Ave., 11 SHS, Augusta, ME 04330

Website: <https://www.maine.gov/portal/index.html>

### **Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services:**

207-624-7900; 2 Anthony Ave., Augusta, ME 04330

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/>

### **DHHS Child Abuse or Neglect Hotline:**

1-800-452-1999 (Deaf/Hard of Hearing Call Maine Relay 711)

### **211:**

*211 is a free, confidential information and referral service that connects people of all ages across Maine to local services. 211 Maine is based in Maine and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Specialists are trained and friendly; they know we all need help sometimes.*

Just dial 2-1-1.

### **Family Violence Project:**

1-877-890-7788; 83 Western Ave., Augusta, ME 04330

<https://www.familyviolenceproject.org/>

### **Children's Advocacy Center of Kennebec and Somerset Counties & the Sexual Assault Crisis and Support Center:**

1-800-871-7741

<http://www.silentnomore.org/>

### **Bridging the Gap: Addie's Attic:**

*Clothing and Basic Hygiene Pantry & Warming Center*

207-248-1782; 209 Eastern Ave., Augusta, ME 04330

<https://www.btgaugusta.org/>

**Maine Children's Trust**

*Maine Children's Trust works to strengthen families, promote healthy relationships, and support communities to prevent child abuse and neglect.*

207-623-5120; 56 Leighton Rd., Augusta, ME 04330

<https://mechildrenstrust.org>

**Capital Area New Mainers Project:**

*A cross-cultural organization that welcomes refugees and works to build a thriving, integrated community in central Maine.*

207-370-5246; 70 State St., Augusta, ME 04330

<https://www.newmainersproject.org>

**Healthy Communities of the Capitol Area:**

*A coalition of local people who work to improve the health and quality of life in Kennebec County*

207-588-5012; 11 Mechanic St. Suite 101, Gardiner, ME 04345

<https://hccame.org/>

**Maine Equal Justice Partners:**

*A civil legal aid and economic justice organization working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity for people in Maine*

207-626-7058; 126 Sewall St., Augusta, ME 04330

<https://maineequaljustice.org/>

**Pine Tree Legal:**

*Provides free civil legal assistance in cases where it can make a difference in one's ability to meet one's basic human needs or in enforcing one's basic human rights, including access to housing, food, income, safety, education, and healthcare.*

207-622-4731; 39 Green St. #7436, Augusta, ME 04330

<https://ptla.org/>

**The Warm Line:**

*Callers will receive support, social connection, assistance with referrals to community resources, recovery programs and an opportunity to connect with others during a time of fear, grief or sadness.*

1-866-771-9276

**Maine Crisis Hotline:**

*Helps to stabilize individuals and families while assisting in crisis resolution and action planning*

1-888-568-1112

**Poison Control Center:**

*Provides immediate treatment advice for poisonings and answer questions about poisons and prevention*

1-800-222-1222

**NAMI Maine Hotline:**

*It provides confidential support, education and advocacy for anyone with questions about mental health concerns.*

1-800-464-5767

**The Maine Tobacco Helpline:**

*When you're thinking about quitting, just call.*

1-800-207-1230

**Alcoholics Anonymous (AA):**

1-800-737-6237

[csoaamaine.org](http://csoaamaine.org)

**Narcotics Anonymous (NA):**

1-833-436-6166

[www.namaine.org](http://www.namaine.org)

**Statewide Al-Anon:**

1-800-498-1844

[www.maineafg.org](http://www.maineafg.org)

\*For more support with whatever you need, for example including accessing your local general assistance office or food pantry, please reach out to your Teacher or Family Services Coordinator (FSC) so we can help connect you with a resource.

# Follow Us on Facebook!



Scan the QR code to like and follow our Facebook page and stay up to date with all that is happening at SKCDC!

