



**DICKINSON COLLEGE
CHILDREN'S CENTER**

FAMILY HANDBOOK 2026

**DICKINSON COLLEGE CHILDREN'S CENTER
CARLISLE, PA 17013
(717) 245 – 1088**

DICKINSON COLLEGE CHILDREN'S CENTER

The Dickinson College Children's Center (DCCC) is a non-profit day care center which provides campus childcare for faculty and staff members, students of the College and community members. The Children's Center is a part of the Campus Operations Division of Dickinson College. DCCC is a part of the Keystone Stars Program. The Keystone Stars Program holds its centers to the highest standards in the state of Pennsylvania. The Kindergarten Program is licensed by the Department of Education. The Department of Education requires that our program be in alignment with Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood.

DICKINSON COLLEGE CHILDREN'S CENTER PHILOSOPHY

Dickinson College Children's Center is dedicated to the belief that each child deserves to be provided an opportunity to learn within a safe and nurturing environment. Each child has the right to be accepted and respected for his or her own uniqueness and individuality.

The Center is committed to encouraging the child's individual growth, developing each child's social skills and self-esteem, and encouraging collaboration with others on projects of benefit to all.

We affirm our commitment to accept, respect, and indeed celebrate the individual cultural backgrounds and learning styles of every child. The Center's curriculum will enable all children to develop their physical, emotional, cognitive, and social skills to the fullest potential.

Dickinson College Children's Center will provide opportunities for children to share positive experiences, to appreciate each other's contributions to the group, and to learn about a variety of cultural heritages.

Each child will be enriched by the involvement of teachers, administrators, families and community in the advancement of our philosophy.

Adopted June 20, 1989

Adapted May 2009

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Dickinson College Children's Center is to provide high quality childcare for the employees of Dickinson College and the surrounding community so that families are able to fulfill professional and personal commitments secure in the knowledge that their child is cared for in a safe nurturing environment.

ADMISSION PRIORITIES

As space becomes available, applications will be considered and spots will be assigned in the order of preference of the groups as listed below within predetermined age groups. Within each age group, applications will be considered by the date they are received in the DCCC office.

1. DCCC employee's child
2. Dickinson College employee or student's child with sibling currently enrolled at DCCC
3. Dickinson College employee or student's child
4. Child with sibling currently enrolled at DCCC
5. Child whose parent is a Dickinson College alumnus/alumna
6. Dickinson College employee's grandchild
7. Community member who receives tuition assistance from CCIS (Child Care Information Services)
8. Child was previously enrolled in DCCC
9. Community member's child

Waiting list information is available on our website under Enrollment Information. No application fee will be charged.

Available in the office is a copy of our Dickinson College Employee Sabbatical Policy. Please inquire if more information is desired.

CHILDREN SERVED

Child Care and Kindergarten are available for children from six weeks to six years of age. During the summer months, a school-age program is offered for children ages six to twelve.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Center is open 7:15 AM – 5:30 PM Monday through Friday. Late pick-up fees go into effect at 5:30.

The Center is **closed** on the following dates:

2026

June 19 – Juneteenth

June 29 – July 3 - Independence Day Week

August 14– Staff Training Day

October 19 – Staff Training Day

November 25 - Thanksgiving break

November 26 - Thanksgiving break

November 27 - Thanksgiving break

December 21 - 25 – DCCC Closed for Holiday Break

December 28 – January 1 - DCCC Closed for Holiday Break

2027

January 1 – DCCC Closed for Holiday Break

March 19 – Staff Training Day

May 31 – Memorial Day

June 18 – Juneteenth (observed)

July 5-9 - Independence Day Week

LOCATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

- Physical Address: 28 Garland Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013 (do not use for mailing items)
- Mailing address: Dickinson College Children's Center P.O. Box 1773 Carlisle, PA 17013
- Phone number: 717-245-1088.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Dickinson College Children's Center
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

SUBJECT: Non-Discrimination in Services Policy Statement

TO: Center Families

FROM: Regina VanKirk, Director

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race (to include hair type, hair texture, or hair style), color, religious creed (to include all aspects of religious observances and practice, as well as belief), disability, ancestry, national origin (including Limited English Proficiency), age (40 and over), or sex (to include pregnancy status, childbirth status, breastfeeding status, sex assigned at birth).

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any individual/client/patient/student (and/or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with:

Facility Contact Information:

Dickinson College Children's Center Summer School-Age Program

P.O. Box 1773 Carlisle, PA 17013

Phone – 717-245-1088

Fax – 717-245-1122

E-mail – [vankirk@dickinson.edu](mailto:vankirk@ dickinson.edu)

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Department of Human Services

Bureau of Equal Opportunity

Room 225, Health & Welfare Building

P.O. Box 2675 Harrisburg, PA 17120

Inquiries: (717) 787-1127

Email: RA-PWBEOAO@pa.gov

(Within 90 days from the date of incident)

October 16, 2024

Office for Civil Rights

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Centralized Case Management Operations

200 Independence Avenue, S.W.

Room 509 HHH Bldg

Washington, D.C. 20201

Customer Response Center: (800) 368-1019

TDD: (800) 537-7697

<https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/complaints>

Email: ocrcomplaint@hhs.gov

(Within 180 days from the date of incident)

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission

333 Market Street, 8th Floor

Harrisburg, PA 17101

<https://www.phrc.pa.gov/Complaints/Pages/How-to-File-a-Complaint.aspx>

Inquiries: (717) 787-4410

TTY users only: (717) 787-7279

(Within 180 days from the date of incident)

THE CENTER

- **Enrollment**

Enrollment will be on a full-year (49 weeks) basis. Agreements, Emergency Consent Forms and Food Program Enrollment Forms must be signed upon enrollment in the Center. Families will be requested to update these forms every six months as required by the Department of Human Services. Families are encouraged to provide more frequent updates to such forms if changes in personal circumstances warrant such modifications.

A welcome packet from your child's classroom will be distributed to you upon enrollment. This packet will include required forms, a letter from your child's teacher, a sample daily schedule, a list of items needed for daily routines, and DCCC's Emergency Operations Plan Letter (you will receive an updated copy of this letter on an annual basis).

New enrollments will officially start mid-August of every year. Currently enrolled children will move up to new rooms at the same time. Room assignments for fall will be provided to teachers and families in the spring. Prior to moving up, children will have time to tour and visit their new room and new teacher. More detailed information about the transition experience will be provided to families in late July.

Within 45 days of your child's start date at the center, you will receive a developmental assessment using the following assessment tools: Teaching Strategies Gold & Ages and Stages: Social-Emotional 2 (ASQ: SE2). You will also have an opportunity to schedule a family conference.

Each fall, families of returning students will be charged \$10.00 to their tuition account which helps cover the cost of the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment Tool and will receive a letter explaining this charge.

A non-refundable enrollment fee of \$85 will be charged upon enrollment. All checks should be written to Dickinson College Children's Center (\$52 for kindergarten families).

- **Center Security**

All primary caregivers will be issued an access card for the building. Families have acknowledged and agreed that they will only use the card designated to themselves. If families are found to have shared their card for any reason (card misuse) this could be grounds for loss of card access. All others are to ring the doorbell to be greeted by a staff person to be properly escorted through the center.

- **Family Communication**

DCCC uses a digital platform called Lillio to do most of our communication with families. Lillio will allow you to receive updates about your child's day including pictures and videos. Through the app, you will also receive the complete daily report at the end of the day so that you can enjoy it whenever, wherever you are! We also utilize the program to mainstream many of our DHS regulations such as family sign in/out, attendance, and CACFP meal tracking.

- **Emergency Closure (Snow closings)**

To make families aware of a Center closure due to weather or another emergency, we will use Lillio to communicate updates by text and e-mail to all families.

- **Disclosure of Information**

Prior to enrollment, we request that families make full disclosure of any medical/special needs (including asthma or allergies) that their child may have. At this time, we ask for that families who require assistance, such as the use of translators, sign-language proficient staff members, assistance with building accessibility, etc. make us aware of such a situation. The primary language spoken at DCCC is English. If a family or child's primary language is one other than English, a student volunteer/translator from the college and newsletters in a language that is understood by families will be provided. Other accommodations will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

We ask that Individualized Education Plans (IEP) for children be submitted to the office. The Director will then share necessary information with those who are in direct care relationships with the child. A release

of information and communication about other specialists visiting must be signed. Specialists visiting the Center will be required to: sign in at the office, wear a badge from where they work, and maintain confidentiality about the child/children with whom they are working.

If your child has an IEP and you are planning to have them attend Kindergarten here at DCCC, please see additional information under Kindergarten Policies in this handbook.

- **Child Health Report**

Prior to enrollment, a physician's report must be signed by the physician and submitted to the Director. Thereafter, according to state requirements and by recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics, additional physician's reports must be submitted to DCCC at the following ages: 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, 24 months, and every year thereafter on or near the child's birthday. Failure to do so may result in termination of enrollment. Health forms can be found on our website.

Please complete our health form and have the doctor sign the bottom of the form. A printout from the physician's office is also accepted if it contains a physician's signature. The purpose of the health form is to document both well check-ups and immunizations. If your family elects to opt out of routine recommended immunizations, DCCC is required to have a note from your family physician on file, this includes the annual influenza shot. Please make sure that the date of the child's most recent exam is on the health form.

- **Family Code of Conduct**

Families of enrolled children and any other adults who are engaged with the Center or the children we serve shall always behave in a courteous and respectful manner in their exchanges with Center staff, other families, children, and visitors to the Center. The use of vulgar, profane, or other inappropriate language on Center property is not permitted. Such language is considered offensive and will not be tolerated. Acts or threats of physical harm are strictly forbidden.

Any conduct by an individual other than an enrolled child's parent or guardian that violates this policy will result in that person being banned from the Center. Conduct by a parent or guardian that violates this policy will result in prompt action by the Center and may include the immediate and permanent termination of the child(ren)'s enrollment.

- **Withdrawing from the Center**

DCCC requests a 2-week notice if a child will be withdrawn from the Center. The child's records will be transferred at the request of the parent (signature required).

FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- **Tuition**

Families will be charged tuition through Lillio on a weekly basis. Tuition for the current week is due by Friday of that week. An additional \$10 is charged if tuition is not paid when due. Failure to pay tuition may result in termination of a child's enrollment.

Full weekly tuition amounts will be charged each week except for the three full weeks that DCCC is closed.

- **Other Fees:**

Returned checks – There will be a \$30 fee for returned checks. Three or more returned checks in one fiscal year will require a family to pay tuition in cash for the remainder of the fiscal year.

- **Tuition Assistance**

Tuition assistance is provided for persons eligible based on total family income, family size, and major financial responsibilities. Information is obtained from the Director. Assistance through CCC (Community Connections for Children) is the first step in obtaining any scholarship funds from DCCC, call 1-800-864-4925 or 717 210 3334 for information on these services.

- **Late Pick-Up Fee**

In consideration of our staff, the Children's Center closes promptly at 5:30 each evening. Families should arrive at the Center with enough time to pick up their child, gather their child's belongings and exit the building by 5:30. Families will be charged one dollar for every minute that they or their child remain in the building after 5:30.

Families who are late more than 3 times per fiscal year will have their late fee increased to \$5 per minute for the remainder of the year.

If, after having the late pick-up fee increased, late pick-up continues to be a consistent problem, a meeting will be scheduled with the Director to plan and come up with possible solutions.

CHILD PICK-UP

If the child will be released to someone other than a primary caregiver(s), please notify the office by phone call (verbal permission), sending a Lillio note, or submitting a written note prior to the time of pick-up. Families who wish to have their child released to an older sibling must have a note on file with the office, the sibling must be 18 years of age or older and show valid identification upon arrival at the Center (driver's license). Please remember that the office must have communication from the primary caregiver prior to the child being released. Simply having their name listed on the Emergency Consent form is not sufficient. This person will be required to show identification upon arrival at the Center. For the process that will be followed for releasing children in case of emergency, your attention is directed to the Emergency Operation Plan letter which is included in our Enrollment Packet.

To keep our children safe, if a designated pick-up person arrives at DCCC to pick up a child and appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol that person will be provided with an opportunity to make immediate arrangements to have an unimpaired person come to pick up the child. Should the person decline this option, or should the behavior be repeated, DCCC staff will immediately contact Public Safety who will in turn contact the local police department. Additionally, the DCCC staff reserves the right to contact the Carlisle Police Department, Child Protective Services and the other parent. Any other authorized person who attempts to pick up a child, and who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, will be denied access to the child. Under those circumstances, DCCC staff will notify the child's parents or other authorized contact person.

VISITORS TO THE CENTER

Due to the number of visitors to Center, families will be required to stop in the office to sign in all visitors. If you have someone accompanying you and you are going to be in any room for an extended amount of time, we ask that they wait in the office. If they are family members or close friends, arrangements can be made to accompany you. However, please keep in mind that eating and napping times are not the best times to interrupt children's schedules. Some children within rooms do not react well to visitors to their classroom. It can also be difficult for teachers who need to tend to their children, discuss confidential matters openly during their day, and to abide by

their daily schedules. In order to respect all children, teachers, and families, we hope that you will be considerate of this policy.

OTHER CHILDREN'S CENTER POLICIES INVOLVING DAILY ROUTINES

- **Arrival/Departure**

The Center opens at 7:15 AM. Children should arrive at any time between 7:15 and 9:00 AM.

While in the building, children must be always supervised. Families sign their children in and out using Lillio upon arrival and departure from the Center. To staff appropriately for the day, as well as for the teachers to plan accordingly for their instruction, children will not be admitted to the Center after 11:00 AM unless the office was given prior notice due to a medical/dental appointment.

**see below for Winter Weather Policy and arrival times.*

Families are asked to remove temporary belongings from the child's cubby each day. Bedding and extra sweaters, etc. may remain in the cubby during the week and should be taken home each Friday.

Rest time pick up: if a family needs to pick up a child from the Center during nap time, they should check in with the office so office staff members can notify the classroom, and the teacher can prepare the child for departure. We recommend that immunization appointments be scheduled toward the end of the day, if possible. If the child must return to care, we recommend that they do not return during rest time (1:00 – 3:00) as this can be disruptive to the routine of the child and their classmates.

- **Winter Weather Policy**

Closing/delay due to bad weather:

DCCC will be closed when the college is closed due to bad weather (snow/ice). We will continue to notify families via text and e-mail through Lillio, a Facebook post, and through the following media outlet:

TV Station: WHTM Channel 27 (ABC)

To provide the utmost safety to the children within the Center, DCCC also reserves the right to decide to close even if the college would remain open.

If the College decides to delay, DCCC too will delay.

- On a one hour delay DCCC will open at 8:15 (11:00 arrival policy remains in effect)*
- On a two-hour delay DCCC will open at 9:15 (11:00 arrival policy remains in effect)
- If DCCC would decide to open at 10:00 a.m. (rare case) – the 11:00 arrival policy will be extended to 11:30 a.m. to help accommodate the number of children at drop-off.

Once again, if possible, we will notify families via the family communication app and a local TV station.

Early Dismissal:

When the college decides to close early due to worsening weather conditions, DCCC will close as well. However, we will add an hour to our closing time in relation to the college time to allow our families enough time to arrange to pick up their child safely. (For example, if the college decides to close at 3:00 p.m., the Center will close at 4:00.)

This message will go out via the family communication app, local TV stations and, when necessary, the classroom teachers will call their individual families.

Please keep in mind that the college does not decide to close very frequently. However, when they do, it is necessary that we now follow their same schedule to provide the utmost safety to the DCCC staff as well. **We will be certain to make sure that the Children's Center is specifically stated to avoid confusion.**

- **Personal Belongings and Items Brought to the Center**

Any clothing, bedding or other belongings brought to the Center **MUST** be labeled with the child's full name.

Toys may not be brought from home unless families have obtained special permission from the teacher. Classroom toys are frequently rotated to provide variety for each child.

We particularly ask that families not allow their children to bring toy guns, war toys or toys of violence.

All children are required to keep at least one complete set of seasonally appropriate extra clothing for emergency changes in their designated classroom area (bins, etc.) Families are responsible for taking home soiled clothing and replacing them with clean extras.

- **Naps/Rest Time**

DCCC feels it is important for each child to have a quiet time for rest. Older children who need less sleep will still be given the opportunity for a quiet rest. During nap time the child will hear a quiet story and lullaby music before falling asleep. A staff member will remain in the room throughout the rest period. Children are very active so it's a good idea to give them a special opportunity to rest. Some children have a hard time falling asleep, but it is important to set aside some quiet time during the day for relaxing their bodies.

Families may bring a small, soft blanket, crib sheet and a favorite soft toy for their child's comfort at rest time. Please label all items with your child's name. All blankets and belongings will be taken home each Friday to be laundered and returned on Monday.

DCCC KINDERGARTEN POLICIES

The Dickinson College (DC) Kindergarten program is licensed by the PA Department of Education. The kindergarten program is part of the Capital Area Intermediate Unit's (CAIU) consortium of nonpublic private schools and shares in consultation and testing services only with the CAIU.

DC Kindergarten strives to offer the best learning environment and to meet the needs of every child. However, please keep in mind that individual requests may not be able to be granted if not reasonably possible.

DC Kindergarten children with a current IEP are encouraged to reach out to their local school district to request a school-age IEP to be completed to determine if public school enrollment or dual enrollment is recommended for the best possible educational experience.

Each school district sets their own policy for kindergarten cut off age and therefore enforces guidelines/policies in reference to age and entry into first grade. Families are encouraged to reach out to their local School district or intended first grade placement prior to enrolling in the DC Kindergarten program.

CURRICULUM (Infants – Pre-K)

- **Infants – Pre-K**

DCCC has adopted the Creative Curriculum as a basis to build on and to support our philosophy about the education of Infants through Pre-K children. Our curriculum enables the children to explore and create in an atmosphere of warmth and enthusiasm for each day's happenings. The children gain positive self-concepts as they find enjoyment and success in the developmentally planned activities. They participate in activities including, but not limited to, the following:

- Language enrichment through stories, puppets, finger plays, dramatic play, conversation
- Creative art, involving diverse media for painting, drawing, cutting, tracing, gluing, molding and constructing
- Gross motor (large muscle) development on safe, supervised equipment
- Fine motor development, work with manipulative media such as clay, blocks, sand, objects of size appropriate to the child's age and wide variety of puzzles
- Visual and auditory perceptual activities involving shapes, color, rhyming and many other activities appropriate to their age and leading to readiness in reading and math
- Psycho-social development through supervised play, imaginative dramatic play and activities fostering cooperation and respect for oneself and for others
- Multicultural activities including cooking projects, music, dancing, and games.
- Science and Math activities using manipulatives and discovery tables with a variety of materials.

When planning activities, the staff will encourage community awareness by utilizing the many resources found on the campus and in the extended community of Carlisle. Families are encouraged to be involved in the classroom activities by sharing theme-related ideas or specialized skills with the class.

Upon enrollment and upon each new classroom transition you will be asked to fill out a Developmental History Questionnaire. The information that you provide by filling out this form will be used for the Teachers to better care for your child throughout the year. The information will be used as a reference to help aid in planning their individual goals and activities related the curriculum.

In addition to the Creative Curriculum, several classrooms use various other resources to supplement their daily lesson planning including Color Me Healthy and Get Set for School (preschool).

- **Health Education**

Health Education will be a part of the curriculum for staff, families, and children. Weekly classroom lessons will reflect various health education topics. Topics for staff and families will be addressed through Family Meetings, Bulletin Board (staff and family) postings, and Staff Meetings. Topics may include: nutrition, stress management, exercise, child development, and more. Speakers and materials for staff and families may be obtained from community or children's hospitals, voluntary health organizations, and other community organizations. All health education activities and materials for children will be developmentally appropriate. DCCC will notify families if sensitive topic areas are included in the health education plan. Families must notify the staff of the facility if they do not wish for their child to be involved in activities related to a specific topic.

- **Social-Emotional Curriculum/Anti-Bullying**

The Children's Center has two Anti-bullying programs implemented daily within the Preschool Curriculum. These programs are the **PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) Program** and the **Bucket-Filling Program**. At the preschool age, the focus of the programs is promoting kind, safe, and responsible behavior in order to prevent bullying behavior in young children. Detailed information about

both of these programs can be found in the DCCC Guidance Procedures document. Newsletters will be sent home twice per year giving updated information pertaining to our Social-Emotional Curriculum.

ASSESSMENT

ASQ: SE2. The ASQ: SE2 (Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional 2) allows for early identification of social-emotional problems which is crucial to building a strong foundation to learning. It offers a deep, exclusive focus on children's social and emotional development, screens important areas of social-emotional competence, pinpoints behaviors of concern, and identifies any need for further assessment or ongoing monitoring.

Teaching Strategies Gold. The Gold assessment is an ongoing observation-based program for children ages birth through third grade and is an integral part of our education program. The Creative Curriculum is embedded into our day here into all classes at DCCC and aligns with Gold.

Teaching Strategies Gold helps teachers understand where the children in their classroom are developmentally and plan appropriate experiences for them. Content areas are: Literacy, Math, Science, Social Studies, The Arts, Social/Emotional, Cognitive, Language, and Physical.

There will be an annual \$10 fee associated with this online assessment purchase and that will be charged to your account each fall. Upon initial enrollment it is included in your enrollment fee. On an annual basis after that, it will be charged to your child's tuition account.

All information will be shared only among the DCCC teachers and administrative staff.

The results of these assessment tools are confidential (only classroom teachers will have access) and will be placed in each child's file along with their Individual Goals. They will be used to help make decisions about curriculum content, teaching approaches, and interactions with children.

A parent teacher conference will be offered twice per year to discuss the results and any questions you may have. If you choose to decline a conference, you will be asked to sign the appropriate form from your child's teacher. All teachers and assistant teachers will be trained yearly on assessment procedures.

THE STAFF

All Children's Center staff members support the philosophy of the Center. Upon hire, they are required to submit a Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, PA State Police Criminal Record Check and FBI Fingerprinting. They also must have a bi-annual physical and once upon hire test for TB. Annually, all staff members complete 20 hours of training, Bloodborne Pathogens Training, and a variety of other training requirements through Dickinson. Upon hire and then once every five years (and when updates are established) staff members complete the following: *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse: Mandated and Permissive Reporting in PA* which includes but is not limited to the following topics: recognition of potential signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma, strategies for coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child, and addressing the prevention and identification of child maltreatment. Annually, staff members sign that they've reviewed DCCC's Child Abuse Policy on recognizing and reporting child abuse. **Please refer to our website for more detailed information regarding classroom teachers.**

All staff members also follow diapering and hand-washing guidelines.

In addition to the teaching staff members, Dickinson College students employed as staff, interns from other universities, and volunteers from the community are required to have clearances, a current health appraisal, TB test, 2 references and documented education and experience with young children.

HEALTH POLICIES

The main protection of your child's health is for the Children's Center to prevent ill children from attending the Center. The Children's Center staff members have been trained to recognize possible infectious disease symptoms, and families of children with these symptoms will be asked to keep their children at home and away from well children.

Please observe the following childcare health policies:

1. **All illnesses** must be reported to the Center so the staff and Director are aware of the child's absence and/or infectious disease. Please notify the Director prior to returning to the Center after an injury, serious illness, or operation.

2. **DCCC reserves the right to exclude a child from care if they are not able to participate in all of the daily activities, if additional staff are required to provide care for the child thus compromising the health and safety of other children, or if their illness poses a risk of spread of disease to others. (According to the guidelines provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics).**

3. If your child is sent home because they are suspected of having a contagious illness, such as those listed below, a note from your child's pediatrician or family doctor will be required before the child may return to DCCC:

- conjunctivitis, such as pink eye
- measles, roseola, rubella, fifth disease, chicken pox, whooping cough, mumps
- skin infections/rash, such as poison ivy
- head lice
- strep throat
- hand, foot and mouth disease
- Covid-19
- RSV

If your child is diagnosed with a bacterial infection, such as **pink eye** or **strep throat**, they will be excluded from the DCCC until they have been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours. This policy is intended to prevent the spread of infection to other children and staff. If your child is diagnosed with bacterial pink-eye and prescribed an antibiotic and you choose not to follow the recommended treatment, the child cannot return to the center until the child is completely symptom free in the judgment of the DCCC. Depending on the severity, this may take a few days. An additional doctor's note may be required confirming that the child is not contagious before he or she is allowed to return to the Center.

If the diagnosis is a **contagious or non-contagious skin infection**, please remember that a doctor's note will be required with a diagnosis and a safe return date. For **any of the other conditions (lice, chicken pox, etc.)** please contact the office as soon as possible for Center specific policies regarding that illness.

4. Children must be excluded from the Center for the following conditions, **and** for 24 hours after the symptom is no longer evident:

- fever 100.4 degrees
- vomiting
- diarrhea

If any of the conditions listed above are present in a child while at the Center, the family will be contacted and asked to take the child home. If you are unable to pick up your child within an hour, please arrange for a friend or

relative to come in your place. Repeated failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in the dismissal of your child from the center.

5. Families will be notified when their children have been in contact with an infectious disease. More information on symptoms will be made available to you as needed.

MEDICATION POLICY

Medication may be administered to a child ONLY when directions are written by the parent on the individual medication log within the child's classroom and when the following conditions are present.

- a. Child's name must appear on the medication.
- b. Physician's directions for dosage must appear on the medication label on the original container.
- c. Any medication (prescription or over-the-counter) must be accompanied by a signed doctor's prescription, which identifies the medication and the dosage.
- d. With the understanding that every attempt has been made to administer the medication at home, medication will be administered at 12 o'clock and 4 o'clock.

Any over the counter products to be administered orally will require a doctor's note.

Topical ointments such as Chapstick, sunscreen, hand lotion, vaseline, etc. should be labeled with the child's name and will be kept in a locked cabinet in the classroom and a permission form must be signed by the parent before the Center will use such ointments. We **do not** use spray sunscreen.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If a child has a serious medical problem or emergency, the staff will first call 911, then Department of Public Safety and then the primary caregivers. If primary caregivers are unavailable, those listed under Emergency Contacts on the Emergency Form will be contacted.

FOOD

Snack

Dickinson College Children's Center is enrolled in the CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) for morning and afternoon snack. Staff will post point of food service on the center-wide digital communication program. The center will provide morning and afternoon snacks and milk for lunch. If your child has a diagnosed food related allergy (doctor's note required), DCCC will provide an alternate snack.

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/ad-3027.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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Lunch

Lunch should be sent with each child in a clearly marked lunch bag which will be refrigerated. Lunches will be heated in microwave ovens if necessary. We will heat up food that has already been cooked but will not prepare a lunch (i.e. Easy Mac, oatmeal). All families are asked to send food with nutritional value (fruit, vegetables, proteins, dairy) and to avoid other foods of low nutritional value which the child may prefer to eat first. Staff members gently encourage children to try developmentally appropriate servings of fruits and vegetables and offer positive reinforcement when a child does so.

The Center will not send home lunch items that have been served but not eaten. Food that has been served but not eaten will be discarded. The only food that may be returned to the family is food that does not require refrigeration or holding at a hot temperature, that came to the facility in a commercially wrapped package, and that was never opened.

Allergy statement

Due to the number of children at our center with severe peanut and tree-nut allergies, foods containing such products are not allowed at DCCC. The Children's Center is a PEANUT and TREE NUT FREE environment. DO NOT SEND any peanut butter sandwiches, items cooked in peanut oil, or other items made with any tree nuts. *Please read labels to assure that food products do not contain traces of peanuts or were not processed in a facility that contains products with traces of nuts.*

****DCCC will make every effort to be peanut and tree nut free however, because lunches are provided by individual families, we cannot guarantee that children will not come into contact with some sort of nut.**

Choking Hazards

Caregivers shall not offer to children **less than 4 years of age** foods that are common choking hazards.

Avoid foods that are: round, hard, small, thick and sticky, smooth or slippery.

Examples of foods to avoid (DCCC will NOT serve them to children under 4):

- Hot dogs that are whole or sliced in rounds - slice the rounds into quarters
- Whole grapes - cut them into quarters
- Cherry tomatoes - cut them into quarters

- Hard candy
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Raw Peas
- Raisins/dried fruit
- Raw Carrots and Celery
- Hard pretzels (thin pretzel sticks are permitted)
- Chips
- Popcorn
- Marshmallows
- Ice cubes or ice chunks
- Fruit Snacks/Gummies

BIRTHDAY/HOLIDAY PARTY POLICY

Families are welcome to send in a small snack to share on the day of their child's birthday (items must be store-bought and packaged). Please remember we are a "nut free" center so read the labels carefully. Please **do not** send napkins, plates, candy or party bags for any of the holidays or special class days.

Fruit (cups or whole fruit)	100% juice or fruit popsicles (Minute Maid or Outshine)
Muffins/bread	Yogurt
Cheese	Vegetables/dip
Crackers (graham, cheezits, goldfish, etc.)	Pudding or Jell-O
Bagels w/ cream cheese	Thin pretzels

Pizza lunch - please give 2 days **advance** notice to the classroom teacher and the office. Also check for special dietary needs within the classroom.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play enhances the health of children. DCCC, along with recommendations by D.H.S., American Academy of Pediatrics, ECELS, and our Child Care Health Advocate (VNA) state children should play outdoors daily. DCCC follows the PA Position Statement in regards to outdoor play. Our "weather permitting" policy is this: Children are expected to go outside when the forecast temperature/wind chill are above 25 degrees, the forecast temperature/heat index is less than 90 degrees and the air quality alert is not purple. Air quality alert descriptions (information taken from the EPA and CDC – Air Quality & Outdoor Activity Guidance for Schools):

- Green and yellow – great day to be outside
- Orange – okay to be outside, for longer activities take it easier
- Red – Take it a little easy if doing outside activities
- Purple – Good day to play inside

It is understood that given these parameters there may be portions of the day that do not meet these conditions since forecasts are generally targeted to a point of time in the day. In this case, all groups will be provided with large motor activities inside for the scheduled time in our "Big Play Room."

All children birth to 6 years of age have continuous opportunities to develop and practice gross motor and movement skills appropriate for their age. Every day, active play includes moderate to vigorous activities such as rolling, crawling, scooting, running, climbing, dancing, hopping, galloping, skipping and jumping. The total time for outdoor play and vigorous indoor or outdoor physical activity (adjusted for weather) is as follows:

Infants to 12 months of age

Babies who are not yet crawling spend a minimum of 3 to 5 minutes (and more as the infant enjoys the activity) on their tummies interacting with their teachers/caregivers each half day while awake. Infants are not seated for more than 15 minutes at a time except during meals while eating, riding in a stroller on a walk or playing on a large blanket on the playground. Infants will be outside 2 times a day totaling 60 minutes, weather permitting.

Toddlers (ages 12 months to 3 years)

Toddlers receive 60-90 minutes of outdoor play per day, weather permitting.

Preschool & Kindergarten aged children

Preschool aged children have 90 – 120 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity

School-aged children

School-aged children have opportunities for vigorous physical activity indoors and outdoors for 90-120 minutes each day. Teachers/caregivers make plans to include all of the children in some physical activity they individually enjoy.

Outdoor clothing appropriate for the weather: As appropriate for the weather, families must provide outdoor clothing that keeps their child dry and comfortable such as a raincoat, warm coat, boots, snow pants, mittens and hats for cold weather or days when precipitation is expected. For sunny days, children must have lightweight clothing that is sun protective, including long-sleeved shirts and hats.

CHILD PROTECTION

The welfare of children is protected by the State Department of Human Services which mandates that childcare providers must report any suspected incidents of child abuse. All staff members, substitutes, volunteers, and student workers are mandated reporters. Any day care worker, volunteer or any DCCC employee who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused, regardless of where the abuse occurred, is required to report the suspected abuse immediately, and in no case shall the report be made more than 24 hours after discovery. The failure to report suspected child abuse shall be considered an act of willful misconduct.

GOVERNANCE OF THE CENTER

The Children's Center is an integral service of Dickinson College and is part of the Finance and Administration department. The Director reports to the Associate Vice President of Campus Operations. As such, the College makes all final policy determinations. However, family participation is encouraged and welcomed through both Family Meetings and the Advisory Committee.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

- **Family Meetings**

All families are invited to attend Family Meetings. These meetings take place bi-monthly to lend support and guidance to the daytime home for their children. If a need arises, additional Family Meetings may be scheduled. The September and March Family meetings will focus on Social/Emotional topics.

- **The Advisory Committee**

The Advisory Committee serves to discuss policies and procedures of the Center including PBIS and DCCC Guidance Procedures and bring family concerns to a Committee of people. As Committee member terms expire, Center parents express interest in serving on the Advisory Committee and if necessary voting takes place to decide on new members. Other non-elected members of the Advisory Committee include non-parental College professional and staff members and non-parental residents of

the community. The Director, Assistant Director and Associate VP of Campus Operations are non-voting members of the Advisory Committee.

If a family has a Center concern that they would like to be brought to the Advisory Committee, they should speak directly with the Director. Advisory Committee members are to express concerns to the Director prior to the meetings so that if appropriate, the item can be added to the agenda.

- **Program Evaluation (Family Survey)**

A yearly center evaluation will be completed by families and staff. Center strengths and areas for improvement will be shared and discussed through staff and Family meetings and followed up with an improvement plan. An improvement plan for the year is set up and discussed and the results are shared at Advisory Meetings and Family Meetings.

- **Fundraising**

Fundraising efforts for special projects, program support or scholarships will be carried on throughout the year. All families are expected to support fund raising activities. By participating in Fundraising efforts you will interact with and meet other families in the Center while at the same time improving your child's experience at DCCC and supporting each other's common interests.

FAMILY/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Daily communication between teachers and families is an essential key to providing high quality care for your child. Each classroom uses Lillio to assure that you get information about your child's day. We recommend that you speak to your child's teacher directly at drop-off and pick-up.

Transitioning/visiting classrooms will take place during the summer months. Each child will spend time in their new classroom with their new teacher. Move-ups will take place once per year. When transitioning classrooms families will be notified of move-up date and given a move-up packet (will include updated agreement, classroom tour, etc.). Necessary child records will be transferred to the next classroom.

Each week, the lesson plan for your child's class will be posted and sent through Lillio. This will help you plan for your child's day and give a more detailed account of the day's activities. We do ask for family involvement and participation in many of our special events. The lesson plans, newsletter and calendar of events are also posted online.

As regulated by the Department of Human Services, bumps, bruises and other minor injuries not requiring medical attention (scrapes, splinters, etc) will be reported to the family on an Incident Report. The parent and teacher will sign this form and one copy will be given to the parent, one logged in the Center Incident Log and placed in the child's file, and one placed in the Center Incident File.

DCCC has a Calendar of Events which gives a Center-wide overview of important dates (closures, events, etc.), it is available online and in Lillio.

Other modes of gathering information throughout the Center are: the Community Bulletin Board which contains referral numbers and resources throughout the community, Family Information Board, and Health & Safety Education Board. All of these Boards are located in the main hallway of the Center.

To help negotiate differences and difficulties (between teachers/children or teachers/families) in a peaceful and respectful manner, the center has adopted the following guidelines:

1. If there is a classroom concern or conflict, we ask that you first speak to the teacher. It may be necessary to schedule a conference for you and the teacher to meet together.
2. The next step is talking to the Director who will help mediate the situation and develop a plan for improvement.
3. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled with those involved in the situation and the plan effectiveness will be assessed.

GUIDANCE PROCEDURES

At DCCC, guidance is regarded as a learning strategy and the procedures are based upon the philosophy of the Children's Center. The Center believes that all children should be treated with respect and that developmentally appropriate guidance strategies should be implemented. The focus will be on helping children learn inner control and resolve conflict among themselves. Classroom teachers may use some of the following strategies to encourage the children to make the right behavior choices: charts, stickers, positive reinforcement, redirection, and timers.

The Dickinson College Children's Center has implemented a **PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support)** program to support children's healthy social-emotional development. Our Center-wide expectations for all classes are *Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Responsible*. The program will foster positive and encouraging interactions between all teachers, children, and families.

A situation might arise which reveals a child's inability to function well in a group situation, including but not limited to repeated use of threatening language or language that is inappropriate and causes another child or teacher to feel unsafe or excluded. Should a DCCC employee observe behavior that suggests that a child cannot cope with group childcare or may be engaging in behavior that endangers himself or herself, the other children, the teacher, or the property of the Center, the following procedure will be followed:

- The staff member will inform the Director who will then observe the child during a variety of activities to determine whether a plan for the child must be developed. As part of PBIS, if a behavior plan is necessary, the steps outlined in the DCCC Guidance Procedures will be followed.

Regardless of meetings, behavior plans and interventions, if the child still does not progress to a point of good adjustment to group care or if the families do not follow through with the referral, the Director may meet with families to discuss further options.

Our goal is that we can work together to ensure both children and teachers have the support they need to build positive relationships and remain part of their early learning community.

I _____ acknowledge receipt of the
(Parent Name)

Dickinson College Children's Center Family Handbook or to electronic access to the Handbook at
www.dickinson.edu/departments/children.

I have had the opportunity to read the handbook and understand that I am bound to comply with the policies and procedures contained in it.

I further acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the policies and procedures contained in the Family Handbook before signing this acknowledgement.

_____	_____
Parent Signature	Date

_____	_____
Director Signature	Date

PLEASE RETURN TO THE OFFICE