

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

## **WELCOME TO THE KINGSTON CHILDREN'S CENTER!**

This packet contains our policies and information that will be helpful to you. KCC is a group childcare center licensed by the State of New Hampshire Child Care Licensing Bureau and Accredited by The National Association of the Young Child. The center provides year round, full and half day early childhood education where children come first. The Kingston Children's Center does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.

## **HISTORY**

The KCC began as a non-profit childcare facility in 1972. Starting off in the basement of the Pilgrim United Church of Christ at 12 Church Street, Kingston, N.H., the Children's Center has grown over the years to serve nearly 200 children annually from throughout Rockingham County and beyond. In 1989, the Children's Center purchased the building at 12 Church Street from the church and began some major and long awaited renovation projects due in large part to a grant from the NYNEX Company and IBEW/CWA funds. As a non-profit organization, the KCC is overseen by a Volunteer Board of Directors whose function is to set policies, oversee the financial management of the Center and uphold the By-laws of the Corporation. Parents are encouraged to join the Board. The KCC is also an agency of the Greater Seacoast United Way.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Kingston Children's Center strives to meet the physical, cognitive, social and emotional needs of all children in our care. We believe that each child has his/her own learning style and it is our job to meet these various needs based on what is age-appropriate as well as developmentally appropriate for each child. As a central component of its commitment to all children and families, the center strives to include ALL community children, including those with special needs, and participants in the State of New Hampshire Scholarship Program that provides tuition support for qualifying families.

The Center offers a variety of activities for children 6 weeks to 13 years. Our programs include infants, toddlers, preschool, kindergarten, and school-age care. Our professional staff creates an environment where children can learn through exploration and interact with appropriate materials, adults and other children. Children are encouraged to choose from a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and materials within each classroom. The Center also offers extended day childcare in addition to the preschool and kindergarten programs.

## **CURRICULUM**

KCC is committed to providing a developmentally appropriate curriculum that supports each child to learn and grow to their fullest extent, at their own individual pace, in the areas of social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development. We

recognize that each child is unique and present a curriculum that allows them to bolster their strengths and self-esteem while working on areas that provide more challenge. We recognize that each child has a different learning style and promote children to learn in their own individual way while accepting and learning from the individual styles of those around them. We strive to instill in children a love of learning that they can carry forward in to their academic careers and lives.

KCC recognizes the importance of each parent's input for the curriculum goals for their child and offers various opportunities for parents to share their input including the initial enrollment development questionnaire, conferences at the time of each bi-annual developmental assessment, and daily communication at pick up and drop off. Conferences are available anytime by request and can be scheduled in the staff room during the mid-day, in the office in the early morning or late afternoon, or by phone at a time that is convenient for the parent.

Families that speak another language at home are encouraged to share key phrases and words with their child's teacher so the teacher may use them to communicate with the child. They are also welcomed to work with teaching staff to integrate representation of their home language in to the classroom environment and activities. We welcome you or family members to join us to share special family celebrations or traditions and will work with you to plan a time that is good for you to join us. Please remember that KCC has an open door policy and welcomes parents to visit their child's classroom at any time throughout the day.

KCC curriculum goals align with the twice annual assessment of children's developmental progress. The curriculum in each classroom is designed to promote the general developmental milestones presented for each age group in the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). The ASQ is the tool that KCC uses for the individual developmental assessment for each child within three months after each child enters the program. The teaching staff uses the aggregate ASQ results of the children in their room to set group curriculum goals and the individual ASQ results of individual children, along with parent input, to set curriculum goals for individual children. The teachers design curriculum based not only on the children's individual development needs, but also note their individual interests and learning styles. For example, if a child demonstrates that they love dinosaurs and are a kinetic learner, you will be sure to see dinosaurs making "letters" with their bodies at circle time in that classroom!

Each classroom environment and schedule is designed around the developmental goals and learning styles of the children within each room. Materials are available at child level for the independent selection of the children in each area of the classroom. The staff recognizes that children's learning does not only occur during planned, teacher directed activities but throughout the daily schedule, including during daily care routines and the free and independent play of the children. Routine and play areas are set up to optimize and support these natural learning opportunities by having ample materials for exploration and ample time for staff/child interactions during care giving routines.

Teachers are actively involved in children's play and routines in order to take advantage of teachable moments that naturally present themselves throughout the day.

KCC complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act as it applies to child care center facilities that were constructed prior to 1993. KCC believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

The Kingston Children's Center operates daily from Monday through Friday 6:00am to 6:00pm, 52 weeks a year.

### **HOLIDAYS**

We close for eleven (11) major holidays and two closure dates (The Day of Caring and one professional development day).

Our holidays/closures include: New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King Day  
March/ professional development day  
Memorial Day  
July 4<sup>th</sup>  
Labor Day  
September / the Day of Caring  
Day of Caring  
Columbus Day  
Veteran's Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Day after Thanksgiving  
Christmas Eve Day  
Christmas Day

If a holiday falls on a weekend the Center will be closed either on the Friday before or on the following business day, unless otherwise noted on the annual calendar distributed in September. The Center will be closed for the United Way Day of Caring in mid-September as the nature of the annual improvement project necessitates closing for that day. This is a workday for staff and a tuition day for parents.

### **SNOW DAYS**

The Center will remain open on snow days with the following exceptions. If there is a state of emergency or the conditions escalate to severe the director may close the school. On particularly bad weather days, the Center may have a change of hours. Please stay tuned to Channel 9 News or [WMUR.com](http://WMUR.com) to see if we have a delayed opening or change in hours. You can set an alert through the WMUR website to send you a text or e-mail in

the event we post a change. Please see an administrator if you need further instructions on how to set up the alert.

Early closing is subject to administrative discretion. In the rare event the center does close parents will be charged for the day. If Bakie School is closed, we automatically cancel our Monthly Program Preschool and both AM and PM Kindergarten classes but remain open for day care (unless announced otherwise.) If there is a 2-hour delay at Bakie School, Monthly Program Preschool and AM Kindergarten classes will be canceled; day care will still be offered for those enrolled.

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

We ask each parent to sign in and out each day at the time the child is dropped off and picked up. The sign-in sheets are located inside the door at the top of the stairs. These sheets need to be signed by the parent or guardian at the end of the week.

\*Parents must enter the building in order to drop off and pick up a child unless the child is met at the car by a staff member. Do not allow your child to enter the building alone and make sure that a staff member is aware that your child has arrived. Car engines should be shut off during drop off and pick up as a safety consideration. No child will be released to anyone other than the parent without written authorization. Parents must notify the teacher before taking their child from the classroom or playground. KCC is not responsible for a child once that child has been signed out, even if the child is still on the premises.

Children love to have attention from all adults; however, parents/non staff adults may not hug, lift or have close contact with children that they are not on the pickup list for.

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. We may request that another adult listed as an emergency and release contact pick up the child. If you chose to refuse this we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child.

\*Anyone other than the parent or guardian who is picking up the child must be at least sixteen years old, and, must have identification as well as prior parent authorization.

\*If a child is to be absent or late, parents should please notify the Center before 9:00am. Parents of school-age children should also inform the office if their child would not arrive on the afternoon school bus from Bakie School.

\*Before a child may begin, the following enrollment paperwork must be completed and be on file in the office:

- A current child health form that must be updated yearly and must be signed and dated by a doctor.

- A copy of your child's current insurance policy.

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- A current immunization record that is on the schedule recommended by the America Academy of Pediatrics, the Center for Disease Control of the United States Public Health Service and the Academy of Family Practice. In the rare case your child is under-immunized because of a medical condition or family belief and a preventable disease occurs in the program we will separate your child until they can be picked up. They should not return to the program until the program is free of the disease.
- Child emergency information form (updated annually and as any changes occurs)
- Emergency field trip form
- Parent fee agreement

Your child's file will only be assessable to child care licensing and the KCC staff. No one else will be able to assess your child file without your written consent.

\*We ask parents to bring and leave at the Center a complete change of clothes for their child. As the clothing is used and taken home, it needs to be replaced. If your child has an accident and the clothing has not been replaced you may be called at work to bring in extra clothing. All extra clothing should be labeled with the child's name. Children's clothing should be appropriate for the season. It is particularly important in the winter when some time is spent outside during the day. Children should be prepared to play outside daily. In the rare case weather conditions prevent outside play the children will be offered indoor gross motor that offers the same gross motor opportunities as outdoor play. Flip-flops, open toed shoes or sandals with little support are not allowed on the playground as they increase the chance of tripping, falling or foot injuries.

\*Parents are responsible for supplying diapers for those children who use them.

\*We are mandated by the State to provide all children in attendance a full day an opportunity for rest, relaxation or sleep. All children (except school age who do not nap) should bring to school for naptime:

- A sheet to cover their rest mat
- A blanket to cover the child
- A pillowcase to store individual sheets and blankets

All bedding should have the child's name on it and should go home on Friday to be washed and returned on Monday. Keep in mind cubbies are small and blankets and sheet should be small enough to accommodate the storage units. Infants shall not be allowed a pillow or quilt in their crib. Infants will always be laid to rest on their back.

## **NUTRITION AND MEALS**

The center participates in a nutrition and meal program supervised by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Meals served are breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. All meals are prepared in accordance with USDA standards. Regulatory personnel monitor us. The Center is reimbursed for all meals served. The amount of reimbursement is based on income level as reported by parents. Parents are asked to complete and return to the office the necessary forms for reimbursement at least once a year.

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The Kingston Children's center is committed to serving healthy meals. Foods served will have as few ingredients as possible. The center will not serve foods containing high fructose corn syrup and will limit the number of processed foods served.

## **Free and Reduced Meal Policy**

All children are served the same meals at no separate charge, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap and that there is no discrimination in the course of the food service.

No food shall be brought in from home except in the case of a class event or birthday. Please check with your child's teacher ahead of time. Any food brought in from home to be shared must be store bought and in the original packaging for the safety of children with allergies. The only exception to this rule will be if a child has a medical reason and it is documented by the child's doctor.

Any allergies, medical or religious considerations should be made known to the office at the time of enrollment in order that provisions can be made to accommodate these special circumstances. In the case of severe allergies, the center will provide an alternative menu option for your child. A physician's statement must be provided identifying the following; the child's disability, an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet, the major life activity affected by the disability, the food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet, and the food or choice or foods that must be substituted. The center will provide CACFP approved generic iron fortified formula and baby food for infants who not eating table food. Brand name formula and baby food can be provided by the parents. All formula brought in to the center must be in factory sealed containers. Bottle feedings do not contain solid foods unless you provide written permission for a medical reason from your child's doctor. Solid foods and fruit juices are not introduced before six months of age unless recommended by the child's doctor and approved by the child's parent.

The center supports breast feeding. Breast milk should be brought in a sanitary container labeled with the infant's name and dated. The center stores the milk for up to 24 hours if previously frozen and up to 72 hours if not or up to three months in the freezer. The milk will be gently mixed prior to serving; left over milk will be placed in the fridge marked used (to be sent home with the parent) after one hour. Milk may be warmed in water at not more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit for no more than 5 minutes. No milk including human milk is warmed in the microwave. The center welcomes mother's to breast feed their infants either in the rocking chair in the nursery class or on the couch in privacy in the staff lounge.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audio tape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local)

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where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at:

[http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form of letter to USDA by:

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

## **MEDICATION**

### **Prescription Medication**

All medication must be in the original container without an expired label and have the child's name as the patient. We will dispense medication provided the parent has administered the first dose and completes the required form.

### **Non-prescription Medication**

No over the counter medicine will be given to a child unless the parent has an optional fever authorization form completed by a physician or the center has been directed by the child's physician by note or phone. Children with a fever will be given medication only to provide the child comfort until the parent arrives. Parents must supply the center with the medication labeled with the child's name.

## **ACCIDENTS**

Anything that requires more than TLC requires an accident report. Parents are required to sign and date each report and leave it at the Center to be placed on file. Please let us know of an accident your child has had while not at school. We will document any signs of injury we notice the child having.

The KCC staff is trained in basic First Aid and CPR. If there is any question as to the severity of your child's condition, we will notify you.

In the case of an emergency, the parent will be notified immediately. If medical attention is needed, the child will be transported to Exeter Hospital in Exeter, N.H.

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We are required by law to report any signs or suspicions of abuse and/or neglect to DCYF. We are not required to speak with a parent before making such a report, although we may choose to do so. It is up to DCYF (Division of Children, Youth and Families) to investigate any reports they deem necessary. Our interest is in your child. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to speak with us. We are here to help families.

### **HEALTH/ILLNESS**

If a child has any of the following symptoms the parent or guardian will be notified to pick the child up.

- \*Temperature of 101 degrees or higher
- \*Vomiting accompanied by other symptoms
- \*Repeated diarrhea
- \*Any contagious illness or condition (conjunctivitis, strep-throat, head lice, etc.)
- \*Any symptoms requiring one on one care or causing the child to be unable to Participate in Center/classroom activities

If any of these symptoms are observed, staff will do their best to keep the child comfortable and minimize the risk of spreading illness in the classroom setting until the parent can take him/her home or make other arrangements for care. A child with a temperature of 101 degrees or higher will not be allowed to return until they have been fever free for a 24 hour period.

In the case of an infectious disease that requires antibiotics, the child should not return to the Center for 24 hours after starting the medication and could possibly require a physician's release.

In the event that a child becomes ill with a communicable disease, all parents will be notified that such a case was reported. Please inform us if your child has been ill or exposed to a communicable illness. This information is potentially helpful if another child becomes similarly ill.

If a child is sent home from their public school program or is not well enough to attend public school due to illness they may not attend KCC that day, unless they have been seen by their pediatrician and have a note stating that they are free from illness and healthy enough to attend school and child care.

### **HEAD LICE POLICY**

Any child found to have head lice will be sent home as soon as possible that day. Upon their return they will be checked for any evidence of lice by a member of the KCC staff, and will only be allowed to return if they are nit-free. This is necessary to prevent the spread of lice due to the constant contact among young children, and our abundance of bedding, cloth toys, etc.

## **PAYMENTS AND FEES**

We have an annual non-refundable registration fee of \$75.00 for one child, with a maximum of \$125.00 per family. Tuition is due on the first day of enrollment and is used for the first week or month your child is enrolled.

Tuition payments are due on the Friday before services are rendered, unless arrangements are made with management. Established weekly or monthly payments are due even if your child has missed school due to illness, vacation, etc.... Children who are registered full-time year round (minimum of 4 full days per week) will be granted one weeks' vacation without charge after one year of attendance, however you cannot use only one day at a time. Children enrolled full-time for the summer or school year only or part-time are not eligible. The one-week without tuition can be applied if your child misses a **full week** of school due to an illness, however you will forfeit your vacation week.

The Center offers a 10% discount for having more than one child enrolled. The child with the highest tuition rate pays full price and the child/children with the lesser tuition will receive the discount.

Monthly tuition payments are due within the first five days of the month.

Failure to satisfy a financial obligation within 2 weeks of the due date will result in your child's expulsion from the Center until the balance is paid in full, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Director. For budgetary reasons, however, such arrangements can only be made in extremely limited circumstances.

The Center closes at 6:00 PM sharp! Children must be picked up prior to closing so staff members can leave on time. A late penalty fee of \$1.00 is assessed for each minute that your child is not picked up. We will use the clock at KCC to determine the time.

A \$25.00 fee will be charged for each check returned due to insufficient funds. If more than one check is returned, we will no longer accept check payments; in that case, cash or bank money orders will be accepted.

There is a \$15.00 late fee for weekly tuition's/daycare that are not received by 2 PM on Friday of the week attending. This fee also applies to monthly tuitions that are not paid within the first five days of the month.

A two-week termination notice is expected if your child must leave us for any reason or if you are requesting a schedule change. We request all schedule changes and notice of termination of enrollment be sent to the office in writing or via e-mail.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES AND COMMUNICATION**

Conferences are always available at the request of parents or staff. If you would like to schedule a conference, please notify your child's teacher. If you would like to schedule

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a phone conference any given day with a staff member, please let them know and they will give you the best time to call.

Child evaluations are done for each child at least twice annually. We gather information from both skills demonstrated in the classroom and at home. You will receive a copy of your child's evaluation. If you would like to schedule a parent/teacher conference to go over the evaluation please let your teacher know when you receive your copy. If we identify a need or delay in your child's progress we will request a conference with you at which time we will discuss arranging a screening or referral. All results will be kept confidential and will only be shared with other agencies with your written consent.

Each child, with the exception of school age, will have a daily report sent home with them that will detail their overall mood, what they ate, whether they slept, and any information the teachers needs to make sure the parent is aware of, such as upcoming events. Please look for your child's daily report each day.

Teachers and parents have the opportunity to touch base each day during drop off and pick up. We ask that parents refrain from talking on their cells phones at this time to make sure that there is ample opportunity to share in the news of your child's day.

## **TOYS**

It is difficult for the staff to prevent toys from home from getting lost or broken, so we ask that your child not bring toys to the Center unless specifically requested by your child's teacher as part of the curriculum. KCC will not be responsible for lost or broken toys.

A small blanket and/or soft toy may be brought in and used for rest time.

## **DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE**

The policy for behavior guidance used at the KCC is redirection, encouragement and reinforcement of appropriate behavior. In accordance with this policy, each of the following techniques may be used to guide children's behavior:

- Redirecting a child's attention to a desirable activity when a child is engaging in unacceptable behavior;
- Establishing appropriate rules and limits for acceptable behavior;
- Giving positively worded directions;
- Arranging equipment, materials, activities, and schedules in a way that promotes desirable behavior; and
- Implementing safe, logical, and natural consequences related to the misbehavior and enforcing those consequences as soon as possible after the misbehavior has occurred.

## **BITING**

KCC recognizes that one of the most traumatic events in your child's participation in childcare may be that of biting. Biting is a developmental stage usually ending by four years of age. Some children never bite. However, toddlers and children with limited verbal skills may bite out of frustration. Whether your child is bitten or is the biter the situation often causes an arousal of emotions, which in some cases may be extreme. Our goal is to meet the needs of all children including the biter; however, it is a priority to keep all of the children safe. When a child is bitten staff is required to give the hurt child's parents an accident report and inform the parents of the biter. We are required by law not to mention the names of the children who are involved. KCC utilizes available resources in curbing biting and offers the parents of both children information about this stage of development. If biting remains a chronic behavior, we may need to recommend alternative care or suspension.

## **EXPULSION POLICY FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR**

Prior to the expulsion of any child for challenging behavior the center will take the following steps:

- Observe and evaluate the child, and refer for support services if deemed necessary;
- Provide classroom support for the child within the program's capabilities; (This may include shadowing the child to help them navigate interactions and transitions.)
- Provide education and support for the classroom teacher; (This would include the Director or other support services observing the child, followed by a meeting with the classroom teaching team where suggestions for behavior management would be given).
- Meet with the parents to discuss evaluations, observations and ways to help the child be successful in the classroom.

For any child who poses a threat to the safety of the staff, other children or themselves and who does not respond to various discipline techniques, their parent will be notified to pick them up and the parents must meet with the Executive Director to come up with a plan to meet their child's individual needs. Counseling may be recommended. In rare cases, the center may not be the proper placement for the child and alternate childcare arrangements will be discussed.

In the event that a child must be expelled from the program the parent will receive notice in writing, and e-mail can suffice for written notice.

## **CLASSROOM TRANSITIONS**

Infants will spend a minimum of their first twenty months in our infant/early toddler program. Transition from there typically happens as children show developmental

readiness. Due to classroom size limitations, transition to preschool and from one preschool to the next usually occurs on a school calendar schedule. All transitions include recommendations from teaching staff, input from parents and assessment of the child's needs. Children will be given opportunities to visit and transition slowly if needed.

### **CHANGE IN HOURS**

Any changes in schedule (increase in days or hours) are subject to availability. Changes in schedule must be arranged through the Executive Director and your child's teacher. One day cannot be substituted for another unless prior arrangements are made with the administration.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

There are a variety of ways parents can be involved in the Center. As a non-profit agency we have fundraisers throughout the year to supplement tuition in our operating budget. We are always looking for parent volunteers. Any way you can help means a great deal to us. We are governed by a Board of Directors consisting of parents and community members. Our Board meets the third Thursday of each month. If this is something you might be interested in, please attend a meeting to see what it is all about. Parents are also welcomed into the classroom to help on a special day, to chaperone a field trip, to share a cultural custom, or simply to visit. We have an open door policy and welcome parents to visit any time of day. Another way to get involved is to collect items for classroom projects like film containers, ribbon, yarn, computer paper, old files, etc...

### **NOTICES AND NEWSLETTERS**

A quarterly newsletter is given out throughout the year advising parents of upcoming events. Teachers provide parents with classroom notices and curriculum on a monthly basis. Special news, upcoming events or important notices will be sent out periodically. Please watch your child's cubby/mailbox for these notices. They may also be posted on the sign in/out bulletin board.

### **BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS**

The center encourages families to share their family and cultural traditions with their child's classroom and the center at large. One great way to share traditions is through the celebration and traditions of holidays. If your family celebrates a holiday or has traditions that you would like to share with the classroom please let us know. Your teacher will work with you to create a meaningful way to share it with the classroom as a whole.

If a parent would like to offer a special treat for your child's birthday, please make arrangements with your child's teacher. All food items must be store bought and in original packaging this ensures we are serving children with allergies safe foods. We cannot give out addresses and phone numbers. However, if the entire class is invited invitations may be placed in the children's cubbies.

**FIELD TRIPS**

The Kinston Children's center does not transport children. We do take walking field trips as indicated in our parent agreement. The center enriches its programs by bringing entertainers and activities into the center.

**BABY SITTING**

The center does not recommend that staff babysit children enrolled in our program; however, should they choose to, a consent to hold the Kingston Children's Center Harmless for Staff Babysitting form must be filled out and signed by the parent/legal guardian of the child/children.

We are delighted that your family is part of the Kingston Children's Center family!

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