



Children's Circle Family Handbook

Enriching lives and creating memorable experiences.



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Welcome

The Glencoe Park District is excited to welcome you and your child to our Children's Circle Full Day Early Childhood Program! This handbook outlines the procedures and policies of our program. We are confident your child will create lasting memories while in our care.

This handbook is intended to provide families with clear expectations and procedures. Enrollment in Children's Circle constitutes agreement to the policies outlined herein. We believe the more informed you are, the better your child's experience will be. Please take time to read through the materials carefully. Since 1988, Children's Circle has proudly served the community, combining loving, high-quality care with engaging, play-based learning.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Early Childhood Director. We are here to help and happy to support your family.

We look forward to welcoming you into our community!

Sincerely,

Molly Tigera

Early Childhood Director

(847) 835-7541

mtigera@glencoe parkdistrict.com

Children's Contact Information and Locations

Park District Office Hours

Takiff Center Main Desk

999 Green Bay Road, Glencoe
Monday- Friday, 8:30 AM-5 PM
(847) 835-3030

Takiff Center Early Childhood Desk

999 Green Bay Road, Glencoe
Monday-Friday, 7 AM-6 PM
(847) 835-7553

Children's Circle Daily Program

As you enter our classrooms, you will notice the warmth and inviting openness of the materials. Our materials are chosen to invite active participation and promote learning, and are geared to the particular developmental levels of the children in each room. We often supplement our offerings with items from home, the library, or other classrooms. We will ask you to provide family photos for our family tree in each classroom.

Classroom play-based curriculum is based on weekly themes that offer developmentally appropriate learning experiences. Daily activities include:

- Large Group Times (music, stories, fingerplays, etc.)
- Small Group Times (specific activity related to weekly theme)
- Free Play/Free Choice
- Large Motor/Gym Time
- Outside Time (Playground and Nature Play Area)
- Nap/Rest Time
- Sensory Exploration/STEAM Lab

We want you to know our plans. Each week, you will receive a recap via Brightwheel messaging on the breakdown of activities and classroom happenings. Weekly lesson plans are posted in Brightwheel each Friday and include details of each day's activities. You will receive photos and updates throughout the day via the Brightwheel app.

Classroom Child to Staff Ratios

The following minimum ratios have been established by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, by which we are licensed.

Track	Class name	Age Range	Ratio	Max Children
Ocean Track				
	Jellyfish	6 weeks- 15 months	4:1	12
	Frogs	15 months-2 years	5:1	15
	Turtles	Older toddlers/2-year-olds	5:1	15
	Starfish	2-year-olds	8:1	16
	Dolphin	3-year-olds	10:1	20
	Beluga	4-year-olds	10:1	20
Arctic Track				
	Penguin	Toddlers and 2-year-olds	5:1	15
	Polar Bear	3 & 4-year-olds	10:1	20

Children's Circle routinely staffs above minimum DCFS/IDEC ratios to better support supervision, transitions, and individualized care.

Classroom Placement and Transitions

Children's Circle bases your child's classroom assignment on the age of your child. Infants may be enrolled any time after they reach 6 weeks of age. Typically, children are transitioned to the next classroom at the beginning of the summer or early fall, except for infants, who are transitioned to Frogs at 15 months of age.

As transition time approaches, staff and administration meet for discussion and planning. Children's Circle holds an annual open house for families to visit the new classroom, talk with the teachers, and explore the materials. We hope you will touch base with the teachers and share any information that will ease the adjustment. Former teachers and new teachers will work together to make the experience a positive one.

Schedule of Hours and Holidays

Children's Circle offers two full-day care tracks, operating Monday through Friday for 50 weeks each year. The Ocean Track is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and the Arctic Track is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The Center is closed for major holidays, for one week in August, and one week in December. A full calendar of annual closures is published each June to provide families ample time to plan ahead.

Full tuition is due during all scheduled closures, including holidays and vacation weeks, as these days are already factored into the annual tuition rate.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

Please bring your child into the classroom when you arrive in the morning. We require that you sign your child in upon arrival utilizing the Brightwheel app and QR code. Children may not enter the building without an accompanying adult.

Your child will be released only to individuals listed on the approved pick-up form. No other person will be allowed to pick up your child unless you have notified us in writing prior to the time of release. If you need to make last-minute pick-up arrangements, you may email the front desk at ecwing@glencoe parkdistrict.com.

Photo identification is required before a child will be released to anyone other than the parents/guardians.

For pick up, the classroom will share where they are located (playground, gym, walk, classroom, etc..) for you to locate your child. We require that you sign out your child utilizing the Brightwheel app and QR code.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Children must be picked up by the time their program ends. In the event that a child has not been picked up by the end of their program, the following procedure will be implemented:

If the family or designated pickup person has not arrived or contacted the center within 20 minutes of the program ending, Children's Circle staff will begin calling parents' work, cell, and home phone numbers in an effort to reach the family. If, after calling the available numbers, a parent cannot be reached, Children's Circle staff will call the emergency contacts listed on the Emergency Contact Information form, followed by any other names listed on the Pickup Authorization form. If a child has not been picked up within 30 minutes after the program ends, staff will notify the Early Childhood Director and/or Program Supervisor and contact Glencoe Public Safety.

We will add fees to your next tuition bill based on what time you pick up your child:

Ocean Track

If you arrive in this window	You will be charged
6:01 – 6:15 pm	\$8
6:16 – 6:30 pm	\$16

Arctic Track

If you arrive in this window	You will be charged
1:00 – 1:15 pm (half day program)	\$8
1:15-1:30 pm (half day program)	\$16
5:30 – 5:45 pm	\$8
5:45 – 6:00 pm	\$16

Children's Circle acknowledges its responsibility to ensure the child's well-being until the parent, authorized pickup person, or police department representative arrives.

Children's Circle staff will not hold the child responsible for late pick-up, will discuss the issue only with parents/guardians, and will never discuss it with the child.

Parents are expected to keep their contact information up to date. Updates can be completed by contacting the Early Childhood Director.

Any child who is picked up after their program end time more than five times in a calendar year may be subject to disenrollment at the discretion of the Early Childhood Director.

Safety and Security

A mobile access system, HID, is installed in the Early Childhood Wing. Children's Circle families will receive access to the secured wing through a mobile app, which they can download to their phone. If someone arrives without access through the app, they will be required to sign in at the front desk, where staff will verify their ID.

Entrances to the building, sensory room, as well as the Early Childhood Wing, are video monitored.

We take safety seriously. Staff are trained in First Aid and CPR/AED. Fire drills are conducted each month, where we model a calm, immediate response by exiting according to routes planned by Glencoe Public Safety. Routine staff safety and intruder response drills are conducted to ensure preparedness and reinforce emergency procedures.

Parking

Parking spaces are available at the front of the Early Childhood entrance. Additional parking is also available at the rear of the building. Please park in the parking spaces and not along the building's front curb. This is a fire lane, and people parking here will be ticketed.

Throughout the year, Glencoe Park District has different programs that utilize the carline system. Please be aware that this may prolong your drop-off or pick-up time due to high traffic. During the summer season, at peak times, no left-hand turns are permitted when exiting the parking lots at Takiff Center.

Family Communication

Sometimes, outside circumstances affect your child's behavior at school. A late night, a visit from relatives, an out-of-town trip for mom or dad - all these things may impact your child's day. We don't want to pry, but we do want to have enough information to respond appropriately to your child. You are welcome to touch base with your child's teacher at drop-off, leave a note on Brightwheel, or talk with one of the classroom coordinators.

In addition, we hold two parent-teacher conferences per year in the fall and the spring. If you wish to schedule an additional conference or time to speak with your child's teacher, please use the Brightwheel app.

Once a year, we ask you to share your thoughts on our program by filling out a program evaluation. We value your input, so please take the time to let us know! Comments are welcome at any time throughout the year.

Contact Us

When contacting Children's Circle, please call (847) 835-7553. In an emergency, when you are unable to contact us at this number, please call the Glencoe Park District office at (847) 835-3030. A message will be delivered to staff. You may also ask the front desk staff to page the Early Childhood Director.

If you need to contact your child's teacher directly, this is done in the Brightwheel app.

Absences

Please notify us if your child will be absent. You may notify us via email or Brightwheel messaging. Full tuition is due when a child is absent.

Brightwheel

We use an app called Brightwheel. You will receive an invitation for the app one week before your child's start date. You will be able to access pictures and updates about your child's day as well as message teachers directly. We cannot guarantee that messages will be answered immediately, as our staff's priority is the children in their classroom. If you have an urgent message, please call our front desk at 847-835-7553.

Health and Emergency Forms - Epact

One month prior to your child's start date, you will receive an email from Epact to complete your child's paperwork packet electronically. Each child must have a completed Epact account with a medical form, a lead assessment form, and a copy of their birth certificate. In addition, if your child's paperwork notes an allergy or medical condition, you will need to provide an action plan.

The health and emergency contact information you provide on the forms will help ensure that appropriate health and safety procedures are followed in the event of any health or emergency situation regarding your child. It is important to list all emergency contact information, information about your child, and guardians who have permission to pick up your child in this paperwork.

Enrollment Deposit and Tuition Payments

A \$750 non-refundable deposit is due at the time of enrollment.

Tuition is billed and processed on the first business day of the month. You may pay your bill by ACH, credit card or check. Checks should be made payable to the Glencoe Park District. For your convenience, you may elect to have your tuition automatically withdrawn from your account via ACH. You may also have it automatically charged to your Visa or MasterCard; however, there is a 3% fee for credit cards. Please see the Early Childhood Director for more information.

Accounts more than 30 days past due will be charged a \$25 late fee. An additional \$25 will be charged to accounts 60 days past due.

Tuition rates are based on classroom placement.

State Requirements

As required by the Department of Children and Family Services, our building has lead testing conducted on all water sources every three years. The results are available in the Early Childhood Director's office if you are interested.

Illness Protocol

Children's Circle follows all applicable requirements and guidance established by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC), applicable local health departments, and Illinois child care licensing regulations.

Families play an essential role in maintaining a healthy and safe learning environment. We understand how difficult it can be for working families to arrange care when a child is ill. Please ensure you have a backup plan in place if your child becomes ill and cannot comfortably participate in group activities or requires more care than can be provided in a group care setting.

Emergency Contacts

Each family must provide two local emergency contacts, other than the parent(s)/guardian(s), on the Emergency Contacts Form.

Parents/guardians or an authorized emergency contact are expected to pick up an ill child within one hour of being contacted by Children's Circle.

If leadership is unable to reach a parent/guardian within 20 minutes, emergency contacts will be notified.

A child may be required to be picked up and sent home for any of the following conditions:

- A temperature of **100.4°F or higher** is recorded, regardless of the method used, or a lower-grade fever is accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms of illness. Children's Circle uses Braun ThermoScan ear thermometers.
- A persistent or uncontrolled cough that prevents comfortable participation or requires care beyond what staff can reasonably provide.
- Difficulty breathing, rapid or labored breathing, wheezing, bluish coloring, or other signs of respiratory distress. Emergency medical services may be contacted when warranted.
- Diarrhea, meaning stools that are significantly more frequent or less formed than is usual for the child, including stools that cannot be contained by a diaper or use of the toilet.
- Vomiting or Diarrhea two or more times within a 24-hour period, or vomiting or Diarrhea that interferes with participation or raises concerns for illness.
- A rash, eye drainage, mouth sores, lice, or other symptoms that may indicate a communicable illness until evaluated, when appropriate, according to public health guidance.
- All active blisters resulting from hand, foot, and mouth must be scabbed over with no new blisters.
- Any behavior or symptoms indicating the child is not well enough to remain in a group care setting.

When determining whether a child should remain at Children's Circle, leadership will consider whether:

- The condition prevents the child from participating comfortably in daily activities.
- The condition requires a level of care greater than staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- The condition poses a risk of spreading illness to others.

Returning to Children's Circle

Following a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, children must be symptom-free for **24 consecutive hours (This means they will miss, at minimum, the entire next day of care)** before returning to the Center. Children recovering from a fever must also be fever-free for at least 24 consecutive hours **without the use of fever-reducing medication**.

Example: If a child is sent home on Wednesday at 11 am, they may return on Friday, provided they have remained symptom-free for the required 24-hour period.

Children diagnosed with a communicable illness may return when they meet the applicable exclusion and return requirements established by IDPH, IDEC, the local health department, and Children's Circle. Return requirements vary depending on the illness and may include a specified period after treatment begins, resolution of symptoms, or clearance from a healthcare provider or public health authority.

A healthcare provider's note does not automatically authorize a child's return. Children must also meet Children's Circle's illness protocol and all applicable public health and licensing requirements.

Communicable Illness Reporting

Families must notify Children's Circle as soon as possible if their child has a known or suspected communicable illness (including influenza, COVID-19, strep throat, croup, conjunctivitis, hand, foot and mouth disease, or other reportable illnesses). Families in the affected classroom or program will be notified while maintaining the confidentiality of the individual child and family.

Medications

Children should be well enough to participate in the school day without the need for medication to temporarily reduce or mask symptoms such as fever, significant pain, or other symptoms that would otherwise require exclusion. Children who require medication solely to remain comfortable enough to attend school should remain home until they are able to participate without symptom-masking medication.

Additional Information

- Please notify Children's Circle of any significant changes to your child's diet, medications, allergies, or home circumstances that may affect your child's care.
- Children's Circle maintains the required first aid and CPR-certified staff on duty at all times. Staff can provide basic first aid and routine assistance within the scope of their training.
- When a child becomes ill or is injured while attending Children's Circle, a member of the Early Childhood leadership team will determine whether the child may remain in care or must be picked up.

- Before returning, the child must demonstrate the ability to participate safely and comfortably in daily routines based on the child's current symptoms, level of care required, applicable public health guidance, and Children's Circle's ability to protect the health and safety of all children.

Medication

State licensing regulations and Glencoe Park District policy do not allow us to give children over-the-counter medication. Only prescription medication may be given. The District does not administer Diastat (diazepam rectal gel) or other rectal medications. Emergency medical services will be contacted when required in accordance with the child's action plan and District emergency procedures.

A medication authorization form must be filled out before medication can be administered. Medications must be in the original prescription container. You must also provide a doctor's note stating the medication, the reason for administration, what time it is to be administered, the exact dosage, and the start and end dates of the medication. Please see the Early Childhood front desk for medication consent forms.

Medical Records

State licensing regulations require a physical examination and immunization record on file for each child enrolled in the Center. This medical record should be **dated no more than six months before your child's first day of enrollment**. In addition to immunizations, a lead assessment is also required. State regulations require a child's medical record to be updated every two years. You will be required to complete a medical form before your child's first day at Children's Circle.

Clothing/Extra Clothing

Please dress your child for the school day. Your child will paint, splash in puddles, stretch slime, and dig in the sand and dirt. We encourage the use of smocks and aprons, but these are not always enough protection.

Remember, too, that part of your child's day will be spent in the gym or on the playground. Be sure your child's clothes allow for active play, with no dangling strings or belts that may get caught on equipment. To prevent slipping on the floors, gym shoes or shoes with rubber soles are required. Sandals, clogs, and dressy shoes are unsafe and should not be worn.

When weather permits, the children will go outside. Boots, hats, gloves, and a snowsuit are required during the cold weather.

We require that **2 complete sets of extra clothing be kept at school**. All clothing should be marked with your child's name. If soiled clothing is sent home, please bring a clean extra set the following day. Please change extra clothing according to the season and your child's size. If your child is actively toilet-training, we highly recommend keeping extra shoes and socks in their locker.

Diapering and Toilet Training

Parents of children who are not toilet-trained are responsible for supplying diapers and wipes. When your child's supply is low, a note will be sent home reminding you to restock them. You may also provide diaper ointment. Please label it with your child's name and complete the form authorizing its use (available at the Early Childhood front desk). Children's Circle staff will assist families in toilet training when the child expresses interest and readiness. Please feel free to discuss toilet training with your child's teacher.

Bottles, Sippy Cups, & Pacifiers

Parents are responsible for supplying the Center with enough clean, empty bottles or cups with caps for your child to use each day. We do not allow glass bottles or cups. Children in the infant room who require formula or breast milk should arrive at school with pre-filled bottles for the day. For toddlers, the staff will fill the containers with milk or water as needed. Containers will be rinsed and placed in your child's locker for you to take home and sanitize. Please put the date and your child's first and last name on each bottle. Pacifiers are allowed at rest times. Please be sure to leave it with your child's teacher.

Nap Time

State regulations require us to provide a daily nap/rest period. More information regarding rest/nap time can be found in our rest/nap protocol. At nap time, each child is provided with a cot exclusively for their own use. Many children bring a blanket and a stuffed animal to snuggle with as they rest. Blankets will be sent home every Friday to be washed. We wash cot sheets and disinfect cots weekly. The use of pillows is discouraged due to health regulations. Infants are provided with cribs and are only permitted to wear armless sleep sacks and utilize a pacifier without any stuffed animal attached.

Toys

Children's Circle supplies ample toys for each child to use. Therefore, we ask that children do not bring toys from home to school (we will, of course, make exceptions for cherished "loveys" that can stay in their locker until nap/rest time).

Toys may be brought to school if your child's class has "show and tell" or a "home toy" day.

These toys should be labeled with your child's name and placed directly in your child's locker until the scheduled play time. In keeping with the non-violent philosophy of Children's Circle, any toy that exhibits aggressive behavior is not permitted. It has been our experience that such toys prompt aggressive, fighting-based play.

Children's Circle cannot be responsible for lost or stolen toys.

Food

DCFS/IDEC licensing states that all foods consumed by children in a childcare setting must be provided by the Center unless the child is under 15 months. If children require a special diet due to medical reasons, allergic

reactions, or religious beliefs, a doctor's note must be on file and approved by the State. Any special food supplied by the parent must be labeled with the child's name, date, and identity of the food.

Birthdays/Holidays

We love to celebrate! Birthdays and holidays are special times, and you are welcome to bring a treat to share with your child's class if you wish. Treats may include nut- and egg-free treats such as Pirates' Booty, Oreo cookies, or popsicles. **State licensing regulations require us to only serve food purchased from a store.**

As part of our birthday celebrations in the classroom, you have the option of sending in a small gift donated to the classroom in honor of your child's birthday, such as a book, toy, or puzzle. Your child will get to open the gift on their special day, and it will become a part of the classroom's shared learning and play environment. Teachers can provide a wish list. Please let your child's teacher know in advance when your child will be celebrating a special event, and what you plan on bringing so they can get approval ahead of time.

Please let your child's teacher know in advance when your child will be celebrating a special event, and what you plan on bringing so they can get approval ahead of time.

Classroom activities planned by the staff for holidays will reflect the following principles:

1. Holidays are a time of family celebration.
2. Holidays are a time of giving, receiving, and sharing.
3. Thoughtfully acknowledging holidays supports and reflects the diverse cultures and experiences of the children we serve.

If a student initiates a conversation about the religious aspect of a holiday, we will not discourage the discussion. Rather, we will acknowledge that this is one of the many ways a holiday is celebrated. It is our hope that in addressing the holiday season in this manner, we will help our students respect and appreciate cultural differences without offending any family traditions.

Preschool Discipline Policy

Discipline should be administered as guidance to help children develop appropriate social skills, gain self-control, and assume responsibility for their actions. Discipline through the use of guidance allows children to learn boundaries. It is understood that young children are not born with these skills, and it is the adult's responsibility to guide them through the experience.

Preventing Behavioral Issues:

To prevent discipline issues in the classroom, staff should maintain a consistent classroom routine, provide a variety of activities and materials for the children to use, and model appropriate behavior. Since young children are still learning to share, duplicate toys should be available in the classroom when possible. Staff should work with children to establish written classroom rules that are posted in the classroom. This should be visible to staff, children, and families.

Strategies:

No one discipline method works for all children, and the methods vary greatly depending on the developmental age of the child. Discipline should be administered by using the least restrictive approach to the most restrictive approach.

Methods include:

1. Providing guidance for children in a positive manner. Acknowledging children's appropriate actions should be an ongoing part of the daily interactions. Remember, children do not know what is expected of them if they are not told. You have to identify the desired behavior. Example: Chairs are for sitting.
2. Ignoring children who may be acting out as a method to get an adult's attention. This method can only be used if the behavior is not harming the child or anyone else. When the behavior ceases, it is important to follow up by providing attention in response to positive behaviors.
3. Use of the 1-2-3 warning system.
4. Redirection of a child to a different activity or area of the classroom. This is the best method for children under 2 years old.
5. Facilitating conflict resolution. Whenever possible, children should be encouraged to work out their differences with each other. It is the staff's role to coach this process.
6. Removing the child from the action. As a method of helping a child gain control, a child may be separated from the situation. This is not a use of a time-out. Time-outs are not permitted. You can have the child take a walk with an adult, read a book in the library, cuddle on a chair, or hop on the sensory path.
7. When behaviors seem to be impacting more than one or two children, the teacher may elect to have a group discussion to clarify what is and is not okay. The group method is only appropriate for children 3 years old and older.

Home-school communication is an important aspect in providing guidance for young children. Staff members and families must communicate freely to set consistent guidelines for behavior. Families should be kept informed of their child's behavior. Since changes in a child's home life can affect a child's behavior, families are encouraged to inform staff of such changes. Changes can be as simple as one parent traveling for work.

Incident Reports

Incident reports are used to document three primary types of situations: **Injury/Accident**, **Illness**, and **Observations**.

- **Injury/Accident:** This type of report is completed when a child is physically hurt, either by another child or through an accidental fall or mishap. Examples include a scraped knee from falling on the playground or a scratch from a peer.

- **Illness:** These reports are used when a child is sent home due to illness in accordance with our Illness Policy. For example, a child having a fever would be documented in this category.
- **Observations:** Observation reports are used to track behaviors witnessed by staff that may or may not be age-appropriate. These may include:
 - Aggressive behavior such as hitting, pushing, or biting.
 - Actions that damage property, like tearing books.
 - Behaviors that seem unusual or outside the norm for a child's age group.

The **purpose** of incident reports is to maintain open and transparent communication with families regarding what occurs in the classroom. Additionally, these reports serve as important documentation in the event that a child exhibits challenging behaviors that may need to be addressed through our **Challenging Behavior Policy**.

Upon enrollment in the program, families agree that they will acknowledge incident reports when requested and understand the importance these documents provide regarding our program safety, illness, and behavior policies. A staff member, a member of leadership, and a parent/guardian will be requested to sign an incident report.

Challenging Behavior Policy

At Glencoe Park District Preschools, we strive to create a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment where every child can learn and grow. We understand that all children are learning how to manage their emotions, behaviors, and relationships with others. Occasionally, some children may display behaviors that require additional support.

What is Challenging Behavior?

Challenging behavior is defined as serious and repeated actions that interfere with a child's ability to:

- Self-regulate in ways that are developmentally appropriate
- Learn and engage in activities in a group care setting
- Build healthy relationships with peers and adults

How We Address Challenging Behavior

Our goal is to work closely with families to support children through any behavioral challenges they may experience. If ongoing concerns arise, the following steps will be taken:

Step 1: Family Pledge Meeting

- Children Circle leadership will schedule a Family Pledge Meeting to discuss the behavior.
- Parents/guardians will be expected to:
 - Communicate openly with staff and provide documentation from outside care, if applicable.
 - Provide a couple of days/times they are available to meet within two weeks of the initial Family Pledge Meeting request
 - If needed, consult with pediatricians or other professionals regarding their child's development

Please note:

- If a child's behavior presents a safety risk to themselves or others, families will be contacted and must pick up the child within one hour.
- The Early Childhood Director may adjust or skip steps based on the severity of the behavior.

Step 2: Behavioral Support Plan

- A personalized behavioral support plan will be developed with input from staff, the family, and qualified professionals (if applicable).
- The plan will outline specific strategies and supports tailored to the child's needs.
- The plan will outline what strategies Children Circle staff will be committed to and what strategies the family will be committing to.

Step 3: Implementation & Ongoing Support

- Staff will consistently implement the plan and track:
 - Strategies used
 - Child's progress, specifically looking for trends in behavior has stayed the same, increased, or decreased
 - Communication with families via touch base at least every two weeks, if not sooner

Step 4: Transition Planning

- If, after reasonable and documented efforts, the child continues to struggle in the program and poses a consistent challenge to the group's or staff's well-being:
 - A transition plan will be created with the family
 - Plans may include moving the child to a more appropriate program setting
 - Transition plans are shared with the Illinois State Board of Education as required

We understand that not every program is the right fit for every child. If it becomes clear that our environment is not meeting a child's needs—even with reasonable accommodations—we will work with families to support a successful transition.

Program Guidelines

- We do **not** use any form of corporal punishment or verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.
- Children will never be disciplined for bathroom accidents.
- No child will be denied meals, snacks, water, or rest as a form of discipline.

Allergies

Participants with allergies may be at risk of a serious allergic reaction while participating in a Park District program due to contact with or ingestion of the allergen. The Glencoe Park District cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment, but with your cooperation, we can create a safer environment and be better prepared to handle emergencies. The Park District will make reasonable, feasible, and practical accommodations to allow participants with life-threatening allergies to participate in our programs.

If your child has allergies, list all known allergies on your child's paperwork. If your child has allergies that require medication, you must complete our Allergy Form and Medication Form and provide an action plan. Required forms must be submitted at least seven days before the participant's first day of attendance to allow Park District staff time to make accommodations and train appropriate staff.

Parents/guardians are responsible for promptly notifying the Park District of any changes to their child's allergies, medications, or action plan.

Special Accommodations

The Glencoe Park District welcomes the participation of all individuals in our program. We are fully committed to complying with the ADA and providing reasonable accommodations to facilitate participation in our programs. Please make us aware of any special situations as soon as possible.

If your child requires support with medication, behavior management, or physical assistance, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to contact the Program upon registration to make arrangements for any accommodations. If sufficient notification is not received, school attendance may be delayed.

Sunscreen

Any parent who wishes to have sunscreen applied to their child must provide authorization in the special product release form, which can be found at the Early Childhood front desk. Parents are responsible for providing their child's sunscreen. Sunscreen bottles should be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. Sunscreen will only be applied to the child whose name appears on the bottle. Sunscreen will not be provided by the District under any circumstances.

Field Trips

Our Beluga and four-year-old Polar Bear class experiences local field trips in the summer and winter seasons. They will walk to public parks such as Duke Park and Friends Park, as well as ride on the Glencoe Park District bus to Glencoe Beach. During the winter season, they will have weekly skating sessions at the Weinberg Family Recreation Center. Your permission for your child's participation in these activities is part of the release form agreement. A permission slip will be sent home for longer field trips. Only Beluga and four-year-old Polar Bear classrooms participate in field trips.

Pesticide and Pest Control

Our school uses a licensed pest control company in accordance with DCFS licensing standards to help protect the health and safety of children and staff, maintain a productive learning environment, and preserve the integrity of the school building and grounds.

We use appropriate preventive and non-chemical methods whenever possible to control pests. Pesticides are used only when necessary and are applied in accordance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Only individuals licensed by the State are permitted to apply pesticide products, and all applications will be made strictly according to the product label instructions.

Whenever pesticides must be applied, they will be used at times when children are not present in the building or on the grounds.

Lost and Found

Found items will be located in the main Takiff lobby. Labeled items are more easily recovered! All unclaimed lost and found items will be disposed of or donated every quarter.

Orientation

Some children join us from other programs, while for many, this is their first school experience. Regardless of your child's background, we believe it's important for both you and your child to transition into the program through a tour and an initial visit. Orientation visits help children become familiar with new faces, spaces, and routines, while giving families the opportunity to learn more about the classroom, ask questions, and share important information about their child. These visits also allow teachers to begin building a relationship with your child and better understand their individual needs.

Prior to your start date, you will receive a welcome packet from your child's classroom with details on what to bring, daily routines, and other helpful information to support a smooth start.

Separation Issues

Some children walk into a new classroom and feel at home immediately! For most, however, getting comfortable is a process that may take from a few days to several weeks. During the adjustment period, your child may be increasingly clingy, teary, or angry. Try not to be too disturbed if your child displays these symptoms. Usually, symptoms of separation anxiety will disappear once the child feels more comfortable with the teachers, program, and classmates.

How can you help?

1. Be positive. If you are anxious about your child attending school, then you may be transmitting these feelings to your child.
2. Allow more time. Give yourself and your child a little more time for the home-to-school routine. Rushing can add to everyone's stress!
3. Bring a "transitional object" from home to school can sometimes help children feel more secure if they have something from home to hold onto. Some possibilities: a photo, a blanket, a loved stuffed animal.
4. Develop a goodbye routine. Some families ask their children to wave from the classroom window or draw a special picture. Some children think it's fun to push their parents out the door! Your routine may be as simple as hanging up your child's backpack, having one good hug, and then handing it over to the teacher!
5. Signal the teacher when you are ready to leave. Say a brief and positive goodbye to your child.
6. Avoid staying in the classroom too long if your child begins to cry.
7. Be supportive and understanding about your child's feelings. Explain to your child that it takes time to adjust to new people and places. Let your child know that there are people at school to help them if they need it.



We know that starting a new program is a transition for you as well. Feel free to call and check in on your child. We're glad to give you an update. And as always, if you have questions or comments, let us know. Our doors are open!