



# Executive Child Development Center

at HHS/ED Children's Center  
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## *Family Handbook*

***ECDC's Family Handbook***  
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We are pleased to have you join us and hope that you and your child will have an enjoyable learning experience during your stay at HHS/ED. This handbook describes certain policies pertinent to your enrollment with Executive Child Development Center at HHS/ED Children’s Center in conjunction with the most recent Enrollment Agreement and Health and Safety Manual. The policies contained herein supersede all previous manuals.

If you have any questions, please ask the Director.

### ***Mission Statement***

ECDC provides quality child care and education to children of diverse economic and ethnic backgrounds from infancy through preschool. ECDC’s multi-cultural environment cultivates a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to meeting the needs of our families. In the broader community, ECDC seeks opportunities to advocate for the well-being of all children.

### ***Philosophy***

ECDC has been founded on the premise that each child, regardless of circumstance, claims the world as their own. Respect, positive regard, and learning opportunities are cornerstones for healthy and happy families.

ECDC strives to provide a “community of inquiry” where children and adults are continually translating experience into meaning.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Active exploration is essential to learning.
- Learning is a social endeavor, an exchange of ideas which results in deeper conceptual understanding.

- Foundational skills and achievable challenges create the stepping stones to future learning.
- Learning strategies must be developmentally appropriate, individualized, and personally meaningful.
- A positive and secure environment opens the door to true learning.

### **Program Goals/Outcomes**

- Creating a safe, secure “neighborhood” community for all families.
- Preparing children for future academic success.
- Motivating and supporting staff to continue their progress towards excellence through continued education.
- Allowing children opportunities to fully participate in group settings while expressing their own unique individuality.
- Respecting and nurturing families in their efforts to raise caring and contributing members of society.
- Enjoying each other in our respective roles.

<h3><b><i>Description of the Program</i></b></h3>
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HHS/ED serves Health and Human Services employees, Department of Education employees and federal employees. Executive Child Development Center (ECDC) is currently serving the Center as its child care provider.

ECDC is a non-profit, parent corporation providing child care for Health and Human Services, Department of Education, Department of State, and the National Institutes of Health employees. Our child care corporation has been operating since 1975. We have contracted with the Board of Directors at HHS/ED Children’s Center since 2009. The

Center is licensed by Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) in the District of Columbia and accredited by NAEYC.

### **Children**

HHS/ED serves approximately 76 children of diverse economic and ethnic backgrounds ages six weeks through five years.

The children at HHS/ED benefit socially and intellectually from being in a multi-cultural environment which allows them to learn respect and appreciation for people of different countries and backgrounds.

### **Staff**

ECDC is known for its highly qualified personnel. Our policy is to employ teachers of mixed ethnic backgrounds, and to provide children with a balance of both male and female teachers. All staff must submit and be found suitable for work with children by GSA's Personnel Security Division (DSP).

Education is a priority at HHS/ED Children's Center for all ages. In order to maintain quality personnel, ECDC offers education scholarships to staff members to further their knowledge and expertise.

### **Assessments and Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Assessment is an integral part of any quality program for the purposes of identifying children's needs and interests, and for improving curriculum, teaching practices, environment, and family involvement.

In an effort to demonstrate children's growth, all children will receive a developmental screening within three months of enrollment at HHS/ED. Ages and Stages Questionnaires,

which is a nationally-recognized, normative based instrument designed to be used by caregivers will be used. All results will be shared with parents/guardians. Ongoing informal assessments including observations, checklists, rating scales, and work samples will be collected and shared at your parent/teacher conferences. All areas of learning including cognitive skills, language, artistic expression, physical growth, and social-emotional development will be covered. If needed, these results will assist us in making appropriate referrals for services. Additionally, multiple data assessment of children will assist teachers in making sound decisions regarding curriculum content, daily planning, and personal interactions.

Semi-annually through staff meetings and literature searches, ECDC actively engages in a literature search for the most appropriate screening/assessment tools published. Parents/guardians will be informed if the assessment instruments and procedures are changed. Parents/guardians are invited to help guide our assessment process to best meet the needs of their children.

Parents/guardians will be provided information, verbally or in writing on a quarterly basis with written reports at least two times each year.

All children's files will remain confidential unless a parent/guardian gives written permission to HHS/ED Children's Center to release the information to a third party. Staff who interact regularly with your child will have access to HHS/ED Children's Center-generated reports.

### **Program Evaluation**

We are continually evaluating our curricula, policies, and procedures. At least annually, we will ask you to fill out formal evaluation forms. The results will be shared with HHS/ED's

families. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome, so please communicate with us. No concern is too small!

### **Parent/Guardian Participation**

Parents/guardians of children enrolled in HHS/ED Children's Center programs are encouraged to participate in the program. We invite you to visit the Center anytime. Accompanying your child on field trips and sharing your cultural practices and home traditions with your child's class are wonderful ways for parents/guardians to be involved with their children's education. Please arrange these visits with the appropriate teacher.

HHS/ED is delighted to host luncheons, open houses, graduations, and other celebrations throughout the year. These are great opportunities for parents/guardians to get to know their child's friends as well as other parents/guardians. If you have any suggestions for an event, please feel free to share your ideas with your child's teacher or the administration.

Please check the bulletin boards and your child's classroom cubby or mailbox daily for information about activities, projects, trips, and special notices. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to read announcements and return forms and field trip fees.

HHS/ED offers a list-serv to facilitate communication between the center and the parents/guardians by sending reminders and important announcements. You can join at any time by signing up at the front desk, adding as many email addresses as you'd like.



## **General Schedule**

### **Calendar/Holiday Schedule**

HHS/ED is open 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Center will be closed on all public federal holidays, as well as up to three professional days. There will be no refund or credit against the tuition fee for these days or for days we close due to circumstances beyond our control (i.e., electrical problems, flood, etc.).

New Year's Day

Independence Day

Thanksgiving Day

MLK Jr. Birthday

Labor Day

Day after Thanksgiving

Presidents Day

Columbus Day

Christmas Eve Day

Memorial Day

Veteran's Day

Christmas Day

### **Inclement Weather Closings**

The following procedures will be implemented as minimum standards to ensure that the HHS/ED Child Care Program is operating as normally as possible during adverse weather conditions (snow emergencies, severe icing conditions, floods, and hurricanes), natural disasters, and other disruptions of the Federal Government's operations (air pollution, disruption of power and/or water, interruption of public transportation, etc.).

When there are disruptions of the Federal Government operations, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will make announcements to the media as to whether Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are "open" or "closed," or operating under an "unscheduled leave," "delayed arrival," or "early dismissal" policy. During these situations, the HHS/ED Child Care Program hours of operation will be as follows:

<b>Federal Government</b>	<b>HHS/ED Children’s Center</b>
OPEN	<i>OPEN</i>
OPEN, X Hours Delayed Arrival, with Option for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework	<i>HHS/ED Children’s Center will open at 9:00 a.m.</i>
OPEN, X Hours Early Departure	<i>HHS/ED Children’s Center will close 2 hours after the Federal Government</i>
CLOSED	<i>CLOSED</i>

These procedures are based on the principle that the business of the Federal Government is vital to serving the public everywhere, and we must do so without compromising the safety of our employees, their families, and the HHS/ED Child Care Staff.

### Early Drop-off / Late Pick-Up Policies

We will not be responsible for children left unsupervised before our official opening time at 7:00 a.m.

If your child is picked up after 6:00 p.m., you will owe a late fee of \$5.00 for each five-minute period, or portion thereof, after the scheduled time. This late pick-up fee is due to the teacher immediately at the time of pick-up. If your child is picked up over thirty minutes late, he/she may not be admitted to the Center the following day.

<b><i>Enrollment</i></b>
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### **Eligibility/Equal Opportunity**

HHS/ED is open to all children, ages 6 weeks to 5 years. Children are admitted to programs without regard to race, creed, sex, disability, or socioeconomic class. No discrimination is practiced in the treatment of children in the programs or in program administration or operation.

### **Priority Enrollment**

Children enrolled in HHS/ED's federally-funded space will be selected from the HHS/ED Child Care Waiting List in the priority given to HHS/ED by the Center's Board of Directors. Priority will be given in the following order:

1. Siblings of children of employees of HHS and ED who are currently enrolled in the Center.
2. Siblings of children of employees of other federal agencies and departments who are currently enrolled in the center.
3. Siblings of children that are currently enrolled in the Center from the general public, including federal contractors.
4. Children of employees of HHS and ED with an attempt to allocate the number of slots at the center between HHS and ED families.
5. Children of employees of other federal agencies and departments.
6. Children of families of federal contractors.
7. Dependents of families from the general public.

### **Custody/Guardianship**

If your family is experiencing custody concerns, please inform the Director/Assistant Director immediately and furnish the appropriate documentation. Legal documentation of guardianship may be required.

<h3><b><u>General Information</u></b></h3>
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### **Absences**

Please notify the Center if your child will be absent on a specific day. You are responsible for paying the full biweekly tuition when your child is enrolled in the Center, even if your child is absent due to illness or vacation.

### **Addresses/Telephone Numbers**

The Center must be notified if there is a change in your address and/or home or office telephone numbers. The names, addresses and phone numbers of persons to contact in an emergency (if you are not available) must be provided. The names and telephone numbers of those persons authorized to pick up your child must also be on file. Please review and initial all registration record information at least annually.

### **Clothing**

All outer clothing and change of clothing items should be labeled. An extra set of clothing should be available at the Center.

Children should be dressed warmly during cold winter months, including boots, mittens, and snow pants on snow days and days following snow, so that children can play outdoors.

We encourage children to wear casual clothing.

### **Toys**

Toys may be brought to the Center if they are suitable for sharing with other classmates. The Center does not assume responsibility for the loss or breakage of these toys. Toy weapons are not allowed.

### **Birthdays**

The Center encourages the parents/guardians of children having birthdays to participate and to provide nutritious birthday foods for a party. Please do not send candy, gum, or other junk food. Please let the teacher know when you are planning a birthday celebration.

Latex balloons pose a choking hazard, however mylar balloons are permitted at the Center.

Please be conscientious of the children in your child's classroom when planning a birthday party outside of the center. If you are inviting all the children in your child's class, HHS/ED is happy to put the invitations in the classroom's mailboxes. If you are not inviting everyone, please contact the families directly.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

HHS/ED has several on-site extra-curricular programs that are in addition to the activities included in the curriculum. Payments for these programs are by contract between the activity's provider and the parent/guardian. HHS/ED will have an ECDC employee present at all activities except for private lessons.

### **Community Resources**

The ECDC administration would be happy to help you with attaining resources throughout the community for any needs your child or family may have. Please feel free to stop by and speak with an administrator at any time. Additionally, HHS/ED posts community information in the front lobby and classrooms.

### **Translation Services**

If at any time you need translation of documents or to communicate with a staff member with the assistance of a translator, please notify a member of the administration.

### **Grievance Procedure**

Grievance complaints are best handled informally and expediently between the involved parties. HHS/ED Children's Center staff are interested in providing the best service to your family, so feel free to communicate your concerns, no matter how small. The Director and Assistant Director are available to discuss any concerns.

### ***Emergency Evacuation Policy***

Children who are capable of walking will be trained how to exit the building in an orderly manner during emergencies and monthly drills. These procedures will include establishing a “buddy” system, line drills, holding onto a rope, etc.

Non-walking children will be placed in evacuation devices such as evacuation cribs on sturdy wheels and will be rolled out of the Center to our assembly point.

Our child care staff will maintain an up-to-date roster of the children present. The supervisor will be responsible for verifying the safe evacuation of all children listed on the roster.

The Director and HHS/ED Security will be responsible for physically checking all areas within the Center. Facilities Management will be notified of the evacuation and its progress. Parents/guardians will not be allowed to remove a child from the Center’s custody until we have accounted for all children.

If the telephone is not answered at the center, call back in approximately ten minutes since we may be practicing our emergency procedures.

Upon evacuation of the facility, no one will be allowed to re-enter the facility until an official “all-clear” signal is given.

At least two times a year, ECDC will practice “Shelter-in-Place” drills where children will not exit the building. During the drill, all access to the building will be limited.

All child care staff and support personnel will be trained in emergency/evacuation procedures regularly.

### **Safety Rules**

Our Center has been designed to provide children with a safe and healthy environment. The following is a list of safety rules for all programs at the Center. Please be aware of them. Discuss them with your children.

- Do not leave children in a car without supervision.
- Supervise your children carefully while walking into the center.
- If you have made arrangements to have your child picked up by someone not listed on your child's emergency card, please notify us with the person's name and relationship to the family. The person may be required to show photo identification.

### **Nutrition**

HHS/ED Children's Center offers breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Due to increasing numbers of severe nut allergies, HHS/ED Children's Center is requiring that nuts are not served at the center. This includes nut butter and candies with nuts. Soy products are acceptable.

### **Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act**

All parents and visitors to the center must comply with the HHS tobacco-free policy.

### **41 C.F.R**

All parents and visitors to the center must comply with the provisions of 41 C.F.R. Subpart 101-20.3, "Conduct on Federal Property."

For further details regarding health and safety issues, please refer to HHS/ED Children's Center Health and Safety Manual.

## ***Medical Policies***

### ***Medical Requirements***

Please refer to HHS/ED Children's Center Health and Safety Manual regarding exclusion and readmission policies, which follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Please call the Center if your child will not be in school due to illness, and specify the illness. Diagnosed illnesses will be posted on classroom doors anonymously.

As your child receives immunizations, please provide HHS/ED with documentation.

### ***Consent Forms***

In an effort to maintain the most appropriate practices for each child and provide staff members with a visual reminder of such necessities, HHS/ED may post children's specific allergies, medical information, and/or dietary information in food preparation areas and within the classrooms with the permission of a parent/guardian.

### ***Administration of Medication***

The administration of prescription and non-prescription medication is permitted with prior written permission from the child's physician and parent/guardian with the exception of non-prescription sunscreen, lip balm, lotion, or diaper cream, which only require written parental/guardian consent.

#### ***Parent information:***

- A separate medication order form is to be filled out for each prescription and non-prescription medication by the parent and/or physician.



- Prescription medication must be in a child-proof container labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and the strength of the medication and instructions on how to administer and store it. The first dose must be given by the parent.
- Non-prescription diaper cream, insect repellent, sunscreen will require a parent's signature for continued use and must be labeled with child's first and last name.
- When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellents containing less than 30% DEET are used, and these are applied only on children over 2 months of age. Staff apply insect repellent no more than once a day and only with written consent from the parent/guardian.
- Parents are to notify staff of any medications given before arrival at the Center.

## ***Financial Policies***

### ***Budget***

HHS/ED Children's Center is committed to affordable, quality child care for all families needing services. Parent/guardian tuition provides the greatest source of operating income. Additionally, HHS/ED Children's Center participates in various subsidy programs, including Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund. Other sources of funds are derived from fundraising efforts.

## **Tuition**

Although the initial deposit may be made by check or money order, future payments must be made by electronic ACH Debit to a bank account. Debits will be made every other Friday. If any debit is returned unpaid, you will owe a service charge \$29 in addition to other amounts due. Unpaid late fees will be deducted from the tuition deposit when the child leaves the Center. An ACH debit calendar is distributed annually, with additional copies readily available from the administration.

Receipts are available on a four-week or end-of-year basis when requested. If you would like receipts, please include a request with a tuition check. Flexible spending account forms and similar requests require 48 hours.

Tuition payments must be made if a child is absent for vacation or illness.

A two-week deposit is required and will be applied to the tuition for the last two weeks the child is in the program. Written notice must be given at least thirty days before the child leaves the program.

A fee will be charged for checks returned because of insufficient funds.

## **Late Payment**

If the Center has not received any tuition payment by the sixth day after payment is due, the Center may refuse to admit your child until you pay the amount. If the Center has not received your payment by the thirteenth day after payment is due, your child's enrollment in the Center may be terminated and his/her space will be offered to another child. You will not be entitled to a refund of your deposit.

### **Additional Fees**

Fees may apply to field trips and special events held for your child's class. During summer camp, an activity fee will be added to the biweekly tuition for children in the two's through kindergarten programs. This activity fee includes all field trips, swimming, and special events.

### **Damage Charges**

You may be held financially responsible for any property damage due to destructive behavior of your child.