

Welcome to Siskin Early Learning Center. We thank you for choosing Siskin Early Learning Center to educate your child. As outlined in this Parent Handbook, the goal of our policies and procedures is to ensure the lives of all children are improved. With your help, we can achieve our goal. Please review the handbook thoroughly to learn about our policies and procedures.

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INSTITUTE OVERVIEW

About Us

Siskin Children's Institute works to improve the quality of life for children with special needs and their families.

Founded in 1950 to serve children with special needs, Siskin Children's Institute is a non-profit organization based in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Today Siskin Children's Institute helps children of all abilities, families and professionals through four areas of focus: education, outreach, health care and home visiting.

Siskin Early Learning Center provides a quality early childhood education to children of all abilities. Inside our classrooms, children learn and play in a nurturing environment that celebrates the accomplishments of every child. A comprehensive team of education specialists work together to help all children reach their full potential.

Siskin outreach services provide disability information to families, professionals, and college students through a dynamic array of programs that weave through the Institute's other areas of focus. Outreach services include family support, a lending library, consulting & training services and student training opportunities for future professionals in the fields related to early childhood development, early intervention and special education.

Siskin Center for Developmental Pediatrics offers assessment, diagnosis, treatment and support for children with or at risk for developmental delays and disorders. Led by a full-time triple board certified developmental behavioral pediatrician, the center specializes in early identification of delays and disorders in children. Families can receive support through the Institute's outreach services as well as the Developmental Family Therapy Center.

Siskin Home Visiting Program provides collaborative consultation visits between the family and an early interventionist in the home and community. The focus of these visits is on support and consultation to strengthen the family's confidence in meeting their goals for themselves and their child. The Early Interventionists focus on emotional, material and informational support and well as behavioral consultation around child and family goals.

Helen Siskin Pregulman Family Voices of Tennessee, Southeast Partnership provides emotional and educational support to the families of these children. To reach these families on what can be a lifelong, complex healthcare journey with their child, Family Voices of Tennessee has created a unique network of experienced staff and volunteers who have personal experience navigating the healthcare journey of an individual with a special healthcare need, chronic illness, or disability.

VISION

Siskin Children's Institute will be a nationally recognized leader of evidence based services for children with diverse abilities using a family centered approach to increase access and opportunity for each child to reach his or her life goals.

PHILOSOPHY

We believe that *every moment* should be a *teaching opportunity* and that every day is a celebration of each child's strengths, abilities and accomplishments.

We believe that *children of all abilities are unique and capable learners* benefiting from exploration within a predictable, loving and safe environment.

We believe that the *family is a child's first teacher* and that collaboration, respect and family involvement in the team approach to early education are paramount.

We believe that a *positive and accepting learning environment* supports each child's social, emotional, physical, motor, language and cognitive development.

We believe that *children of all abilities grow and develop to their full potential* by having the opportunity to engage in developmentally appropriate activities, being exposed to multiple instructional approaches, interacting with peers and developing relationships with caring adults.

We believe that *community collaboration*, resources and partnerships provide valuable awareness, educational, and outreach opportunities to support children, families, and professionals.

We believe that *interaction with children and educators* in a setting which demonstrates recommended practices is essential in the preparation and retention of professionals who work and will work with children and their families.

We believe that it is our responsibility and opportunity to *value, nurture, and develop the potential* within our human resources, including employees, volunteers, community partners and donors.

We believe that our *human resources*, including employees, volunteers, community partners and donors, *are the essential element* in providing an ever-evolving array of services to our community.

We believe in the responsible *stewardship* of those who invest their time and financial resources into helping us fulfill our mission.

GOALS

1. Children will demonstrate a high level of engagement in meaningful, developmentally appropriate activities.
 - a. Projects involve children in studies of things that interest them and are expanded through children's participation in active hands-on learning.
 - b. Staff act as facilitators and will use incidental teaching strategies to facilitate engagement.
 - c. Staff embeds the Tennessee Early Learning Standards and Creative Curriculum within project work to ensure progression of development.
2. Children will exhibit independence in classroom activities and routines.
 - a. Routines and classroom experiences are accessible and encourage independence for all children.
 - b. Environments and experiences that are provided match each child's developmental level and individual style of learning.

3. Children will develop social relationships with peers and adults.
 - a. Classroom experiences are designed to encourage children to interact with each other.
 - b. Cooperative play is supported and encouraged as children develop.
 - c. Appropriate social interactions are identified and reinforced.

 4. Parents will be active participants in their child's educational program.
 - a. Parents and teachers will have multiple opportunities to exchange information and share in decision making.
 - b. Families and professionals will have a partnership for designing, implementing and evaluating programming.
 - c. Information will be exchanged between the family and classroom staff in order to meet the needs of the children.
 - d. Families will be supported in achieving their hopes and dreams for their children.
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SISKIN EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Siskin Early Learning Center is an inclusive early childhood program utilizing evidence-based practices to assist children in reaching their greatest potential. Siskin Early Learning Center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and serves children six weeks through five years. A collaboration between Hamilton County Department of Education and Siskin Early Learning Center funds preschool children with special needs who have been referred by HCDE. Children referred by HCDE attend from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with the option to private pay for extended childcare if available. Other children with special needs are enrolled based on availability and are given priority on our applicant list.

Siskin Early Learning Center is licensed by the Tennessee Department of Developmental Disabilities, approved as a Tennessee Non-public category 1 school and approved as a Tennessee child care center. Siskin Early Learning Center is a Three Star rated child care center.

Siskin Early Learning Center appreciates the generous financial support of the Hamilton County Schools and their participation in the planning and development of each child's program.

Classroom Staffing

Classrooms are staffed by teaching teams composed of a lead teacher and teaching partners. Staff hours are staggered so that there are familiar adults with the children throughout the day. The center strives to keep consistent floaters and substitutes so that children and families can get to know them. Staff are asked to introduce themselves to families but please feel free to introduce yourself to any staff that you do not recognize.

Lead teachers for classrooms of children three years and above are all certified teachers. They have degrees in Early Childhood/Special Education or Special Education. Certified teachers work limited days during the months of June and July. They will work 16 days of HCDE Extended School Year. HCDE determines these dates. However, the teaching partners that are familiar with the children continue year-round. All teachers and teaching partners

receive many hours of training and the opportunity to attend conferences in order to keep current on evidence-based practices.

Classroom Day

Schedule

Each classroom has a daily schedule designed by the teachers to meet the needs of the particular children in that group. These schedules may change from day to day depending on class interests and activities, but everyone has a predictable routine for breakfast, lunch, snack, and rest time. Your child's teacher will share this with you. Activities are arranged so that there are active ones and then quieter ones scheduled throughout the day.

Please bring your child to the center in clothes designed for active indoor and outdoor play. These should be clothes that you and your child are willing to get dirty. We will go outside each day, weather permitting, so help your child dress appropriately including shoes for running (**no crocs, flip flops, or sandals**) and a jacket when necessary. On sunny days please apply sunscreen at home and then we will reapply with your consent.

Clothing

Each child should have at least one change of clothing in their cubbie. **Please label all clothing with the child's name.** During the toilet training process please bring several changes of clothing and underwear. The Department of Education licensing requires a protective barrier when using cloth diapers, training pants or underwear for children who frequently have accidents.

Toys from home

Please leave personal toys at home or in the car rather than bringing them into the center. A soft toy may be brought for naptime use only. When personal toys are brought to the center they get lost or broken. They can also cause disagreements and hurt feelings. Some classrooms have show and tell one day a week and we encourage children to bring a book, photo or a treasure from nature to share with the class.

Outside play

Outside play is a part of our daily program. The Department of Education licensing **requires** that we take children outside daily when the temperature (adjusted for wind chill and heat index) is between 32 degrees and 95 degrees and it is not raining. Children should be properly dressed depending on weather conditions. If your child is not well enough to play outside, he/she is not well enough to attend for that day.

Nap time

Soft mats are provided for children to nap on. Parents are requested to bring a crib sheet to go over the mats and a cover. Nap time is scheduled for 1 ½ hours per day. The Department of Education licensing requires that all children have at least a 30 minute rest time (or quiet activity). If children do not go to sleep after 30 minutes quiet activities are planned. Each room has naptime routines such as reading a book, putting on soft lights and music. Teachers rub the backs of the children that respond to soothing touch.

Birthdays

Celebrating birthdays is an exciting and anticipated event in our daily lives. Each classroom has unique traditions and celebrations. For example, in the past some classrooms have allowed the birthday child to decorate a letter that is displayed in a special place in the room, a special job, and/or select a special activity. If you would like to join in celebrating your child's birthday in their classroom, please let the teacher know in advance. We can work together to make this day special for your child.

Signing In and Signing Out

Your child must be accompanied at all times to and from the center & classroom by an adult and checked in and out using the computer system located at the main entrance to the Early Learning Center. This is a Tennessee licensing requirement. Any person authorized to pick up a child from the center will be assigned a registration number to set up an account at the computer station. The adult must remember the Identification number and password they create and use this in order to check their child in or out each day. **Not only is this a requirement from the State, but in the event of an emergency it is imperative to know which children are present. This is done through families checking their children in and out at the computer station.** Administrative staff will check children who are transported by bus in and out each day. Children will be released only to those adults whose names are provided in the child's enrollment papers. Only persons 16 years or older may pick up or drop off a child. Children will not be released to anyone whose behavior may place the child at risk. **If a child is not checked in or checked out, you will automatically be billed a \$5.00 fee per child per day.** Again, in the event of an emergency it is imperative to know which children are present. This also ensures proper staffing ratios for the day.

Because classroom staff are preparing the room for the day, they **cannot accept a child earlier than 7:30 a.m.** You may be asked to wait in the hallway with your child if you arrive before 7:30 a.m. If your child will be arriving at school after 8:30 a.m. due to a doctor's appointment, etc., please notify the classroom staff regarding your expected arrival time in order for meal preparation.

Parental access to pick up children is mandatory by law. If a legal guardian or parent is not allowed pick up a child, we must have court documentation stating these guidelines.

Families may add additional names to the pickup list by notifying the receptionist or administrative assistant in writing. As a safety precaution staff will ask the pickup person for identification before allowing them to take your child from the center.

You will find a parent information board with the menu, lesson plans, upcoming events and other notes that help us keep you informed located outside your child's classroom door.

Siskin Children's Institute staff members are not permitted to transport children to/from the center or sign a child in or out of the center.

CURRICULUM

Siskin Early Learning Center is committed to ensuring a high quality early childhood education program for every young child through our partnerships with families. We utilize an integrated, developmentally appropriate, universally designed curriculum that is flexible and comprehensive to make sure that all children have access to program participation regardless of need, ability, or background. We provide opportunities for rich learning and relationship building through play and in-depth project investigations. Our curriculum is guided by the Creative Curriculum, the Tennessee Early Learning Standards and The Engagement Model, which is research based and follows the national guidelines for best practice in early childhood education. As you move through our center you will also see influences from the philosophy of the schools of Reggio Emilia in Italy.

Our program not only addresses the basic needs of all children but plays to the strengths, individual needs and interests of each child. At Siskin Early Learning Center we have created

a safe place where we partner with families to facilitate children's growth and learning. Each classroom environment is carefully designed to enhance learning through incidental teaching. Structured flexibility and routines provide a predictable and safe environment in which children feel comfortable to play, explore and grow. From infant rooms with soft surfaces for rolling and crawling to Pre-K classrooms with interest centers (blocks, dramatic play, games and toys, art, discovery, sand and water, computer, library, and music), each classroom creates opportunities to learn through play and engage with a variety of materials supported by adults. Each day consists of a balance of learning activities that foster language development and emerging literacy, the understanding of number concepts, gross and fine motor skills, self-help skills and social and emotional development. The children participate in a combination of large and small group activities and individual choice in order to develop these skills. The classrooms meet state and national standards and implement developmentally appropriate practices.

We also address the curricular needs of children through the **Project Approach**. The Project Approach builds on the children's natural curiosity. Teachers choose a project based on the children's interests. Children and teachers interact together to question, problem-solve, communicate, reflect and make connections to the real world. Through the project approach, children are learning to use critical thinking skills as they are exploring each project. Literacy and math skills are naturally embedded into the projects.

Our classroom environments are inspired by the **Reggio Emilia** philosophy, which originated in Northern Italy. True to the Reggio Emilia approach, we think of the environment as an additional teacher. Unique materials are intended to promote exploration. The materials of the classrooms are always changing based on children's interests and their projects. The classroom feels more like home and the materials are natural and inspire exploration. The role of the teacher as a researcher is enhanced by the teacher's ongoing observation and documentation of children's work and play. Teaching is intentional and relevant. Teaching staff engage actively in learning and promote investigation alongside children. In addition to using the environment to promote child engagement, classrooms are also organized to promote independence, social interaction and creativity.

Siskin Early Learning Center uses a collaborative approach to ensure the success of all children. We have a variety of support staff working in collaboration with teachers to adapt curriculum and materials. Teachers are trained to use a variety of teaching strategies. We believe that all children can learn. We have high expectations for each child. We strive to prepare all children not only for their next educational environment but to become lifelong learners.

ASSESSMENT

Siskin Early Learning Center uses ongoing informal curriculum-based assessment to continually monitor program effectiveness, evaluate individual child progress, interests, and abilities while guiding teachers in the decision-making process.

All children are observed daily within familiar classroom routines. Teachers document observations using the TN Early Learning Standards which includes cognitive development, language skills, social/emotional development, and approaches to learning, health and physical development. Families communicate with teachers on their child's progress related to the developmental continuum in order to participate in guiding their child's program. A

formal report is generated and provided to families three times per year and a family conference is held twice a year.

The first five years are critical in a child's life. The sooner a delay or disability is discovered the sooner you can help the child receive the supports needed to make a difference.

When there are concerns about a child's development the teacher and center director will meet with the family. Observations will be shared and information will be provided to the family on how they may obtain a formal assessment.

GUIDANCE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

All young children are developing the social skills that enable them to play cooperatively with other children and to function as part of a group. Often when children have inappropriate behaviors it is because they haven't yet learned the skills to negotiate, to ask for what they need or to join in play with others, without grabbing, pushing, or hitting. Children are still learning how their behavior might impact others.

Siskin Early Learning Center utilizes a positive behavior support approach. Behavior is managed by providing children with clear expectations about what behavior is acceptable and by encouraging, with positive reinforcement, those behaviors that are valued, while downplaying and redirecting those that are not acceptable. Corporal punishment and humiliation are never used.

Conflicts are seen as opportunities for supporting children's learning. We work with the children to identify the disagreement and then generate possible solutions that can be agreed upon by everyone involved. This form of conflict resolution, sometimes called "social problem solving," is more respectful of children than a teacher-dictated solution and builds social and cognitive skills.

Our goals for children during conflicts are that they:

- Calm themselves down enough to negotiate
- Find words for their feelings, needs, and wants
- Listen to others' feelings, need and wants
- Develop and agree to a mutually satisfying solution and
- Continue to play together and understand each other's feelings.

In the case of a persistent or repeated problem, we inform and consult with a child's family and work together on a collaborative plan for helping the child. Staff considers the developmental stage of the child, what has occurred before the behavior, the consequences and other factors that may be relevant to the behavior. If necessary a behavior specialist may be consulted to help the teacher and family. A formal functional behavior assessment may be needed to assist in developing an individualized behavior support plan. Consultation with the family and parental consent would be obtained before completing a formal functional behavioral assessment. It may be appropriate to consider additional interventions only when these proactive prevention strategies are ineffective or do not result in behavioral changes. If the child exhibits behavior(s) which interfere with his/her development, or ability to participate in educational activities or if the behavior is a danger to the child or others, a behavior plan may be appropriate, which includes additional intervention techniques. Siskin

Early Learning Center policy states that corporal punishment, verbal/physical/mental abuse, seclusion and other extreme interventions WILL NOT BE USED by the staff.

Specific staff members are trained in Handle with Care, a behavior management system that uses a safe physical restraint. With parent permission and in a crisis situation this intervention may be used. Families will always be notified when it has been necessary to use this intervention.

Biting Procedure

Young children experiment with biting and other aggressive behaviors for several reasons, most of which are developmentally appropriate. Teething, sensory exploration, experimenting with cause and effect, imitating, emerging autonomy, need for attention, holding on or letting go, and expressing feelings such as frustration, anger, tension, anxiety or excitement can be reasons for such behavior. The following outlines procedure for dealing with biting incidents:

1. Immediate attention/first aid will be given to the child who has been bitten. Ice will be put on the bite, or if the skin is broken the bite will be washed with soap and water.
 2. Stern verbal disapproval of the biting will be expressed to the biter (i.e. "No biting" said in a stern voice).
 3. The biting incident will be reported on the standard incident report form and both families will be informed personally and privately the same day. The names of the children are kept confidential.
 4. When ongoing biting is experienced in a classroom, a plan will be developed in collaboration with the family outlining specific strategies to address the behavior.
 5. After the plan is developed a letter will be sent home informing all families of the behavior and strategies that are in place to address the behavior.
 6. The teacher and administrators will be available to answer questions, discuss any concerns or share current resources on biting.
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ADMISSIONS/DISCHARGES

Part of what makes Siskin Early Learning Center unique is that we serve children with and without disabilities. If a family is interested in enrolling at the center an application is completed and the child is placed on an applicant list. As spaces become available families are contacted.

The Hamilton County Department of Education contracts with the Siskin Early Learning Center to serve a number of their children. When children are identified by the Department of Education as having a disability, an Individualized Education Plan is developed. The plan is used to determine where it can be implemented. If Siskin Early Learning Center is determined the best place for the plan to be implemented, HCDE contacts the center for placement.

General Admission Requirements

- Pre-enrollment tour of center
- Physical examination and current immunization record on the Tennessee Department of Health Child Care Immunization Record as required by Tennessee state law or a

- statement from the healthcare provider if immunizations are delayed. Information must be current within the last three months.
- Child must be between 6 weeks and 5 years of age.
 - Certified copy of birth certificate and a copy of child's social security card
 - Court documentation must be provided for children with legal guardians or custody agreements.
 - Copy of proof of insurance
 - Application and enrollment paperwork completed.

General Discharge Criteria

The following constitute grounds for discharge from the program:

- Child reaches the maximum age-limit for the program
- Failure to obtain cooperation from the family regarding program policies and procedures
- Failure to pay tuition and fees in a timely manner, not to exceed 2 weeks
- Excessive absenteeism
- On determination that Siskin Early Learning Center cannot meet the needs of the child
- Excessive infringements of the 5:30 p.m. closing time
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For children attending through the contract with Hamilton County Department of Education:

- The child no longer qualifies for exceptional education services.
- Based on the Individualized Education Plan the child needs a less or more restrictive environment or another program or agency would be more appropriate to meet the needs of the child.
- After five consecutive days of absence HCDE must be notified and the team may meet to evaluate the child's program plan.

Siskin Early Learning Center is a private organization and maintains the right to decline or discontinue services. All final admission and re-enrollment decisions are made by the Administrative Team.

General Suspension Criteria

- Failure to keep immunizations current as required by Tennessee state law
- Failure of parent to return required health forms
- The child's behavior is determined to be an extreme danger to self or others

For children with an Individualized Education Plan:

- If the child's behavior is determined to be a danger to self or others, suspension may be enforced in accordance with IDEA guidelines regarding the discipline of children with disabilities.

Discharge Process

- **A two week written notice** of intent to withdraw must be turned into the Administrative Coordinator. Tuition charges will cease no sooner than 14 days after notice is received, regardless of child's attendance.
- Complete any applicable paperwork.
- Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) may request a copy of the child's Tennessee Department of Health Child Care Immunization Record.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

TUITION

Tuition is based on an annual rate broken down into a bi-weekly or monthly payment schedule. This breakdown will eliminate the need to credit back holidays and school vacation periods, and the need for adjustments for inclement weather days. Each family is entitled to one vacation credit per school year. The amount credited will be equal to half of one week's tuition. **In order to process the tuition credit, we need to receive a written notice two weeks in advance stating the vacation week requested.**

Families are required to make the first tuition and/or extended care payment for each child at enrollment time, in addition to any applicable registration fees. Registration fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

Families are asked to sign an authorization for the payments to be drafted from their checking account bi-weekly or charged to a credit card on a monthly basis. **We do not accept American Express.** At enrollment, Siskin Early Learning Center will provide the necessary authorization form for signatures and bank account numbers from which payments will be drafted. (A copy of a check on that account provides this information.) Families are responsible for any charges resulting from insufficient funds. Families are also responsible for notifying the Administrative Coordinator of any changes in credit card or bank account information.

Children with child care certificates through the Department of Human Services will have a tuition adjustment based upon the level of the certificate. Child care certificate parent fees must be paid when applicable. Families entering the program with a child care certificate are still responsible for any registration fees. If the child care certificate expires or is not renewed, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the ELC and begin paying full tuition.

Additional fees may apply for clinical services. Any miscellaneous fees will be billed by monthly statements and can be paid monthly by check. **This may include late pick-up fees and/or being charged for not following the check-in / check-out policy.**

Food Service fees are included in the tuition. If your child qualifies for free/reduced lunches, tuition adjustments will be made according to current USDA reimbursement rates. Families may complete an eligibility form any time during the school year.

Tuition Program Rate Structure:

Classrooms 1-8, 11 -13

Days per week	<u>Annual Tuition</u>	Monthly Rate <u>(Credit card only)</u>	Bi-Weekly Rate <u>(Bank draft only)</u>
Two	\$5,683.00	\$474.00	\$237.00
Three	\$8,191.00	\$683.00	\$342.00
Five	\$10,755.00	\$896.00	\$448.00

Classrooms 9, 10 and 14 (Infant & Young Toddler Classrooms)

Days per week	<u>Annual Tuition</u>	Monthly Rate <u>(Credit card only)</u>	Bi-Weekly Rate <u>(Bank draft only)</u>
** Two	\$6076.00	\$506.00	\$253.00
** Three	\$8680.00	\$723.00	\$362.00

Five \$11,691.00 \$974.00 \$487.00

**** In order to receive Part-time status in the infant/toddler classrooms, there needs to be another family that can fill the vacant days to fill the 5 day a week spot.**

Each additional sibling will receive a 10% discount off of the oldest child’s tuition. This does not apply to part-time students.

There is a \$10 late fee charge for pickup after 5:30 p.m. and an additional \$10 charge for every 10 minute period thereafter. There is also a \$5 fee each time your children are not checked in or out of the center each day. These fees will be enforced and will automatically be charged to the account that we have on file. Any billing questions should be directed to the Administrative Coordinator at 648-1769.

Hamilton County Department of Education funded children:

HCDE Tuition/Funding Source: Siskin Early Learning Center is committed to providing a quality early childhood education program to each child. For those children contracted by HCDE, the allocated funds shall constitute full payment for educational programming and parents will not be billed any additional amount. The cost of educating a child at Siskin Early Learning Center far exceeds funds provided by the Department of Education. Therefore, each child’s program is underwritten by Siskin Children’s Institute. For those children affected by other funding sources, the allocated funds and any available third-party payment sources will be utilized whenever private insurance payment is applicable.

Food Services/Pricing Program: Food Service fees are a part of the tuition for private pay children. For children attending through contract with HCDE, fees are not included and determined by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Payments must be pre-paid monthly by bank draft. Payment arrangements will be made at enrollment with a representative from the Finance Department. Families are responsible for any charges resulting from insufficient funds. Please see the Child Nutrition Services section of this handbook for more information.

All families may complete an Income Eligibility Form to determine if they qualify for free or reduced lunch. If eligibility is met, food service fees will be adjusted. Families may complete an eligibility form any time during the school year.

Food Service fees are based on completion of an income eligibility application, which is completed at registration. All lunch rates are based on USDA rates, which will be published and distributed at registration.

Extended Care: Families of children attending our program through a contract with HCDE **may** have the option of enrolling their child in our program past 3 p.m. as space is available to maintain safe ratios and the child’s needs are able to be met. Prior approval from the center director is needed.

Extended care fees for approved participants are as follows:

HCDE	Monthly Rate (Credit card only)	Bi-Weekly Rate (Bank draft only)
Two-Day	\$140.00	\$70.00
Three-Day	\$205.00	\$103.00
Five-Day	\$314.00	\$157.00

Fees must be pre-paid by bank draft or credit card. Families are responsible for any charges resulting from insufficient funds. Payment arrangements will be made at enrollment with a representative from the Finance Department. Your child will not be eligible for extended care services if your account is not kept current. **If children enrolled in the Hamilton County program but not enrolled in the extended care program are not picked up by 3:15 p.m., an \$18.00 extended care fee per occurrence will be applied immediately.** Extended care has limited space available, so please make every effort to be timely when picking up your child.

Inclement Weather & Children funded by Hamilton County DOE

When HCDE has a delay in start time or early dismissal and the Siskin ELC keeps normal hours, a child funded by HCDE can attend their regular time (8:00 – 3:00) for no additional fee. If HCDE hours change, special transportation buses will run on an alternate schedule, parents have the option for their children to remain at the center until 3:00. Parents must notify the center with this change of request.

When HCDE closes due to inclement weather and the Siskin ELC remains open, a child funded by HCDE can come for the daily rate of \$45. Cash or check must be given to the Administrative Coordinator at the time of drop off.

FOR ALL ENROLLED CHILDREN

Inclement Weather

At times the ELC may close due to the threat of severe weather. Our goal is to keep children and staff safe at all times. Families will be notified immediately of these decisions through School Cast.

Extended Leaves

In the event of the need for an extended leave, please contact the Siskin Early Learning Center Director to discuss options.

Past Due Accounts

If a child's account becomes more than 2 weeks past due, services will be discontinued until the balance is paid in full.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Health Requirements

Before admission to Siskin Early Learning Center, all children are required to submit the following:

- Physical examination and current immunization record on Tennessee Child Care Record as required by Tennessee state law or a statement from the healthcare provider if immunizations are delayed. Information must be current within the last three months. For immunization exemptions please see the Director of the Early Learning Center.
- Immunization records from outside Tennessee must be transferred onto the Tennessee Child Care Record. Please visit the Hamilton County Health Department at 921 East 3rd Street or call 209-8050 for more information.
- Health history completed by the family.

Health records required prior to each subsequent school year include:

- Current immunization record on Tennessee Child Care Record as required by Tennessee state law or a statement from the healthcare provider if immunizations are delayed.

A form is needed listing the name of your physician, who to contact in case of an emergency, who may pick up your child and any medical conditions of the child which may require specific attention.

To provide the optimal program for your child, please inform the school of any changes in medication or health conditions as they occur. Please let us know if you have questions or need assistance with your child's health plan.

Insurance

Siskin Early Learning Center does not provide insurance coverage for children who may be injured during center activities. Insurance for such injuries is the responsibility of parents.

Illness

Bringing a sick child to the center exposes him/her to other secondary illnesses, exposes the staff and other children to illnesses and can be life threatening to our children with weak immune systems.

Frequent minor illnesses are common in a center with young children. Your child should remain at home for their health and safety as well as the health and safety of their classmates if he/she exhibits:

- a fever of 100 degrees or more (within the last 24 hours)
- two or more unexplained episodes of diarrhea or vomiting (within the last 24 hours)
- exclusion is required for all diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper and toilet trained children if the diarrhea is causing "accidents."
- unexplained discharge from eyes and/or ears
- unexplained rash and/or quickly spreading rash
- mouth sores with drooling that the child cannot control unless the child's doctor states the child is noninfectious
- skin sores that are weeping fluid and on exposed body surface that cannot be covered with a waterproof dressing and/or are painful with standard care of child.
- difficulty or rapid breathing
- the child's illness prevents him/her participating comfortably in activities as determined by staff members (tired, pale, lack of appetite, confused, cranky, or excessive whining)
- illness resulting in a need for care that is greater than staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children (tired, pale, lack of appetite, confused, cranky or excessive whining)

When a child becomes ill at school, parents will be contacted and expected to take the child home as soon as possible. We do not have staff that can give children the one-on-one care needed when they are ill. Please make sure to update any phone changes to the center office regarding where the parent or designated other may be reached in case of emergency situations. When appropriate, a child who is waiting on his/her parent for pickup will be secluded with adult supervision from the other children. Your child **can not return** until they

are fever free for **24 hours without receiving fever reducing medication**. Please be mindful that we serve children with complex medical needs and weak immune systems.

**The above policy is being currently reviewed by community members in the field of medicine, there may be changes based on their input. If any changes are made, parents will be notified immediately.

We do not have sufficient staff to keep a child indoors. If a child is well enough to come to the center, they should be well enough to play outside.

Please notify the center if your child is diagnosed with chicken pox, measles, scarlet fever, hepatitis, herpes (fever blisters, etc.), infectious diarrhea, whooping cough, shigella or other diseases so that we may notify other families.

We work to prevent the spread of communicable diseases by practicing careful sanitation. Children and staff wash hands before and after toileting, after sneezing or coughing, after outdoor time, before meals and many other times during the day. Toys are sanitized daily. We ask that when your child arrives at the center they go to the bathroom to wash hands as a means to prevent the spread of infections. Each child only uses his or her own bedding and mat.

If your child has an allergy please obtain an Eating and Feeding Evaluation form to be completed by the doctor indicating the type of allergy, symptoms, foods to be avoided and anything else that the child should not be exposed to. For severe life-threatening allergies an "emergency care plan" will be developed and posted.

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes that are appropriate for the weather. **Jewelry, flip flops, Crocs and sandals are prohibited** for safety reasons. Teething necklaces may not be worn while your child is at the center due to being a choking hazard.

Medications

The Federal Drug and Agricultural Department recommends that no over-the-counter medicine (Dimetapp, Robitussin, Triaminic, Tylenol cold and other cold medications) be given to children under the age of two. Due to this recommendation we will not be able to administer any medication for this age group without a doctor's order.

Medication from a doctor should be in the original prescription bottle with the child's name on the bottle and dosage to be given.

Parents should complete a medication form for all prescription medications. **Medication must be removed from the child's bag upon arrival** and given to the classroom staff.

We will not dispense any fever reducing medicine. Tylenol will not be given simply as a fever reducer. Children with fever of 100 degrees or more should remain at home for their health and safety as well as the health and safety of others. **They are not able to return to school the next day. They will be able to return when they have been fever free without fever reducing medicines.**

Written parental permission is needed for lotions, Chap Stick, diaper ointment and sunscreen. Please see your child's teacher in order for these to be administered to your child.

Nut Free Environment: Siskin Early Learning Center is a nut free environment due to the increasing number of children with severe nut allergies.

Our nurse and/or classroom staff are not allowed to remove ticks and/or splinters. They are not allowed to remove foreign objects/items from a child's ears, teeth or nose. Staff will call the parent and the parent may come and remove the item, tick, splinter, etc. or wait until the child gets home.

Toilet Training Procedure

Toilet training shall never be started until a child has been in the program long enough to feel comfortable. Children will not be forced to sit on the toilet for any length of time. We will consider beginning the toileting training process **when there are indications that the child is developmentally ready**. We have a set of readiness questions that both caregivers and parents use to determine when a child is ready to begin toilet training. These questions will be applied to individual situations, and families and center staff will come to mutual agreement regarding a child's readiness to be trained. Toilet training at our center should be a non-stressful experience that is appropriate for each child's individual development and involves the child, parents and caregivers. We will work with parents and caregivers to ensure that toilet training is consistent between home and the center. We will use written materials and conferences to establish a mutually agreeable plan before a child actually begins the process. Parents/caregivers and school staff will maintain communication about progress and will share any concerns or questions they have.

Our potties are child size and we have the ability to accommodate specific individual needs. Potty chairs or potty seats brought from home may not be used.

Safety

All visitors must sign in and out with the Front Desk and obtain a visitor's badge. This procedure includes families of children unless they are dropping off or picking up a child. Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children at arrival and pickup each day in the hallways and parking lots. **Please carry your child or hold your child's hand when entering and exiting the building and in the parking lot.** Children may not be left in the car while another child is being dropped off or picked up. Please do not leave valuables visible in your car. Also turn off your car and remember to lock doors.

Smoking

Siskin Early Learning Center is a smoke-free campus. This policy includes all building areas, entrances, traffic circle and the parking lot.

Movies and Videos

Videos and movies are shown on a limited basis with approval by the Siskin Early Learning Center Director. They are limited to a maximum of 20 minutes, and must be educationally relevant. iPads may be used to research project topics or as a supplemental resource. Programs, movies and games with violent or adult content will not be allowed. Parents will be provided information about videos, movies and television programs and their ratings before they are shown. Other activities shall be available to children during television/movie viewing. Developmentally appropriate computer technologies and programs are utilized to support the curriculum and computer use must be monitored by staff.

Emergency and Courtesy Notification System

Siskin Children’s Institute uses the SchoolCast alert system to ensure we communicate with parents, other caregivers and staff as quickly and efficiently as possible in the event of an emergency or another event of high importance.

SchoolCast is an online notification system that sends text messages, e-mails and pre-recorded phone calls within minutes of an emergency. We use SchoolCast primarily to alert you of time-sensitive notices (for example, closing early due to snow). The system also can be used to alert you of “courtesy” notices like reminders about scheduled holiday closings or field trips.

The information you provide us is safe, and it will not be shared outside Siskin Children’s Institute.

For the system to be as effective as possible, we need you to keep your contact information up to date in the SchoolCast system. When you register your child at our learning center, the information you provide will be entered into the SchoolCast system.

If you have questions about SchoolCast, please do not hesitate to contact us! Primary SchoolCast contact is the Administrative Coordinator at 423.648.1769.

Emergency Contact Information

Please notify the center office if any of your contact numbers or the names and numbers of those you authorize to pick up your child change throughout the year.

Emergency Reunification Procedure

In the event of an emergency, the Institute staff will follow the appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of all children as outlined in our program policy and procedures. **Children may not be dropped off or picked up during an emergency drill or an actual emergency.** In the event an off-site evacuation becomes necessary for the safety of children and staff, the following reunification procedure will be followed:

- Children and staff, depending on the nature of the emergency and the recommendations of community emergency agencies, will relocate to the Chattanooga Convention Center, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library (Main Branch), Downtown YMCA or other safe site to be determined. Transportation will be determined at the time based on specific circumstances and the distance from the Center.
- Early Learning Center staff may furnish information to major television and radio stations for announcements that give the necessity for and location of an emergency pickup of your child. Also, the staff will notify parents and other listed contacts in your child’s record. Whenever possible, SchoolCast will be utilized. It is important that we always have current information.
- In addition, there will be signs on the doors or around the parking lot of Siskin Early Learning Center giving directions to the emergency reunification site. If possible, a center staff member will remain on site to also give directions.
- When you reach the reunification location, there will be signs and staff to direct you to the proper place to pick up your child. Photo identification will be required. Please be sure that you, or the person picking up your child, bring this identification.
- To insure the safety of the children and staff please pick up your children as soon as possible after notification.

Be assured that your child's safety will be our primary concern at all times during this type of event.

If you would like additional information about the Early Learning Center's Health and Safety policies and procedures, contact the office. Emergency drills are completed in accordance with regulations.

Child Abuse/Neglect

Response to Suspected/Alleged Abuse and Neglect

- A. According to Tennessee law, any person who has knowledge of, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child has been abused must report it to local law enforcement authorities or the Department of Children's Services.
- B. Each state designates individuals, typically by professional group, who are mandated by law to report child maltreatment. Mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect, according to Tennessee state statutes, include **all** citizens. Professionals included are health and mental health care professionals, social work professionals, education/child care professionals, law enforcement professionals, judges, etc. Other citizens include neighbors, relatives, friends, and any other person.
- C. The "reason to suspect" means that indicators of abuse have been seen, the child has disclosed abuse, or there is a "gut" feeling that something may not be right. It does not mean that there is certainty that abuse has occurred. Reporting abuse, or suspected abuse, is actually a request for professionals to investigate further.
- D. According to Tennessee Code Annotated, 37-1-102(b) (1), (12), (21), "Abuse" exists when a person under the age of 18 is suffering from, has sustained, or may be in immediate danger of suffering from or sustaining a wound, injury, disability or physical or mental condition caused by brutality, neglect, or other actions or inactions of a parent, relative, guardian, or caretaker.
- E. At Siskin Early Learning Center, in accordance with Tennessee state law, suspected cases of child abuse or neglect shall be immediately reported by any person to local law enforcement or the Department of Children's Services. Any staff member may make a confidential report but is encouraged to notify the Director of the Early Learning Center that a report has been filed.
- F. Any citizen is required by law to cooperate with the Department of Children's Services (DCS), law enforcement, and other investigators regarding cases of abuse and/or neglect.
 1. As required for any citizen, Siskin Early Learning Center staff shall cooperate with investigations of child abuse and/or neglect by providing access to the records of children and staff and by allowing investigators to interview children and staff.
 2. Siskin Early Learning Center staff shall protect the child by requiring the investigator to provide identification and by knowing who is entitled to custody of the child.
 3. The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) shall be notified before a child leaves the premises except in emergency circumstances, or as follows:
 - a) An investigator may take a child off the premises of the agency if he/she has obtained custody of the child through

- voluntary placement agreement with the parent, through court order, or through emergency assumption of custody without parental permission, or
- b) if the child's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) is present and approves, or
 - c) In conjunction with investigative procedures under the child abuse laws.
- G. Failure to cooperate for children in the case of an approved child care agency is, by itself, grounds for suspension, denial or revocation of the agency's license. Interference with a DCS investigation by the child care provider may result in criminal charges.
- H. The Siskin Early Learning Center policy promotes developmentally appropriate, positive behavior supports and prohibits the use of seclusion, corporal punishment, verbal, physical, or mental abuse. Punishment that is shaming, humiliating, frightening, or injurious to children shall not be used.
- I. The following provisions apply to alleged instances of abuse or neglect by staff:
- 1. Alleged/suspected instances of staff abuse and/or neglect are to be reported immediately to the Director of the Early Learning Center.
 - 2. The Director is responsible for relaying the details of the alleged incident directly to the Human Resources Manager and President of the Institute.
 - 3. In accordance with state laws, alleged instances of abuse and/or neglect by staff are also immediately reported to local law enforcement by the Director.
 - 4. If allegations of abuse and/or neglect in the Siskin Early Learning Center are sustained, disciplinary action will be taken as described in the Institute's Personnel Policies.

For more information about child abuse and/or neglect, call or visit the following resources:

- Siskin Children's Institute Resource Library
- Children's Advocacy Center, 419 Market Street, Chattanooga, TN 37402. Phone: (423) 266-6918
- The Child Abuse Hotline in your area. Hamilton County: 1-855-209-4226.
- The Department of Children's Services, Cordell Hull Building, 7th Floor, Nashville, TN 37243-0290. Phone: (615) 741-9701.
- Local law enforcement.
- National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, nccanch@calib.com, 1-800-FYI-3366.
- Childcare Complaint Hotline: 800-462-8261

DROP-OFF AND PICKUP

The safety of your child while at the center is a big responsibility; therefore, we need to make you aware of safety practices in the parking area and driveways surrounding the center. **THE SPEED LIMIT IS 5 MILES PER HOUR.** Please observe this limit. Please stop at all stop signs, follow the one-way signs, use the crosswalks and park in designated visitor parking areas or spots marked 10 Minute Parking. **Only park in the designated parking spaces available in the traffic circle. Parking your car in other areas of the circle becomes a safety risk to our children and families. Emergency vehicles need to use the traffic circle during emergencies.** The only parking allowed under the awning is in the “10 minute parking” spaces and buses as they are loading and unloading.

Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children at arrival and pickup each day in the hallways and parking lots. Please carry your child or hold your child’s hand when entering and exiting the building and in the parking lot. Children may not be left in the car while another child is being dropped off or picked up. Please do not leave valuables visible in your car. Also turn off your car and lock it.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation may be available to and from the center for those children whose program is funded through contract agencies and as determined by the individualized plan. In the interest of maintaining a safe and efficient transportation system, we ask that you become familiar with the following guidelines regarding transportation.

- Call Durham regarding all concerns about your child's transportation at 209-5685. If your concerns are not addressed to your satisfaction, you may call the center office.
- It is important that you bring your child to the bus at the appointed time. The driver and rider cannot leave the bus. The drivers can wait no longer than three minutes for a child to be brought to the bus. Please be aware that pickup and drop-off times may vary slightly when weather is bad, children are absent or a substitute driver is driving.
- You must be present to pick up your child when he/she is driven home from school. If you are not present, the driver will return your child to the Institute and you will be called. If we are unable to reach you or an emergency contact by 6 p.m. it is our policy to call the Department of Human Services. Extended care service fees may also be charged when applicable.
- A change in residence could affect your child's transportation status. Please call the office immediately to discuss any change of address that may affect your child's transportation availability, route and times. Institute staff will notify Durham with the appropriate information. The route change may take up to 10 business days. You will need to make arrangements to transport your child until the change is in place.
- Please do not ask that Durham pick up or drop off your child at a different location for one day.
- Severe weather conditions may necessitate cancellation of transportation. Durham follows Hamilton County Department of Education in canceling or delaying transportation due to weather. Listen to your radio and local TV for information on school and transportation cancellations and/or delays. In the event that the HCDE

closes for an extended amount of time, we may decide to open without providing the services of Durham. Parents may choose to utilize care during these times for a fee. Please watch the local news stations for information regarding Siskin Early Learning Center.

- Please notify Durham if your child will not be riding the bus due to illness, doctors' appointments, etc.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Siskin Early Learning Center believes that the family is a child's first teacher and that collaboration, respect, and family involvement in the team approach to early education are paramount. Research has shown a clear connection between child achievement and family involvement. Therefore, parents are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of their child's program.

There are many opportunities throughout the year to be involved. Opportunities will be shared in the newsletter, bulletin boards, and classroom correspondence as well as attending Siskin family events or trainings. Please discuss with your child's teacher ways that you can be involved in the classroom. If you have a special skill that you would like to share with the center or classroom please let your child's teacher know.

Siskin Family Association

The purpose of the Siskin Family Association (SFA) is to support the center's mission by:

- Promoting fellowship among members by developing and coordinating special events to encourage the participation of families, children, faculty, staff and alumni, with the emphasis on building relationships among families.
- Developing a support system whereby families can help other families who are in need of information or practical advice on caring for children of all abilities.
- Supporting volunteer efforts that enhance the educational experience of our center.
- Supporting various fund-raising activities that support our programs.
- Participating in events or activities that show our appreciation to the faculty and staff.
- Encouraging efforts that help children participate in meaningful ways in their communities, helping to build on the philosophy that we are all contributors in some way.

CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

Siskin Early Learning Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a Federal entitlement program administered by the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) and funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Child nutrition and mealtime learning are important components of the educational programming at Siskin Early Learning Center, and this program meets the developmental requirements of young children by serving foods that are developmentally appropriate, have high nutritional value, promote good health and reinforce the development of lifelong healthy eating habits. Enrolling in the meal program offers children the opportunity to be exposed to a variety of foods and share this experience with their peers.

Families must complete an income eligibility application for free or reduced meal expenses. All participants are assured confidentiality as it relates to income eligibility.

All families complete the **Nutrition Screening Form** in the registration packet

For students enrolled in the CACFP meal program, regulations allow substitutions of a required meal component if children are unable, because of medical or other special dietary needs, to consume or need a modification for food(s). An Eating and Feeding Evaluation Form must be completed by a physician yearly for diet restrictions and modifications. The Nutrition Department will provide an appropriate substitute meeting the nutritional guidelines of the CACFP meal components. A parent may choose not to participate in the meal program. **Parents are requested to meet the guidelines of the CACFP meals they send from home.** Staff will not cook or heat food sent to the center for children who do not participate in the meal program. Families of children who arrive after meals have been finished may be asked to remain with their child while they eat.

If your child participates in the CACFP meal program, all meal components are provided. Please contact the Administrative Coordinator at 648-1769 to discuss any changes to the CACFP meal program.

Eating food with children is as important as any other time of day in a child's life. Children learn lifelong habits and develop relationships with food and their bodies during meal times. It is our goal that meals will be relaxed and conversational times for children and staff to visit and enjoy their food. We will encourage children to try their food but not insist that children eat everything. Foods cannot be withheld for any reason.

The USDA food program is available to all children regardless of race, color, handicap, sex or national origin.

Meals brought from home should meet daily nutritional requirements.

- Breakfast should include three of the following: milk, vegetable, fruit, and/or grain.
- Lunch should include milk, meat/meat alternative, vegetable, fruit, and grain.
- Snack should include at least two of the following: milk, meat/meat alternative, vegetable, fruit, and/or grain.

For further information about CACFP, contact the Tennessee Department of Human Services, Child and Adult Care Services, at (615) 313-4749.

CIVIL RIGHTS/TITLE VI COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Anyone alleging racial/ethnic discrimination against Siskin Children's Institute personnel or agency admission policies may file a complaint with the facility's local Civil Rights/Title VI Coordinator or directly with the appropriate state agency which exercises quality assurance control over the agency's program. Complaints may also be filed with the Tennessee Human Rights Commission (state level); the Regional Office for Civil Rights; and/or the Department of Justice (federal level). A complaint may be filed at both the state and the federal levels, separately or concurrently, at any time during the process.

Any person believing they have been subjected to discrimination prohibited by Title VI requirements may file a written complaint with Siskin Children's Institute Civil Rights/Title VI Coordinator. Federal law requires complaints be filed within 180 calendar days of the last alleged incident.

A letter will be mailed to the complainant acknowledging receipt of the complaint within five (5) working days.

A fact-finding investigation will be conducted within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the complaint. The Civil Rights/Title VI Coordinator is responsible for this initial investigation.

Within five (5) days of completion of the investigation, a report will be given to the Director of School Operations. If the report includes a finding of violation of Title VI, the report will include proposed remedial action to be taken. Within five (5) calendar days after this report, the written findings will be given to the complainant. At this time the complainant will also be informed of their right to appeal to the state or federal level if there is a disagreement with investigation findings or the proposed remedial action.

It is the Tennessee Department of Education's policy to provide an environment free of discrimination and harassment of an individual because of that person's race, color, national origin, age (older than 40), sex, pregnancy, religion, creed, disability or any other category protected by state and/or federal law. If you feel your rights have been violated please contact:

Vickey Coleman, Ph.D

Title VI Compliance Director

710 James Robertson Parkway, 6th Floor

Nashville, TN 37243-0383

901-356-6324

Vickey.Coleman@tn.gov

Jeaninne Houck

Civil Rights/Title VI Coordinator

Siskin Children's Institute

423-648-1720

Jeaninne.houck@siskin.org

FAMILY CONFIDENTIALITY

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student records. According to FERPA:

- Parents have the right to review student records at any time.
- Parents have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be incorrect or misleading.
- Siskin Early Learning Center must have written permission to release any information from a student's record.

Our staff operates under a strict confidentiality philosophy and does not share any information about a child unless it is in the context of a professional relationship that involves people working directly with the child.

As a parent of a child in our Early Learning Center, it is important that you understand and comply with our confidentiality policies. **Parents who volunteer or visit the classrooms should be aware of the restrictions placed on our staff regarding confidentiality.** We realize no one intends to breach confidentiality guidelines, and better education about what is prohibited is the first step in ensuring we honor the confidentiality of everyone. For example:

It is not appropriate to:

- Ask someone if a child has a disability.
- Request specifics about a child's disability.
- Point out/identify a child with a disability enrolled in our learning center.
- **Take photographs or videos of children in the classroom, on the playground, etc.** (Note: Understandably, this may occur on occasion in birthday photos, etc., but parents are expected to attempt to limit exposure of children besides their own).
- **Post photos of children other than your own on ANY public medium (Facebook, other social media, personal website, via e-mail, etc.).**
- Use the name of a child with a disability in public (via public mediums, in speaking with others, etc.).
- Identify a child who receives a free or reduced lunch through the federal USDA program.

Please be diligent in adhering to these policies. Thank you for helping us protect the rights of children and families.

Observation Rooms

Observation rooms are provided as a courtesy to families, visitors and training participants. To ensure the confidentiality of children and families and to respect their rights and dignity, we ask that families only observe their child's classroom. In situations where observation of another classroom is appropriate, it must be facilitated by administrative staff by appointment. Please follow the rules of confidentiality posted in each observation room.

Videos or photographs are not to be taken from the observation rooms.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Grievance procedures are a systematic method of resolving concerns, complaints or differences of opinion that may develop regarding a child's program while enrolled in our center. Siskin Early Learning Center subscribes to the mandate that parents participate completely in the development of an appropriate program for their child. The center is also aware that parents may, at times, have questions, concerns or opinions about their child's program that may result in disagreement. If such a situation arises, the following internal steps will be followed so that parents will have an opportunity to voice their concerns. All complaints or concerns should be handled at the immediate point of dissent as an initial attempt at resolution. However, if this cannot be accomplished to the parent's, teachers or other professional's satisfaction, a grievance may be written by the person submitting the complaint and the following steps should be taken:

- If the parent, teacher or other professional cannot resolve the question, concern or complaint, a meeting should be convened with the Early Learning Center Director within one (1) week. Following the meeting, a decision should be given in writing within one (1) week.

- If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached from the procedure described above, the Institute President may be consulted. The President will provide a response to the person filing the grievance within one (1) week.
- If the Institute President is unable to resolve the situation, an appropriate committee of the Board of Directors will be consulted. The committee will provide a response to the person filing the grievance within one (1) week.
- If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, an appointment with an impartial third party shall be made. In addition, the person filing the grievance may be given the agency names and numbers below to contact to pursue the issue outside of the Institute.

To report suspected licensing violations or possible illegal childcare operations, call the Childcare Complaint Hotline at 1-877-542-2873. Questions or concerns regarding USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program should be directed to the USDA at (800) 424-9121.

The ARC of Hamilton County
Chattanooga (423) 624-6887

Disability Rights TN
Nashville (800) 342-1660

TN Early Intervention System
Nashville (800) 852-7157

TN Department of Education
Office of Special Education
Nashville (888) 212-3162

Outreach Services

Siskin Early Learning Center is a unique environment dedicated to the lifelong learning of a community of learners including children of all abilities, their families, staff, and trainees. To support the recruitment, training, and retention of professionals in the field, the Early Learning Center serves as a hands-on learning lab and model demonstration site for many area students, professionals, and community members. Through our outreach services we provide current and future educators and health professionals with knowledge, resources, and experiences to help them serve children in an inclusive environment.

Training

The Early Learning Center partners with area colleges and universities to provide dynamic and collaborative training opportunities. Professionals from area child care centers and education agencies participate in training opportunities at the Early Learning Center. These opportunities may include classroom observation, hands-on experiences and informational sessions.

In order to promote the safety of our children, all student training participants must complete a registration and orientation process including a confidentiality agreement, verification of TB screening and verification that their name is not listed on the child abuse registry. Training participants are identified with visible identification badges and Institute staff is responsible for the supervision of all training participants while at the Institute. Trainees may participate in programming at various levels determined appropriate by Siskin Early Learning Center and the partnering institutions. Each participant is oriented to the Institute mission and philosophy and may be offered but not limited to:

- Individualized orientations and training rotations
- Opportunities to observe children & staff through observation rooms and/or in classrooms
- Hands-on classroom experience with children of all abilities
- Opportunities to observe and/or participate in assessment procedures alongside professional staff at the Institute
- Opportunities to participate in IFSP/IEP meetings when appropriate

RIGHT TO REVIEW ALL EDUCATIONAL RECORDS

Your child's records are confidential and protected and may only be reviewed by the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and other authorized persons, such as program personnel and trainees, contract agencies, or state/federal representatives. Additional representatives chosen by the parent(s)/ legal guardian(s) may also review the record if written permission is provided. A record of parties obtaining access to your child's records, including name, access date and purpose for access is maintained in the student record. Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) have the right to timely access to examine all educational records related to your child or family. Program staff must respond to reasonable request for explanations and interpretations of the records. No fee may be charged to search for or review information from your child's records. Copies of any material pertaining to your child will be made available to you upon request. One copy of the record must be provided to parents free of charge. The center/LEA (Local Education Agency) must comply with your request for records without unnecessary delay and before any IFSP/IEP Team meeting or due process hearing, and in no case more than 10 days after the request has been made. Also, the center/LEA may presume that you or a representative of your choice have authority to inspect and review records relating to your child unless the center/LEA has evidence that you are not legally entitled to represent your child's educational interests because of separation, divorce, or other reason.

When any educational record contains information on your child and other children, you may only review the information related to your child. Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) must also be provided, upon request, a list of the types and location(s) of educational records collected, maintained, and/or used by the center. This may include screenings, evaluations, assessments, eligibility determinations, individualized educational programs, individual complaints dealing with the child or family, and/or any other area involving records about the child and family. If the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) feel that certain records are inaccurate, misleading or violate the privacy or other rights of the child or family, they have the right to request that they be removed or amended. The center must make the decision to either remove or amend the record within a reasonable time (no more than 45 days from the date of the request) or inform you of your right to request a local hearing. If decided in the hearing that the information is inaccurate, misleading or violates the child's rights, the center/LEA must inform you of this and amend the

record. If decided at the hearing that the information is not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child, the center/LEA shall inform the parent/legal guardian or eligible student of the right to place in the education record of the student a statement commenting on the information or setting forth any reasons for disagreeing with the decision of the center/LEA. Any such amendment or explanation placed in the child's records must be maintained by the center/LEA as long as the child's records are kept by the center/LEA. Any time the center/LEA releases or discloses the child's records, the amendment and your explanation must also be released/disclosed.

Exceptional Education records are kept for five years after the child is no longer enrolled in the program. After five years the records are destroyed. All other records are kept for one year after the child is no longer enrolled.

ADVOCACY SERVICES

The Arc of Hamilton County serves individuals with developmental disabilities. Services include advocacy, specific disability information and independent support coordination for Hamilton County and ten surrounding counties. Phone: (423) 624-6887 Online: www.thearchc.org

Children's Advocacy Center is an agency that coordinates efforts to assist abused children. The CAC offers services to victims and their families with a supportive response of counseling about sexual abuse and advocacy on behalf of the family. Other services include medical exams for child abuse victims, extended assessments, community education for both professionals and general community, prevention education program for children ages 4 to 18, and coordination of multidisciplinary team responsible for intervention and services to abused children. Phone: (423) 266-6918 Online: www.cachc.org

Support & Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP) provides information, support and training to parents of children with disabilities throughout Tennessee to help them to be effective partners with professionals to plan appropriate educational programs for their children. Phone: (800) 280-7837 Online: www.tnstep.org

TN Disability Pathfinder helps families find useful services and resources for people with disabilities across Tennessee. Phone (800) 640-4636 Online: www.familypathfinder.org

Tennessee Voices for Children is a state agency designed to improve mental health services for children with emotional and behavioral disorders from birth to 21 years old. Services include advocacy, behavior resources, parent education, support groups, child care consultations, and a newsletter. The East Tennessee division serves 29 counties. Phone: (800) 670-9882 Online: www.tnvoices.org

Other Tennessee Advocacy Contacts:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Online</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Arc of TN, The	www.thearctn.org	(615) 248-5878
Autism Society East TN	www.asaetc.org	
Chattanooga Area Brain Injury Association	www.cabiattn.org	(423) 634-1572
Chattanooga Autism Center	www.chattanoogaautismcenter.org	(423) 531-6961
Chattanooga Down Syndrome Society	www.chattanoogadownsyndrome.org	
Department of Mental Health	www.tn.gov/behavioral-health	(615) 532-6700

Disability Rights TN	www.disabilityrightstn.org	(800) 342-1660
Epilepsy Foundation Southeast TN	www.epilepsy-setn.org	(423) 634-1771
Family Voices of Tennessee	www.tndisability.org/familyvoices	(888) 643-7811
Hearing Loss Association - Chattanooga	www.hearingchattanooga.org	
LifeLine	www.lifelinefamilies.org	(423) 622-4007
National MS Society, Mid-South Chapter	www.msouth.org	(800) 344-4867
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), TN	www.namitn.org	(800) 467-3589
Southeast TN Area Agency on Aging and Disability	www.setaad.org	(866) 836-6678
TN Council on Developmental Disabilities	www.tn.gov/cdd/	(615) 532-6615
TN Dept of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities	www.tn.gov/didd	(800) 535-9725
TN Disability Coalition	www.tndisability.org	(888) 643-7811
TN Health Care Campaign	www.thcc2.org	(615) 227-7500
TN Human Rights Commission	www.tn.gov/humanrights/	(800) 251-3589
TN Justice Center	www.tnjustice.org	(877) 608-1009
TN Mental Health Consumers' Association (TMHCA)	www.tmhca-tn.org	(888) 539-0393
TN Respite Coalition	www.tnrespite.org	(888) 579-3754

PHONE NUMBERS

Administrative Numbers

Early Learning Center Front Desk	648-1760
Director of Early Learning Center	648-1758
Administrative Coordinator	648-1769
Nursing Services	648-1770
Librarian/Support Coordinator	648-1754

Classroom Numbers

Classroom #1	648-1801
Classroom #2	648-1802
Classroom #3	648-1803
Classroom #4	648-1804
Classroom #5	648-1805
Classroom #6	648-1806
Classroom #7	648-1807
Classroom #8	648-1808
Classroom #9	648-1809
Classroom #10	648-1810
Classroom #11	648-1811
Classroom #12	648-1812
Classroom #13	648-1813
Classroom #14	648-1814

Other Numbers

Institute Front Desk	648-1700
Director of Finance	648-1720
Director of Development	648-1730
Center for Developmental Pediatrics	648-7710
Family Voices Coordinator	648-1740
TTY #	648-1739
ELC - Downtown Fax #	648-1780