

**The Center**  
Early Childhood Programs  
Lake County School District R-1

**Mission Statement**

Our mission is to serve and respect children and families by providing research-based early childhood services that promote the development of knowledge, life skills, and self-esteem.

**Governing Values**

We believe all children, families, and staff must be respected for their unique strengths and abilities  
We believe the involvement of the family, regardless of its composition, is an important part of enriching each child's success

We believe children have the right to be in a physically, emotionally, and mentally safe environment

We believe children learn best in an accepting, loving, and fun environment

. We believe that families are a child's first and most influential teachers

We believe we can support families in advocating for their child's best interest

We believe it is the responsibility of all staff to nurture, strengthen, inspire, and expand each child's abilities, interest, and independence

We believe all families must have access to affordable child care

We believe all children must be given equal opportunities to enter formal education ready to learn

**Early Childhood Programs at The Center**

All programs provide the same research-based early education with trained teachers in well-equipped classrooms.

An itemized tuition rate schedule is available in either Room 9 or the front office.

- **Head Start** - This program is federally funded for 40 children who are 3 or 4 years old by October 1 of the program year, and whose families meet income eligibility guidelines. Services provided are free and include early childhood education (Monday-Thursday 9:00-3:00 ), family services, health services and transportation where available. Fifteen of the 40 openings are full-day slots up to 40 hours per week, for parents who need quality care for their child so they can work or attend school or training full time.
- **Colorado Preschool Program** - A state-funded program providing early childhood education Monday through Thursday, 9:00-12:00. Children must be eligible under educational risk factors, and be 3 or 4 by October 1 of the program year.
- **Tuition-based Preschool** - Children not qualifying for Head Start or CPP can still receive the same early childhood education with prepaid monthly tuition, an itemized fee schedule will be set up during orientation. Children can start as of their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Children must be potty trained, unless they are on an IEP for Special Needs.
- **Services for Children with Special Needs** - All programs at The Center serve children with special needs, when determined to be the most appropriate placement. Services are provided on-site through the school district and Mountain Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES.)

How to Contact Center Staff			
<b>Director of Early Childhood Programs</b>	486-6921	<b>Education Manager</b>	486-6927
<b>Health Manager</b>	486-6923	<b>Child Care Director</b>	486-6925
<b>Family Advocate Manager</b>	486-6928	<b>Business Manager</b>	486-6927
<b>Disability Manager</b>	719-293-4613	<b>Transportation/Attendance</b>	486-6920 (use this number only)

## About The Center

Age Eligibility and Hours of Operation– The Center accepts children ages 3 – 5 years and 11 months. Children must be 3 by October 1. We are open from 7:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Admission and Registration / Withdrawal – Enrollment application forms are available in The Center's front office and in the Family Resource Office, and are accepted year-round. Enrollment is limited by state child care licensing, program funding and regulations, and an active waiting list is maintained to fill available openings. Recruitment for the following program year is March through May, and selection for available openings is held in early June following regulations for each program. A second selection may take place in August if all openings were not filled. Parents are notified by mail of their child's enrollment status. We ask for a two week notice if you choose to withdraw your child. A parent will be given proper notice if The Center elects to withdraw a child for non-payment of services or lack of cooperation. More detailed information about tuition policies will be provided, along with the bill for your specific schedule. Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons why a child must be expelled from the program. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with your family to prevent this from happening. If the proactive solutions to improve circumstances do not work, a child's family will be advised in writing about the situation warranting expulsion. We will work with families to allow some time for alternate arrangements to be made.

School Closures and Alternate Care – The Center follows the calendar for the Lake County School District. This parent calendar also indicates additional days we are closed. Parents are encouraged to network with friends and create child care sharing options when The Center is closed. Occasionally a few of our teachers are available to provide childcare during breaks.

Emergency Closures – In the event that Lake County School District is closed, The Center will also be closed. Parents will be notified through the Lake County School District automatic phone system by phone, email and text.

Sign-in and Sign-out Procedures – For your child's safety and to follow state regulations, children must be brought to the classroom or bus, and your child must be signed in and out each day by you as the parent, or a person over the age of 18 who is designated by you as permitted to pick up your child from The Center or the bus. Classroom teachers are required to request identification from anyone with whom they are unfamiliar who comes to pick up any child. Please print your name as clearly as possible, including the time arriving or departing. Children will only be released to authorized persons on the pick-up list. A manager will contact parents for any unauthorized pick-ups. Teachers continually check the sign in/out sheet and count children throughout the day. If your child's name is highlighted on the sign-out sheet, please see the classroom teachers, as there may be some information for your attention. Children are accounted for at all times. Teachers use active supervision, and children are counted as they arrive as well as when they move to a new location.

Late Pickup – A fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged for each minute after The Center closes at 5:00pm for each child still in our care. This fee is subject to change. If we are unable to contact a parent or emergency contact the Department of Human Services will be called.

After Closing Hours– As of 5:00 The Center is closed, any child who is still here, office personnel will call parents and emergency contacts. If no one can be reached within 30 minutes, DHS would be called.

Updated and Accurate Contact Info – It is very important that we have updated and accurate contact information for all families. If your child becomes ill or an emergency situation occurs, we must be able to contact you promptly. If your home, work, or cell phone numbers change mid-year, please be sure to notify us of the change.

Confidentiality – Volunteers, staff members and parents working in any program at The Center will maintain confidentiality and respect each family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. In addition, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records.

### Children Accountability at The Center –

- Care for a child who arrives after his / her class has left The Center– Parents are always notified in advance when their child's class will be leaving The Center for a field trip. On the rare occasion that a child arrives after his / her class has departed the school, the parents can elect to communicate with the teachers and transport the child to the class location, or the child will be cared for in a different classroom until his / her class returns to The Center.
- Extra support out of classroom – Hallway support staff or Managers may help provide individual or small group bathroom breaks, Health Services, Diapering, IEP support as necessary and will remain with the child or children at all times. All staff will document on the Out of Classroom Tracking sheet, as they have children enter or leave the classroom and the reason throughout the day. Verbal Communication is also provided to the classroom teachers.
- Tracking– Sign in sheets are utilized to reflect which children are in attendance in each room. In addition, our opening and closing classroom document number of students in the classroom on a separate spreadsheet.

Parent/Teacher Partnership – Your child's learning at The Center will be guided by trained teachers, using a research-based curriculum, in well-equipped classrooms. However, as a parent, you are the main educator of your child. No one knows your child's likes and dislikes, abilities, and interests better than you do. To be sure your child gets the most out of preschool; you and the teachers will work together as partners to build the skills your child will need for success. This partnership is built through home visits, parent/ teacher conferences, your family's attendance and participation in events at The Center, and your sharing of ideas and suggestions.

Attendance Policy – For your child to gain the skills needed to start kindergarten, regular attendance is very important. Each day of learning builds on the day before, and your child will miss some of the basics needed to advance if he or she doesn't attend consistently. Of course, children get sick and families must occasionally go out of town, so please call **486-6920 and leave a message** if your child will be out, with the reason for the absence. Attendance is recorded daily and is checked by the program staff as required by our regulations.

For unexplained absences, we follow these procedures:

- Following the 4<sup>th</sup> day of consecutive absence with no contact, a staff member will try to contact the family or other persons listed on the enrollment forms to determine the reason for the absence.
- For children enrolled in Head Start, if this contact is unsuccessful, a visit will be made by a staff member with the purpose of providing any needed assistance to the family.
- If no improvement in attendance is seen following a contact, the family will be asked if they would like to drop their child from the program and make the opening available to a child from the waiting list.
- The Center's Child Care Collaboration Team will make the decision to drop a child for lack of attendance and enroll a child from the waiting list, according to program policies and regulations, and family needs.
- If the decision is made to drop a child from enrollment, he or she will be placed on the waiting list for an opening at the family's request. A signed Attendance Improvement Plan may be required for re-enrollment following a drop for non-attendance.

If absences are caused by family problems, serious illness, financial concerns, or any other issue where we can offer support, please contact any program staff member for information on local resources to assist.

Toileting & Diapering – Other than children with special needs, children who attend The Center are expected to be potty trained. For safety reasons, a staff member always monitors children during trips to the bathroom. Staff members take children into non-gender-specific groups to the bathroom several times during the day, however bathroom trips are also made available to individual children when needed. For children who require diapers, we have a private changing area with an adjacent bathroom. Staff members are trained in proper methods of handling diapering and routinely log diaper changes.

Sunscreen – Sunscreen or other parent approved sun protection will be used daily for outside play. Parents or guardians can bring in sunscreen for their child and sign a permission slip in their child's classroom to provide written authorization and instructions for applying sunscreen. Sunscreen must be labeled with the child's first and last name and will be kept out of reach of children. If the sunscreen is provided by The Center, parents will be notified in advance and in writing what kind of sunscreen will be used on their child. Children over four years old may rub in if the teacher applied sunscreen to themselves under the direct supervision of a staff member.

Field Trips– During field trips staff to child ratios (8 children to 1 staff) will be maintained at all times. Families will be made aware of field trips and are more than welcome to come join their child.

**Neighborhood Walks**—Neighborhood walks can occur at any time during the program hours and limited to 30 minutes. Walks will be within the following radius:

- one Block East to Pine Street
- three Blocks South to 3rd Street
- two blocks West to Maple Street
- two Blocks North to 8th

\_During neighborhood walks staff to child ratios (8 children to 1 staff) will be maintained at all times.

**Classroom** – Our preschool program uses Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies GOLD ® for Preschool, which is a comprehensive curriculum linked to an assessment system that demonstrates for teachers what to teach, why, and how children learn best. With this framework, teachers can respond to the individual needs and learning styles of all the children in their classroom. It is one of the only curriculum and assessment systems that are inclusive of all children - those developing typically, children with disabilities, and English language learners. Each classroom has its weekly schedule posted on the door, with times for activities, meals, and outside play. Each month, you will receive a calendar of the specific activities planned for your child's classroom. We invite you to become part of that planning by attending the teacher's planning meetings, held every Friday. To operate a program meeting the needs of children and families, it is important to have your input.

<b>Sample Classroom Schedule</b> (for your child's actual schedule, please see the classroom teachers)			
<b>Morning</b>		<b>Afternoon</b>	
7:30-9:30	Play in learning centers	12:30 – 1:00	Brush teeth/play in areas
9:15 – 9:30	Bathroom/wash hands	1:00 – 1:15	Review
9:30 – 10:00	Breakfast	1:15 – 1:30	Get ready for bus or nap
10:00 – 10:15	Morning Board	1:30 – 3:30	Nap kids sleep/awake kids play in centers/ outside
10:15 – 10:45	Small group activities	3:30 – 3:45	Bathroom/wash hands
10:45 – 11:15	Gym	3:45 – 4:00	Snack
11:15 – 11:45	Outside	4:00 – 4:30	Outside
11:45 – 12:00	Bathroom/wash hands	4:30 – 4:45	Carpet Activities
12:00 – 12:30	Lunch	4:45-5:00	Read/Color in Front Entrance for Pick Up
This represents an 11 hour day at The Center. Your child will arrive and depart at different times, according to the program hours and family needs.			

### **Children's Personal Items**

- ☆ **What to bring:** Each child should bring a backpack and warm clothing for the weather, and an extra set of clothing in case of accidents. A nap blanket is OK. Children have the option of bringing a plastic or metal water bottle with a tight fitting lid for personal use in the classroom. All personal items must be labeled clearly with the child's first & last name and taken home regularly for cleaning. Staff cannot take responsibility for the cleaning, maintenance, or loss of any child's personal property, including a water bottle.
- ☆ **What not to bring:** The classrooms are well supplied with enough toys and materials for all children. It is best that children leave their personal items at home, since we can not be responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen personal items. **Toy weapons are not allowed!** Please do not send money to school with your preschool child. Please consult the Health and Nutrition section of this manual for information on bringing food and drinks from home.
- ☆ **Cubbies:** Your child will have a cubby in the hall with a hook for his or her coat. Your child will have a cubby in the classroom for school-to-home communication. Please check your child's cubby daily for notices of coming events, The Center's newsletter, your child's artwork, progress reports, and other important materials. For children who ride the bus, these materials will be sent home in their backpacks. We will gladly provide a second cubby for a mom or dad who does not live with the child.
- ☆ **Clothing:** Children should always be dressed appropriately for play in clean, comfortable clothes. Leadville's winters are long and extreme. Be sure your child has all of the clothing needed to enjoy the outdoors, because we go outside every day when the temperature is above 10 degrees. In cold weather, double-check every day that your child has a hat, gloves, snow pants, boots and a warm coat. If you do not have any of these needed items, let us know. We often have extras or know where to find them. We also go outside when the weather is warmer. If the temperature is above 80 degrees, which doesn't happen often, but it would impact the ability to take the children out as they are not used to these warm temperatures.

**Behavior Management** – At The Center, our classroom environments, schedules, and activities are designed to capture the interest and stimulate the enthusiasm of your children. Classroom rules establish limits and teachers are skilled in reinforcing positive social skills. Children sometimes forget the rules and test the limits, which is normal for their age. Their experience at The Center can help them learn to respect limits and develop positive behaviors which will promote success in preschool and the coming years in public school. Some strategies used to help children learn to respect limits are:

- Redirection to appropriate activities
- Positive reinforcement
- Problem solving with the child
- Predictable routines
- Giving choices within limits
- Teaching children to calm themselves

Our staff will maintain communications with parents/guardians about behavior plans for their children when needed. We have consultants and partnerships with local agencies with expertise in behavior management, who can provide support for staff, children and families.

**Home Visits and Parent Conferences** – The purpose of home visits is to form a partnership between the teachers and parents and to make an educational plan together to best meet the needs of your child. All families will come in for a Parent / Teacher Conference during our Open House prior to the first day of preschool in August, and a second conference in February. Two Home Visits take place for all families during the year in October and May. For detailed information, please read more on these events elsewhere in this handbook.

**Home Language** – The Center believes that families are a child's first teachers and celebrates the diversity of our community. Communicating to your child in your home language will increase your child's knowledge and development of a second language. The Lake County School District is an English Language School District. However, in the preschool classroom, children whose first language is not English will receive support in their home language when possible.

**Classroom Celebrations** – The Center welcomes parents and families to classroom parties and to celebrate their child's birthday. If families choose to bring in something, we ask that you bring an activity or party favor rather than food or candy. **No outside food or candy is allowed at The Center.** Suggestions may be pencils, stickers, crayons, or a game or activity that the children can do together. Please arrange the time and date with the teacher and schedule no more than 15 minutes. **Please do not bring balloons.** If your family does not celebrate birthdays or other holidays, please discuss this with your child's teacher. The Center is respectful of your culture and choices and working together with the teacher, you can develop a plan to meet your child's needs during any classroom celebrations.

**Television & Videos** – Occasionally teachers will use a developmentally appropriate video as a part of connecting children to the curriculum. Parents will be asked to sign a permission form each time their child's class is scheduled to watch a video. Alternative activities are provided for any children whose parents elect for them not to watch. No child is ever required to watch a video. During viewing, staff to child ratio will remain the same.

### **Family Participation**

Since it is proven that children do better in school and in life if their parents are involved in their education, we believe you will want to participate in the program. Every parent is expected to be involved in some way. We recognize that parents work, and often have little time after a long commute. We respect your right to choose how you want to participate. That is why we offer many different opportunities for you to be involved in The Center's Early Childhood Programs.

Option	Purpose
Family Fun Night	Family, friends, and fun! We will host several Family Fun Nights this program year. These events give you a chance to get out with your family, meet other parents, and enjoy fun activities with your preschool child. At Family Fun Night, we will provide information on areas of parent interest, and have the opportunity to communicate with you and hear your opinions about the programs.
Practice Packs	The teachers see your child as an individual, and they work to provide the right activities to help him or her gain the skills and knowledge needed to make the next step in development. That is why you will receive a Practice Pack monthly, with activities for your child to practice at home. You will return the pack and receive a new one regularly.
Teacher Planning	Check your calendar for the dates, and attend if you can. We have made many positive changes in the program from parent suggestions.

<b>Conferences</b>	Nobody knows your child better than you do. It will benefit the teachers to know him or her through your eyes, to better work with you as a partner in his or her education. Parent Conferences occur twice during the program year, and are for parents of all children enrolled in The Center's Early Childhood Programs.	
<b>Home Visits</b>	Teachers will visit your home once after the start of the school and a second visit in the spring. These are great opportunities for building the partnership that will benefit your child all year.	
<b>Classroom</b>	Stop at any time. You are welcome to participate or observe; the choice is yours. Your child will love to show you around and introduce all his or her new friends. Your presence in the classroom says that school is important to you.	
<b>Boards</b>	<b>Combined Head Start Policy Council / Early Childhood Council</b> - This is a board of elected parents of children in Head Start, Colorado Preschool Program, Tuition-based, as well as representatives from the community. They make decisions, advocate for their child/ren, as well as give input for the program. The council also advocates for quality early childhood programs in Lake County. <b>Lake County School Board</b> - A schedule of this governing board for Head Start is available in the Family Resource Office.	
<b>Committees</b>	Participation on a committee is a good way to be involved in your area of interest. Your participation is necessary so program planning includes your voice as the parent and the most important teacher of your child.	
	<b>Education Committee</b>	This is the place to help make decisions about your child's preschool experience. This group meets twice per year, and deals with curriculum, assessments, and transitions.
	<b>Parent Activity Committee</b>	Help plan the activities offered to families by joining this group, which meets before every Family Fun Night to plan the activities and parent education.
	<b>Health Services Advisory Committee</b>	This committee meets twice each year and addresses health needs of children and health care resources in Lake County. They also work with the food service program to review menus and nutritional activities.
<b>Program Evaluation</b>	The Center's early childhood programs are always looking for ways to improve services to children and families. One way is by asking parents and community members to evaluate us, so we can use the feedback for improvement. Watch The Center's newsletter for dates for our annual self-assessment. Please remember your comments and suggestions are always welcome.	
<b>Parents Not Living in the Child's Home</b>	When parents separate, the best thing they can do for their child is to keep in mind the best interests of the child and always stay in touch with the child. We want to support the involvement of both parents, and have developed some ideas to help. If you are not living with your child or have shared custody, please talk with our Family Services staff for information on how you can stay informed about activities and your child's progress.	

### Visitors at The Center

All visitors must sign in at the front desk of Margaret J Pitts Elementary upon entering the building, and sign out when leaving. Parents are always welcome at The Center. Other visitors must check in with a member of administration, who will assist them with any appropriate access, including volunteer training when needed.

**What is In-Kind?** In-kind contributions are the value of the time or resources donated to the program. Throughout the year, you will be asked to sign an "In-kind Form" to document your time or donations. This benefits the program because we are required to raise in-kind contributions to be eligible for some grants received to help support the affordable child care at The Center.

Some examples of in-kind you may contribute are:

- ☆ Time spent in the program, either in the classroom, at meetings, or working with your child at home on curriculum.
- ☆ Items such as books or toys in good condition. We appreciate donations of preschool sized pants, underwear, and snow clothes, but can't claim these as in-kind.

**Volunteer Training** – We welcome your participation in the program, and realize that some training may be needed for you to be most comfortable and effective. You will receive a Volunteer Handbook at Parent Orientation, which covers many of the questions you may have. Further training is available from program staff, or you may watch our Volunteer Training video in our office, or check it out to watch at home. Please sign in and out when visiting The Center.

**Regular Volunteers** – A regular volunteer at The Center is any adult who volunteers more than 2 days per week for at least one hour. A regular volunteer must follow the same health guidelines as an employee along with a background check. The volunteer will receive a packet of forms to complete. A Tuberculosis screen and a physical are required.

## Program Design and Management

A well-managed program includes you, the family! The preschool, child care, and school-age programs at The Center are operated by the Lake County School District and are supported through many funding sources at the state and federal level, including several private grants, along with tuition and fees. It is not possible to run this variety of child care options without the active involvement and support of parents. Regardless of the program in which your child is enrolled, your input and participation is very important to us.

Parent Committee - Parent Committee meetings are held during our Family Fun Night activities, on the dates in your parent handbook calendar. Parents of children enrolled in all program options are invited to these fun, informative events. We often ask for your input and share information about our programs with you during these meetings. When a vote is required on a Head Start issue, ballots will be distributed to Head Start parents only. A Policy Council member will report to parents at each meeting.

Some input requested from you may be to:

- 1) advise staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities and services
- 2) plan, conduct and participate in informal/formal programs for parents within the guidelines of the governing body and Head Start Policy Council,

Program Committees - For information about participating on the Education, Parent Activity, Family and Community Partnerships, or Health Services Advisory Committees please see the family participation section of this handbook. Committee meeting dates are set with parent input.

Combined Head Start Policy Council / Early Childhood Council - The Policy Council is an important decision-making board made up of at least 51% parents of children currently enrolled in Head Start, and community representatives, including representatives from Colorado Preschool Program and tuition-based preschool. Each year the Head Start Parent Committee (all Head Start parents) elects the members of the Policy Council. These members meet once each month to make decisions about the program's policies, budget, grant applications and plans. Members of the Policy Council receive training on their role and responsibilities. Dinner and child care are provided at each meeting. Parents of children enrolled at The Center have been given the opportunity to be placed on the ballot for the Head Start Policy Council election. The Center also offers parents the opportunity to participate within our Early Childhood Council. These parents will be included in decisions which need to be made for the Colorado Preschool Program. These meetings will take place the first half hour of the Policy Council Meeting each month. Parents may be on both councils, and are also encouraged to participate in our classroom walk throughs that take place twice a school year.

## Program Improvement

Program self-assessment - At The Center we have many tools used throughout the year to evaluate and improve our services to children and families. Some of them are: health and safety checklists, transportation, child assessment results, classroom environmental rating scale, staff, parent and agency surveys and a comprehensive self-assessment toolkit. We look for our strengths and areas that may need improvement. We ask parents and community members to help with these audits and have found that input from parents and people outside the system has been invaluable. Notices requesting your assistance in this ongoing monitoring will be placed in cubbies and in the newsletter. Please consider contributing some time to help us improve our services to you.

Communication - Communication between staff and families is vital in providing quality services. Please do not hesitate to speak with your child's teacher, a Manager, or the Director. All employees have voicemail and email addresses, which are provided in our monthly newsletter. Our offices have an open door policy, and you are always welcome. Each month you will receive a newsletter with information on upcoming events, menus, committee meeting reports, and interesting information on child development. Teachers will send home a monthly calendar with classroom activities. Bulletin boards are located on classroom doors and outside of Room 9. Minutes from the Policy Council, Early Childhood Council, and School Board meetings are also posted there.

**Filing a concern or complaint** – The following steps outline a procedure to receive and address community complaints, regardless of the origin of the complaint:

1. The first step will always be to address the complaint with the Director of Early Childhood programs, Child Care Director, or Family Partnerships Manager. If necessary, a plan is proposed to correct the situation.
2. If a resolution is not reached, the complaint will be summarized in writing and presented to the Policy Council.
3. The Policy Council can 1) resolve to take no action, 2) develop a plan to resolve the issue or 3) refer the matter to the School Board.

These procedures are posted on the bulletin board in the preschool hallway.

**State Licensing Violation** - If you believe a State Licensing violation has occurred, you may file a complaint with the Division of Child Care, Colorado Department of Human Services, 1575 Sherman St, Denver, CO 80203. Their phone number is 1-800-799-5876.

**Equal Opportunity- Non-Discrimination** – The Center strongly believes that children and employees are entitled to equal opportunities and freedom from discrimination because of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, or handicap. Children and employees are entitled to work and play in an environment that is non-discriminatory and free of any harassment that interferes with an individual's work/play performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work/play atmosphere.

### **Health Services**

The health needs of your child and your family are important to us. To ensure that children come to preschool ready to learn, there are requirements for health screenings and examinations for attendance at The Center. Screening is not a diagnosis and is done as early as possible in the program year so that follow-up can be scheduled with your health services provider if needed. There are several programs at The Center, and each has different requirements, so please review the chart below. Please return all physical, dental, and immunization forms to The Center. The State of Colorado requires every child to have a yearly physical exam to attend preschool programs. The form documenting this exam must be on file within 30 calendar days of the first day of school. This form expires one year from the date of the actual exam, and must be kept current even if the expiration date is in the middle of the school year.

<b><u>Health Requirements</u></b>	
<b>Head Start</b>	<p><b>Dental</b> - Head Start will pay for the initial exam if other coverage is not available. If follow-up care is needed, the program will provide information on resources to assist with payment.</p> <p><b>Immunizations</b> - A copy of up-to-date immunization records, a written plan for completion from a health authority, or an exemption form is required within 14 days after parents are notified that the child is not up to date.</p> <p><b>Physical</b> - Head Start partners with the Lake County Public Health for immunizations and blood lead testing, and with a health care provider of the family's choice to provide the physical at no cost if insurance coverage is not available. The physical must include health exam, vision, hearing, height &amp; weight, blood pressure, hemoglobin, and blood lead. Families are encouraged to form a relationship with a primary provider.</p> <p><b>Developmental &amp; Social/Emotional</b> – We offer free screenings to evaluate each child's speech, language, and developmental milestones, in addition to their social/emotional development. Teachers also use play-based assessments through Teaching Strategies GOLD®.</p>
<b>Colorado Preschool Program &amp; Child Care</b>	<p><b>Immunizations</b> - See Head Start requirements above.</p> <p><b>Physical</b>- A health exam, including vision, hearing, height &amp; weight. Parents schedule with their own primary care doctor at their expense, and submit the physical form to The Center. Free Blood Lead screenings at Lake County Public Health are strongly recommended.</p> <p><b>Developmental &amp; Social/Emotional</b> – See Head Start requirements above.</p>

**Children can't learn if they aren't healthy, so we offer health services as part of our preschool programs.**

**The following free services are provided by the early childhood programs at The Center.**

<b>Medication</b>	Administered only when accompanied by medication form available in the health office and completed and signed by both the physician and parent. Prescription medication must be in the original container bearing the original pharmacy label with prescription number, date filled, doctor's name, child's name, and dosage. Only one dose can be given per day by staff members trained to administer medication. Medication logs are shared with parents. Medication is stored in a locked cabinet in the Health Managers office. Rescue medication is stored in labeled individual
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	backpacks with the proper paperwork. Under certain circumstances medication will be stored in the child's classroom in a locked medicine cabinet. Teachers will be delegated as needed by the school nurse.
<b>Dental</b>	Besides the Head Start dental exam, dental services include daily tooth brushing with brushes and toothpaste provided by The Center. Since the local water supply contains no fluoride, the program can provide you with information on obtaining fluoride for your child at low or no cost.
<b>Nutrition</b>	The Center serves nutritious meals and snacks to all enrolled children in accordance with the Child and Adult Care Food program guidelines. Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks are served and are low in sugars, fat, and salt to meet USDA standards. Menus are provided monthly in our newsletter and posted in the hallway. Because our food program is subsidized by CACFP, families are not charged for meals. <b><i>Due to CACFP regulations, in general, no outside food or candy is allowed in the classroom, even for classroom celebrations.</i></b> Families who wish to provide all of their child's own food may opt out of the CACFP program completely by signing a written agreement. Please see the Health Manager if your child has special medical or dietary needs or with any other concerns related to nutrition for your child.
<b>Mental Health</b>	Our early childhood mental health services are provided through a framework called the Teaching Pyramid. Through this system, children gain social skills and self-esteem through classroom guidance. Teachers, parents, and professionals work together when special attention is needed. Referrals for family counseling services are also available from the staff in Room 9.
<b>Physical Activity</b>	Children have a scheduled time for physical activity for at least 30 minutes each day, in the gym, outside or both. Our physical activity program is designed to promote health in young children through fun, physical activity.
<b>Child Find</b>	A free screening and home based services for developmental concerns for children from birth to 8 years old.

### Child Illness

Maintaining the children's health is both your responsibility and The Center's. Our trained staff follows policies on illness prevention and the spread of infection. Still, young children get sick more often because their immune systems do not fight illness as well as an adult's, and they have not yet been exposed to many of the germs that cause infection.

***The Center does not have facilities to care for children who are ill.*** If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he or she should be kept home for at least 24 hours. If these symptoms develop while at The Center, you or your emergency contact will be called to take your child home. The Health Manager or Child Care Director will make the final decision on whether a child will attend.

Children with these symptoms should not attend :		Children with the following symptoms should also see a doctor :
Fever at or above 100.4 (oral) or 99 (axillary) Cannot return for 24 hrs.	Repetitive Diarrhea Untreated Lice	
Unusual behavior (cranky, less active, listless, crying, won't eat)	Severe coughing	Pink Eye with white or yellow pus-type discharge
Severe red or sore throat	Vomiting (from infection)	Impetigo (honey crusting around mouth or nose)

If your child does not feel well enough to participate in the usual activities, **which include going outside every day**, he or she should stay home until feeling better. If you are not sure, it would be wise to keep your child home an extra day to be on the safe side.

**Exclusion Policy** – Children will be excluded from attendance at The Center if:

- The child's illness prevents the child from participating in routine activities
- The illness requires more care than childcare staff is able to provide without compromising the needs of other children in the group
- Keeping the child in childcare poses an increased risk of illness to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come into contact
- The child exhibits any of the following symptoms, which require immediate consideration: fever, rash, abdominal pain, unusually irritable behavior, sore or red throat, upper respiratory infection, diarrhea, vomiting, impetigo, untreated lice, ringworm, pink eye with pus coming from the eye, severe coughing.

**Conditions that DO NOT require exclusion** –

- A type of germ in the child's bowel movement or urine that can cause disease, but without symptoms

- Children with conjunctivitis with clear watery discharge and no fever, eye pain, or eye or eyelid redness
- Children with a rash, but no fever or change in behavior
- Mild respiratory illness that poses no risk to others
- Child with cytomegalovirus infection, carriers of Hepatitis B and HIV infection. A child who has been excluded under this policy will be readmitted subject to The Center's attendance policy.

**Illness While at The Center** – If your child arrives at The Center with a condition falling under the Exclusion Policy, the teacher will check your child when they arrive at school. If the child shows any of the symptoms described above, you will be asked to take your child home until they are free of the above symptom. If the child develops illness under this policy while at The Center, the child will be separated from classmates and cared for in the Health Office or Room 9 until he or she can be taken home. **Parents or their designees are expected to pick up the child within one hour of the time they are contacted.** Please keep all contact information current so we are able to reach someone to take your child in case of illness. Failure to make arrangements for care of your sick child may result in a report of medical neglect. In case of an emergency, children will be transported to St Vincent's General Hospital located at 822 W 4<sup>th</sup> St, Leadville, CO 80461, 719-486-0230.

**Accident Reports** – If a child has an accident or injury while at The Center, an accident report will be completed and presented to the person picking up the child at the time they are signing the child out. The person picking up the child will sign the report, and be provided with a copy. If the injury is serious enough to require medical or dental treatment, every attempt will be made to contact the parent or guardian. If a staff member notices that a child arrives at The Center with an injury, an accident report will be completed indicating that the child had the injury upon arrival.

**Emergencies** – Center staff is trained in first aid / CPR. Regular fire drills, evacuation, and lock down drills are practiced. Each school building has a crisis team and manual outlining necessary steps in an emergency including the unlikely incidence of a missing child. If there is a medical emergency involving your child, you will be notified by telephone at the earliest possible opportunity. Building wide emergencies will use the district's call system for notifications.

**Smoking** – Due to the acknowledged hazards of tobacco smoke, especially to young children, it is the policy of the Lake County School District to provide a smoke-free environment for our children, staff and volunteers. Smoking and other tobacco use is prohibited on The Center's grounds, which includes sidewalks and parking lots, and in all activities, including field trips and other off-site events. If you need information on second-hand smoke or quitting smoking, please talk with the Health Manager.

#### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

While the staff at The Center recognizes that all families have their own methods and parenting styles, we are mandated by law to report suspected abuse or neglect. The procedures followed are below.

1. Any suspected abuse or neglect will be documented by the person observing the situation.
2. That person will contact his or her director to relate relevant information and they will report the incident to the Department of Human Services.

There are many services available locally to help with the pressures of family life. Talk with the Family Services staff in Room 9 for referrals.

#### **Transportation**

Families are encouraged to provide their own transportation to and from preschool. Transportation is provided to children with special needs and children enrolled in Head Start who live in our transportation areas. **Buses may not be available to families who live within a four block radius of the school unless special circumstances exist.** Head Start will assist families with children enrolled in the program who need transportation in order for their children to attend the regular Head Start session, 9:00-2:30, Monday through Thursday. Children are transported in school district buses which are equipped to transport preschool-age children. Bus drivers are licensed CDL drivers and a bus monitor rides on the bus to assist the driver. In most cases the bus will stop at designated bus stops. An adult must be with the child at the bus stop. Please understand that the bus stop time given to you is only an estimate. You should allow the driver up to 10 minutes either way in case of bad weather, a flat tire, or other delays.

When the school bus drops your child off, an adult must sign that the child has been released to him or her. We can only release your child to a person that you have identified on the enrollment form, over the age of 18. The bus monitor will have a list of people you have identified as adults who have permission to pick up your child. Unfamiliar persons will be asked for identification. If the person is not on this list or no one comes to pick up your child, we will return him or her to The Center and you will be responsible to come and take him or her home. You will be charged an hourly child care rate until your child is picked up.

For a morning bus schedule change or if your child will be absent, please call the school at **486-6920** by 7:30 am. If you have an afternoon scheduling change, please call by 12:00pm for any changes such as picking up your child early instead of having him/her ride the bus home. If you do not reach a staff member, please leave a message on the voice mail system. Please call **only 486-6920** because messages on this number are checked before the bus leaves. If you leave a message on any other phone line, your message will not be heard in time. You may request a call back to verify the schedule change if you wish.

It is best for your child to have a regular schedule for transportation and pick ups. Children are most confident when they know what to expect during their day. Of course, emergencies do arise, and we do our best to accommodate these changes when necessary. Please understand that space on the bus is limited and requests for changes to other pick up and drop off locations may not be possible. Please plan ahead.

Only children enrolled in Head Start, children with special needs, volunteers (when room is available) and staff may ride the bus. If a volunteer wishes to bring a child not enrolled in the program to an activity or function, they must provide their own transportation. Safety is very important. As a parent you will receive information on transporting children safely on the bus and in your personal vehicles.

**NEVER let your child ride in a car unless secured in an age-appropriate car seat! Information on current child restraint laws is available in The Center's Front Office or the Family Resource Office.**

### Parent Education

For a small community, we are fortunate to have many resources available for continuing your education both formally and informally.

<b>Colorado Workforce Center</b> is a one-stop resource center, offering help with the job search process, from resume and cover letter preparation, to labor market research and career and educational counseling. Qualified individuals may receive financial assistance in training for career goals.
<b>Colorado Mountain College</b> offers AA degrees, along with some BA degrees, and certification programs. A bulletin is available in the Head Start office. The financial aid office at CMC will help you explore grants and assistance with your education expenses. CMC also offers GED study and testing.
<b>DOOR Program</b> is for recent high school dropouts who wish to receive their high school diploma through an alternative educational program.
<b>DARE to Be You</b> parenting classes are offered twice each year through our partnership with Full Circle of Lake County. The classes are fun and interactive, with child care and food offered at each class. These free classes are held here at The Center.
<b>Family Fun Nights</b> offer parent education in a fun and active format. You will have the opportunity to experience a night out with your family with fun activities.
<b>First Aid/CPR</b> classes are offered twice each year, at no or limited cost to parents of The Center Early Childhood Programs.
<b>Leadership Training</b> Members of our boards and committees will learn skills which will serve them for their future participation on community and school committees and boards. The Policy Council receives regular training.
<b>Family Resource Office-</b> There is a collection of books and videos about child rearing available for families for free checkout. Additional materials like those provided in Practice Packs are also available. Ask in Room 9 for more information.

### Community Resources

Annually updated and provided to the community by The Center Early Childhood Programs, a Community Resource Guide is available with more information on the above resources, as well as other family resources in Lake County. This guide is focused on non-profit and health services to benefit families, and is used by

agencies throughout the community. A copy is available in Room 9 for anyone who did not receive a copy at Parent Orientation, or who needs a replacement copy.

Together, we send the message that CHILDREN MATTER in Lake County!

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to help your child grow and learn.