

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

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INSTITUTE OVERVIEW

About Us

Siskin Children's Institute strives to be the leader in early intervention and special education to help build an inclusive society for children of all abilities.

In 1950, two Chattanooga businessmen, Mose and Garrison Siskin, made a commitment to devote their lives to serving the community and reaching out to people with disabilities. A few years later, they opened a facility to serve people with disabilities; a highlight of this first building was a preschool for young children with physical disabilities and developmental delays. Long before laws were passed to guarantee that children with disabilities must have the right to education, the Siskin brothers developed programs to educate and train children with special needs. Today, their legacy of helping children with special needs lives on at Siskin Children's Institute.

Programs

Siskin Children's Institute serves children with special needs, their families and the professionals who touch their lives. Located in Chattanooga, the Institute achieves its mission through four initiatives: the Siskin Early Learning Centers, Siskin Center for Child and Family Research, The Siskin Children's Institute-T.C. Thompson Children's Hospital Center for Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics, and the Siskin Outreach and Resource Center.

The Early Learning Center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and is recognized by the Tennessee Department of Education as an approved school and three-star child care program.

Siskin Early Learning Centers provide a high-quality early childhood education where children with and without disabilities learn together. A comprehensive team of special educators, therapists and other professionals works together to help children reach their full potential. Both centers, located in downtown and East Brainerd, received three stars – the highest rating possible – from the Tennessee Department of Health and Human Services. The downtown facility is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Siskin Outreach and Resource Center provides disability information and support to families, professionals, educators, and students through a dynamic array of outreach programs. The center offers a free lending library with more than 5,000 resources; family support services to answer questions and make referrals to community resources; free workshops on disability topics for parents and community members; and specialized training for students, educators and health professionals. For more information on these services, log on to www.siskin.org or contact our Family Support and Resources Coordinator, Beth Oldham, at (423) 648-1757 or beth.oldham@siskin.org.

Siskin Center for Child and Family Research improves the quality of life for children of all abilities by conducting high-quality and important applied research, discovering effective and innovative methods of intervention with children and families, and discovering significant information about their development and functioning.

The Siskin Children’s Institute-T.C. Thompson Children’s Hospital Center for Developmental Behavioral Pediatrics offers assessment, diagnosis, treatment and support for children with or at risk for developmental delays and disorders. Led by a triple board certified developmental behavioral pediatrician, the center specializes in early identification of delays and disorders in children ages 6 weeks to 18 years. Families can receive comprehensive support services through the Siskin Outreach and Resource Center.

MISSION

Siskin Early Learning Centers will enhance the quality of life of all children and their families. The staff will increase the engagement, independence, and social relationships of the children within an inclusive, intentional play setting incorporating developmentally appropriate standards.

PHILOSOPHY

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

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

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

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

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

We believe that children’s achievement is maximized with intensive interventions and appropriate supports occurring throughout the day by exploration in play.

We believe that the success in meeting all children’s needs is inherently dependent upon quality training of the instructional staff.

GOALS

1. Children will demonstrate a high level of engagement in meaningful developmentally appropriate activities.
 - a. Activities will be designed to encourage and support all children's participation in active, hands-on learning.
 - b. Adults will act as facilitators and will use incidental teaching strategies to facilitate engagement.
 - c. Levels of engagement will be measured for ongoing program monitoring and adjustment.
 - d. Teachers will use the Tennessee Early Learning Standards and Creative Curriculum as a guide when planning DAP activities.
 - e. Teachers will use assessment information to plan activities that meet individual child needs.
2. Children will exhibit independence in classroom activities and routines.
 - a. Activities will be accessible to all children.
 - b. Adults will provide opportunities for independence by observing, teaching, and then using the fewest prompts necessary to allow children time to explore an activity and engage in it independently.
3. Children will develop social relationships with peers and adults.
 - a. Activities will be designed to ensure that children must interact with each other.
 - b. Cooperative play will be supported and encouraged as children develop.
 - c. Appropriate social interactions will be identified and reinforced to support and shape this behavior.
4. Parents will be active participants in their child's educational program.
 - a. A Routines Based Interview will be used to gather information about the daily activities of a child and family in order to prioritize and plan interventions.
 - b. Parents and teachers will have multiple opportunities to exchange information and share in decision making.
 - c. Families and professionals will have a shared responsibility for designing, implementing, and evaluating programming.

SISKIN EARLY LEARNING CENTER-DOWNTOWN

Early Intervention Program

The EI program nurtures the development of children with special needs from 6 weeks to 3 years of age. The features of this program include family training, center-based integrated classroom programming, home/community based services, and integrated therapies. Early Intervention programming is a collaborative effort with Tennessee Early Intervention Systems (TEIS) and the Tennessee Department of Education. Hours of the Early Intervention Program are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Preschool Program

This comprehensive preschool program serves children with special needs from age 3 through 6 years. Support services enhance the individualized education program. Preschool programming is funded through a collaborative partnership with Hamilton County Schools. Hours of the school age program are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tuition Program

The inclusive early childhood program serves children 6 weeks through 5 years of age that are typically developing in a natural, center-based classroom program. Children receive annual developmental screenings and assessments and quarterly reports of progress. Please see the Tuition Program section for further programming and financial information. Hours of the Tuition Program are 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Extended Care

Extended care services are available to children in the Early Intervention and Preschool Program whose parents need to arrange child care for the hours that the child is not in the classroom. Afternoon extended care is open from 2:50 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Reasonable accommodations will be made in extended care. However, nursing services are not available after 3 p.m. Extended care services must be approved through the school office and there is a limit to the number of children that can be accepted. If a child requires nursing services, they will not be accepted into extended care. All children receiving this service will not be received before 7:30 a.m. and must be picked up no later than 5:30 p.m. Please see the Financial Information section for extended care fees and payment procedures.

Siskin Children's Institute appreciates the generous financial support of the Hamilton County Schools and the Tennessee Department of Education and their participation in the planning and development of each child's program.

CURRICULUM

Siskin Early Learning Center is committed to ensuring a high quality early childhood education program for every young child. We stand by an integrated, developmentally appropriate, universally designed curriculum that is flexible and comprehensive to make sure that all children have access to program participation regardless of need, ability, or background. Our curriculum is guided by the Creative Curriculum, the Tennessee Early Learning Standards and The Engagement Model.

Our program addresses the basic needs of every child. At Siskin Early Learning Center, we have created a safe place where every child and family is welcome. Children are provided with a safe environment inside the classroom, school common areas, and outside on the playground. We have structure and routines in place to provide a predictable comforting environment. Staff is trained to encourage independence while nurturing your child. Interactions between staff and children are positive. We work to build relationships between children, staff, and families.

Each classroom is designed for learning. From infant rooms with soft surfaces for rolling and crawling to Pre-K classrooms with interest centers (blocks, dramatic play, games and toys, art, discovery, sand and water, computer, library, and music), each classroom facilitates learning with a variety of materials. These materials are rotated on a monthly basis in relationship to a thematic unit of study. Each classroom has a daily schedule posted within the room. This schedule is designed to provide children with a variety of activities. These activities include outside time, free choice play within interest centers, large group activities, small group activities, quiet time, snack, lunch, art, music and special activities.

Curriculum is extended outside of the classroom. Learning experiences are provided on our playground, in the lunch room and in the library. All children are offered a variety of learning experiences through field trips, school wide events, and other experiences.

Siskin Early Learning Center focuses on the individuality of each child. Through our curriculum, we provide assistive technology and visual supports as needed to each classroom. We have a variety of support staff who works in collaboration with teachers to adapt curriculum and materials. Teachers are trained to use a variety of teaching strategies. We believe that all children can learn. At Siskin Early Learning Center, we have high expectations for each child. We strive to prepare all children not only for their next educational environment but to become lifelong learners.

Families are a part of the curriculum. We value family input. Families have access to Creative Curriculum.net, our online curriculum system. Creative Curriculum.net is a free service for families which allows them to use the internet and a password to access their child's assessment information, messages from the teacher, a center calendar, weekly lesson plans and an activity database for home. If a family is interested in setting up an account, please contact, Jennifer Williams, 648-1752.

ASSESSMENT

Siskin Children's Institute uses ongoing informal curriculum based assessment to continually monitor program effectiveness, evaluate individual child progress, interests, and abilities while guiding teachers in the decision making process. In accordance with IDEA federal regulations and child find efforts, a child may be formally assessed using a variety of norm-referenced and standardized tests as indicated by the IEP/IFSP team or as requested by the family. Research based measurements are used as recommended by partnering agency representatives (Hamilton County Schools).

All children are observed daily within familiar classroom routines. Teachers document observations in context of the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum which includes cognitive development, language skills, social/emotional development, and approaches to learning, health and physical development. Families communicate with teachers on a daily

basis related to the developmental continuum in order to participate in guiding their child's program. A formal report is generated and provided to families quarterly with a family conference twice a year.

Assessment results are used to formulate quarterly reports of progress to families. Teachers review current assessments weekly to make individual and group decisions for program planning. For those children who demonstrate developmental weakness on a formal or informal assessment tool, the teacher can refer for additional assessment. The teacher will obtain parental consent for additional assessment. Following consent and assessment the teachers will schedule informal conferences with the parent or legal guardian to review test data and make further recommendations.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PHILOSOPHY

Note: For a detailed policy providing guidelines for the Institute staff when working with children, visit the center office.

Siskin Early Learning Center utilizes a positive behavior support approach consistent with current empirical research and ethical principles regarding interactions with children. The primary school-wide approach and behavior support policy is to utilize the most positive, proactive procedure(s) appropriate for children.

Center-Wide Philosophy

Behavior support strategies must consider the developmental stage of the child, antecedent events, consequences, environmental conditions and family interaction factors that may be relevant to the behavior. Positive, proactive techniques are used to support and shape behavior while teaching appropriate replacement behaviors concurrently.

Classroom and behavior support strategies must be developed within the context of the center-wide policy. That is, positive, proactive procedures in interactions with children should be emphasized. Adult-child interactions are characterized by identified values. Inherent in this center-wide practice is the adult's need to continuously monitor his/her behavior toward modeling these values, as well as adjust teaching strategies to meet individual learning styles.

Proactive classroom behavior support procedures should be characteristic of all instructional situations. The Behavior Support Team (BST) will be available to assist in developing, implementing and reviewing the efficiency of these procedures. In the event the use of positive procedures is not effective in shaping positive behaviors, a functional assessment may be completed to assist in identifying environmental factors that may be an important focus for intervention and support. Information from this assessment is necessary for developing an individualized behavior support plan.

It may be appropriate to consider additional interventions only when these proactive prevention strategies are ineffective or do not result in behavioral changes. If the child exhibits behavior(s) which interfere with his/her development, ability to participate in educational activities or if the behavior is a danger to the child or others, a behavior plan may be appropriate, which includes additional intervention techniques. Siskin Early Learning Center policy states that corporal punishment, verbal/physical/mental abuse, seclusion and other extreme interventions WILL NOT BE USED by the staff.

CENTER WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

A Behavior Support Team (BST) composed of Siskin Early Learning Center staff, will be trained annually by a certified instructor in crisis prevention intervention. Staff will include, but not be limited to, Director of School Operations, Site Director, Supervisor of Special Education, and Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction. The purpose of the team will be to work cooperatively with classroom staff when intervention is needed to prevent a behavior from escalating to a crisis situation. When a child's behavior begins to escalate and the classroom staff feels the behavior is a threat to the individual or others in the area, the team will be summoned as indicated in the Behavior Support Team procedure.

In summary, a hierarchical approach in which positive proactive support procedures are exhausted prior to initiation of intervention procedures is a required component of the Institute's positive behavior support philosophy.

Biting Procedure

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

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

ADMISSIONS/DISCHARGES

Part of what makes Siskin Early Learning Centers unique is that we serve children with and without disabilities. Children without disabilities enroll with Siskin Early Learning Centers much like any other private preschool. Children with disabilities ages birth to age two are placed with the Learning Center through a contract with Tennessee's Early Intervention Services. Children with disabilities ages three to preschool are placed with the Learning Center through a contract with the Hamilton County Department of Education.

TUITION PROGRAM

General Admission Requirements

- Pre-enrollment tour of center
- Physical examination and current immunization record on the Tennessee Department of Health Child Care Immunization Record (yellow or white form) as required by Tennessee state law, or a statement from the healthcare provider if immunizations are delayed. Information must be current within the last three months.
- Child must be between 6 weeks to 5 years of age.
- Certified copy of birth certificate and a copy of child's social security card. Court documentation must be provided for children with legal guardians.
- Copy of proof of insurance.
- Application and enrollment paperwork completed
- Ongoing developmental assessments
- The child will be accepted into the program as age-appropriate space is available. If space is not available, the child will be placed on an applicant list.

General Discharge Criteria

The following constitute grounds for discharge from the program:

- Child reaches the maximum age-limit for the program
- Relocation of the family
- Personal desires of the parents/legal guardians
- Failure to obtain cooperation from the family regarding program policies and procedures.
- Failure to pay tuition and fees in a timely manner, not to exceed 2 weeks
- Excessive absenteeism
- On determination that Siskin Early Learning Center can not meet the needs of the child
- Excessive infringements of the 5:30 p.m. closing time may result in requesting the child's removal from the program.

General Suspension Criteria

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

Discharge Process

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

EARLY INTERVENTION AND HCDE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

General Admission Requirements

- Referrals are appropriate for children who are 6 weeks of age and who have not turned 3 years of age and qualify for specialized instruction through the Tennessee Early Intervention System. Referrals must be made by the child's Tennessee Early Intervention System service coordinator.
- Referrals are appropriate for children 3 years of age and who have not turned 6 years of age prior to July 1 of a given year. Referrals are only accepted through Hamilton County Schools to support ongoing services to children with special needs. The

- ability of the center to meet the needs of the child and his/her family relevant to the child's educational program must be a primary consideration for admission.
- Private pay options are not available for special instruction for children with special needs. Funding is provided through a contractual arrangement with the referral agency.
 - The child will enroll with current eligibility and results will be reviewed by the appropriate staff
 - Pre-enrollment tour of the center
 - Physical examination and current immunization record on the Tennessee Department of Health Child Care Immunization Record (yellow or white form) as required by Tennessee state law, or a statement from the healthcare provider if immunizations are delayed. Information must be current within the last three months.
 - Certified copy of birth certificate and a copy of child's social security card. Court documentation must be provided for children with legal guardians.
 - Copy of proof of insurance.
 - Account/ID numbers if receiving AFDC, Medicaid, Food Stamps, TennCare or Children's Special Services

General Discharge Criteria

The following constitute grounds for discharge from the program:

- Child no longer needs a specialized program and/or team agrees the child is ready to transition to a less/more restrictive environment.
- Siskin Early Learning Center is a private organization and maintains the right to decline or discontinue services. All final admission and re-enrollment decisions are made by the Administrative Team.
- Relocation of the family.
- Personal desires of parent(s)/legal guardian(s).
- Failure to obtain cooperation from the family in regard to program policy and procedures.
- After five consecutive days of absence, the funding/referral agency must be notified and the team may meet to evaluate the child's program plan.
- On determination of the team that another program or agency would be more appropriate to meet the child's needs.

General Suspension Criteria

- Failure to keep immunizations and other medical forms current as required by Tennessee state law
- If the child's behavior is determined to be a danger to self or others, suspension may be enforced in accordance with IDEA guidelines regarding the discipline of children with disabilities.

Discharge Process

- Contact TEIS Service Coordinator and Siskin Early Intervention Coordinator and complete applicable paperwork for children 6 weeks to age 3.
- For children 3 years of age to 6 years of age contact classroom teacher and complete applicable paperwork.
- Parent(s)/legal guardian may request a copy of the child's Tennessee Department of Health Preschool Immunization Record.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

TUITION PROGRAM

The tuition Program is based on an annual rate broken down into a bi-weekly or monthly payment schedule. This breakdown will eliminate the need to credit back school vacation periods and the need for adjustments for inclement weather days. Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, families will **no longer** have the option of removing their child(ren) from the program during the month of July.

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

Families are asked to sign an authorization for the payments to be drafted from their checking account bi-weekly or charged to a credit card on a monthly basis. At enrollment, Siskin Early Learning Center will provide the necessary authorization form for signatures and bank account numbers from which payments will be drafted. (A copy of a check on that account provides this information.)

Children with child care certificates through the Department of Human Services will have a tuition adjustment based upon the level of the certificate. Child care certificate parent fees must be paid by bank draft on a bi-weekly basis. Families entering the program with a child care certificate are still responsible for any applicable registration fees.

Additional fees may apply for clinical services. Any miscellaneous fees will be billed by monthly statements and can be paid monthly by check.

Food Service fees are included in the tuition program fee. If your child qualifies for free/reduced lunches, tuition adjustments will be made according to current USDA reimbursement rates.

Tuition Program Rate Structure:

Classrooms 1-8, 10-11		Monthly Rate	Bi-Weekly Rate
Days per week	<u>Annual Tuition</u>	<u>(Credit card only)</u>	<u>(Bank draft only)</u>
Two	\$3,029.00	\$253.00	\$117.00
Three	\$4,564.00	\$381.00	\$176.00
Five	\$7,581.00	\$632.00	\$292.00
Classroom 9 (Infants)		Monthly Rate	Bi-Weekly Rate
Days per week	<u>Annual Tuition</u>	<u>(Credit card only)</u>	<u>(Bank draft only)</u>
Two	\$3,387.00	\$283.00	\$131.00
Three	\$5,067.00	\$423.00	\$195.00
Five	\$8,453.00	\$705.00	\$326.00

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

EXTENDED LEAVES

Two weeks' written notice is required for all periods of extended leave. An extended leave is any absence greater than two weeks. All notices must be submitted to Dr. David Cook (648-1760, david.cook@siskin.org) in order to finalize tuition arrangements. Failure to comply with this policy may result in discharge from the program.

EARLY INTERVENTION AND HCDE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM (through the IFSP/IEP)

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

Food Services/Pricing Program: Food Services are included in the tuition program fees. For children participating in the early intervention and preschool programs, fees are determined by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and payments must be pre-paid monthly by bank draft. Payment arrangements will be made at enrollment with a representative from the Finance Department. Please see the Child Nutrition Services section of this handbook for more information.

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

Food Service: Fees are based on completion of income eligibility application, which is completed at registration. All lunch rates are based on USDA rates, which will be published and distributed at registration. For more information, please contact the Administrative Coordinator at 648-1768.

Extended Care: Children attending our program through the EI and HCDE preschool programs have the option of enrolling their child in our program past 3 pm. Please contact the front desk to discuss this option.

Extended care fees for approved participants are as follows:

P.M. CARE		
	Monthly Rate	Bi-Weekly Rate
	<u>(Credit card only)</u>	<u>(Bank draft only)</u>
Classrooms 1-8, 10-11		
Two-Day	\$83.00	\$39.00
Three-Day	\$130.00	\$61.00
Five-Day	\$214.00	\$99.00
P.M. CARE		
	Monthly Rate	Bi-Weekly Rate
	<u>(Credit card only)</u>	<u>(Bank draft only)</u>
Classroom 9		
Two-day	\$91.00	\$42.00
Three-day	\$137.00	\$64.00
Five-day	\$229.00	\$106.00

Fees must be pre-paid by bank draft or credit card. Payment arrangements will be made at enrollment with a representative from the Finance Department. Your child will not be eligible for extended care services if your account is not kept current. If children not enrolled in the extended care program are not picked up by 3:00 p.m., a \$12.00 extended care fee per occurrence will be applied immediately.

PAST DUE ACCOUNTS

If a child's account becomes more than 2 weeks past due, services will be stopped until the balance is paid in full. These services include, but are not limited to, the tuition program and extended care services.

There is a \$10 late fee charge for pick-up after 5:30 p.m. and an additional \$10 charge for every 10 minute period thereafter. This will be enforced billed immediately, to be paid via cash or check. Any billing questions should be directed to Carmen LaMonica at 648-1721 or Jeaninne Houck at 648-1720 in the Finance Department.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Health Requirements

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

- Physical examination and current immunization record on Tennessee Child Care Record (yellow or white form) as required by Tennessee state law, or a statement from the healthcare provider if immunizations are delayed. Information must be current within the last three months.

Health records required prior to each subsequent school year include:

- Physical examination and current immunization record on Tennessee Child Daycare Record (yellow or white form) as required by Tennessee state law, or a statement from the healthcare provider if immunizations are delayed.

To provide the optimal program for your child, please inform the school of any changes in medication or health conditions as they occur. School Health Services is always available to answer your questions or assist you with your child's health plan.

Illness

Frequent minor illnesses are common in a facility with young children. If your child should exhibit symptoms of illness, he/she should remain at home for their health and safety as well as the health and safety of their classmates. Some factors to consider when choosing to keep your child at home include a fever of 100 degrees or more (within the last 24 hours), two or more unexplained episodes of diarrhea or vomiting (within the last 24 hours), unexplained discharge from eyes and/or ears, unexplained rash, difficulty or rapid breathing, or illness resulting in a need for care that is greater than staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.

When a child becomes ill at school, parents will be contacted and requested to take the child home. Please make sure to update any phone changes to the school office regarding where the parent or designated other may be reached in case of emergency situations. When appropriate, a child who is waiting on his/her parent for pick up will be secluded with adult supervision from the other children either in the classroom or nurse's station.

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes that are appropriate for the weather. Jewelry, flip flops and sandals are discouraged for safety reasons.

Medications

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

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

Parents should complete a medication form for all prescription medications. Medication must be removed from the child's bag upon arrival and given to the personnel at the front desk.

We will not dispense any fever reducing medicine. Tylenol will not be given simply as a fever reducer. Children with fever of 100.5 degrees or more should remain at home for their health and safety as well as the health and safety of others. They should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.

Nut Free Environment: Siskin Early Learning Centers are nut free environments due to the increasing number of children with severe nut allergies.

Toilet Training Procedure

We will consider beginning the toileting training process when there are indications that the child is developmentally ready. We have a set of readiness questions that both caregivers and parents use to determine when a child is ready to begin toilet training. These questions will be applied to individual situations, and families and center staff will come to mutual agreement regarding a child's readiness to be trained. Toilet training at our school should be a non-stressful experience that is appropriate for each child's individual development and involves the child, parents and caregivers. We will work with parents and caregivers to ensure that toilet training is consistent between home and the center. We will use written materials and conferences to establish a mutually agreeable plan before a child actually begins the process. Parents/caregivers and school staff will maintain communication about progress and will share any concerns or questions they have.

Safety

All visitors must sign in and out with the Front Desk and obtain a visitor's badge. This includes families of children unless they are dropping off or picking up a child. Children must be signed in and out of the classroom daily.

Smoking

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

Censorship

For the protection of the children, television programs, video tapes and movies are used to enhance a child's educational programming, as well as for the child's enjoyment when appropriate. Viewing is limited to 45 minutes per day and only presentations which are developmentally appropriate for the viewers are allowed. Staff should make every effort to preview the programs on the video list for content before allowing children to view. Programs/movies with violent or adult content will not be allowed. Parents may obtain a list of all videos, movies and television programs and their ratings approved and used by the

Siskin Early Learning Center. Other activities shall be available to children during television/movie viewing. Developmentally appropriate computer technologies and programs are utilized to support the curriculum and computer use must be monitored by staff. Programs and games containing violent themes shall not be permitted.

Emergency and Courtesy Notification System

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

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

The information you provide us is safe, and it will not be shared outside Siskin Children's Institute. You may opt out of non-emergency messages, and you can choose not to participate in SchoolCast at all.

For the system to be as effective as possible, we need you to keep your contact information up to date in the SchoolCast system. When you register your child at our learning center, you will be provided login information and asked to log in to www.myschoolcast.com and change your password and provide your contact information. You can provide as many or as few contact methods as you would like. Examples include your mobile number, a work number, a personal e-mail address, the contact information for a grandparent or other caregiver of your child, etc.

If you have questions about SchoolCast, please do not hesitate to contact us! Primary SchoolCast contacts are Maria Stammen at 423.642.1768 and Deborah Luehrs at 423.648.1708.

Emergency Reunification Procedure

In the event of an emergency, the Institute staff will follow the appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of all children as outlined in section 18 of program policy and procedures. In the event an off-site evacuation becomes necessary for the safety of children and staff, the following reunification procedure will be followed:

- Children and staff, depending on the nature of the emergency and the recommendations of community emergency agencies, will relocate to the Chattanooga Convention Center, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library (Main Branch), Downtown YMCA or other safe site to be determined. Transportation will be determined at the time based on specific circumstances and the distance from the Center.
- Early Learning Center staff will furnish information to major television and radio stations for announcements that give the necessity for and location of an emergency pick-up of your child. Also, the staff will notify parents and other listed contacts in your child's record. It is important that we always have current information.

Emergency Contact Information

Please notify the center office if any of your contact numbers or the names and numbers of those you authorize to pick up your child change throughout the year. In addition, there will be signs on the doors or at/around the parking lot of Siskin Early Learning Center giving directions to the emergency reunification site. If possible, a Center staff member will remain on site to also give directions.

When you reach the reunification location, there will be signs and staff to direct you to the proper place to pick up your child. Photo identification will be required. Please be sure that you, or the person picking up your child, bring this identification.

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

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

Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children at arrival and pick up each day in the hallways and parking lots. Please carry your child or hold your child's hand when entering and exiting the building and in the parking lot. Children may not be left in the car while another child is being dropped off or picked up. Please use the painted crosswalks when walking through the parking lot of the school.

Child Abuse/Neglect

Response to Suspected/Alleged Abuse and Neglect

- A. According to Tennessee law, any person who has knowledge of, or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child has been abused must report it to local law enforcement authorities or the Department of Children's Services.
- B. Each state designates individuals, typically by professional group, who are mandated by law to report child maltreatment. Mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect, according to Tennessee state statutes, include **all** citizens. Professionals included are health and mental health care professionals, social work professionals, education/child care professionals, law enforcement professionals, judges, etc. Other citizens include neighbors, relatives, friends, and any other person.
- C. The "reason to suspect" means that indicators of abuse have been seen, the child has disclosed abuse, or there is a "gut" feeling that something may not be right. It does not mean that there is certainty that abuse has occurred. Reporting abuse, or suspected abuse, is actually a request for professionals to investigate further.
- D. According to Tennessee Code Annotated, 37-1-102(b)(1),(12), (21), "Abuse" exists when a person under the age of 18 is suffering from, has sustained, or may be in immediate danger of suffering from or sustaining a wound, injury, disability or physical or mental condition caused by brutality, neglect, or other actions or inactions of a parent, relative, guardian, or caretaker.
- E. At Siskin Early Learning Center, in accordance with Tennessee state law, suspected cases of child abuse or neglect shall be immediately reported by any person to local law enforcement or the Department of Children's

Services. Any staff member may make a confidential report but is encouraged to notify the Director of Programs that a report has been filed.

- F. Any citizen is required by law to cooperate with the Department of Children's Services (DCS), law enforcement, and other investigators regarding cases of abuse and/or neglect.
 - 1. As required by any citizen, Siskin Early Learning Center staff shall cooperate with investigations of child abuse and/or neglect by providing access to the records of children and staff and by allowing investigators to interview children and staff.
 - 2. Siskin Early Learning Center staff shall protect the child by requiring the investigator to provide identification and by knowing who is entitled to custody of the child.
 - 3. The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) shall be notified before a child leaves the premises except in emergency circumstances, or as follows:
 - a) An investigator may take a child off the premises of the agency if he/she has obtained custody of the child through voluntary placement agreement with the parent, through court order, or through emergency assumption of custody without parental permission, or
 - b) if the child's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) is present and approves, or
 - c) in conjunction with investigative procedures under the child abuse laws.
- G. Failure to cooperate for children in the case of an approved child care agency is, by itself, grounds for suspension, denial or revocation of the agency's license. Interference with a DCS investigation by the child care provider may result in criminal charges.
- H. The Siskin Early Learning Center policy promotes developmentally appropriate, positive behavior supports and prohibits the use of seclusion, corporal punishment, verbal, physical, or mental abuse. Punishment that is shaming, humiliating, frightening, or injurious to children shall not be used.
- I. The following provisions apply to alleged instances of abuse or neglect by staff:
 - 1. Alleged/suspected instances of staff abuse and/or neglect are to be reported immediately to the Director of Programs.
 - 2. The Director of Programs is responsible for relaying the details of the alleged incident directly to the Human Resources Manager and President of the Institute.
 - 3. In accordance with state laws, alleged instances of abuse and/or neglect by staff are also immediately reported to local law enforcement by the Director of Programs.
 - 4. If allegations of abuse and/or neglect in the Siskin Early Learning Center are sustained, disciplinary action will be taken as described in the Institute's Personnel Policies.

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

- Siskin Children's Institute Resource Library
- Children's Advocacy Center, 909 Vine Street, Chattanooga, TN 37403. Phone: (423) 266-6918
- The Child Abuse Hotline in your area. Hamilton County: 1-877-54-ABUSE (22873).
- The Department of Children's Services, Cordell Hull Building, 7th Floor, Nashville, TN 37243-0290. Phone: (615) 741-9701.
- Local law enforcement.
- National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information, nccanch@calib.com, 1-800-FYI-3366.
- Childcare Complaint Hotline: 800-462-8261

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

The safety of your child while at the center is a big responsibility; therefore, we need to make you aware of safety practices in the parking area and driveways surrounding the center. **THE SPEED LIMIT IS 5 MILES PER HOUR.** Please observe this limit. Please stop at all stop signs, follow the one-way signs, use the crosswalks and do not park in reserved areas.

When dropping off your child in the mornings and picking up in the evenings, use the available visitor and 15-minute parking spaces in the lot. Please refrain from parking or driving under the school awning and around the traffic circle when dropping off or picking up your children. The only parking allowed under the awning is for Durham vans and buses as they are loading and unloading. No automobile traffic is allowed in the traffic circle between 7 to 9 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m.

If you transport your child to and from the center, please call if you are unable to pick your child up by 3:00 p.m. **Children attending through TEIS or HCDE that are not enrolled in the extended care program will be charged a daily rate of \$12 for extended care if you have not picked your child up by 3 p.m.** (Extended care has a limited amount of space available, so please make every effort to be timely when picking up your child.)

We must have a name and phone number of anyone who is able to pick up your child. Children will only be released to approved persons, and identification may be requested. Children will not be released to anyone whose behavior may place the child at risk.

Classroom personnel cannot accept a child earlier than 7:30 a.m. Families may wait with their child in the school commons area until classrooms begin accepting children. Children may not be left in the car while a child is being dropped off or picked up. If your child will be arriving at school after 8:30 a.m. due to a doctor's appointment, etc., please notify the classroom staff regarding your expected arrival time.

Families must sign their children in and out each day on the classroom sign-in log. Classroom staff will sign children in and out each day that are transported by Durham. If you transport your child to and from the center, please do not ask classroom staff to come to the parking lot to get him/her. You must come in and sign your child in or out.

TRANSPORTATION

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

- Call Durham regarding all concerns about your child's transportation at 209-5685. If your concerns are not addressed to your satisfaction, you may call the office.
- It is important that you bring your child to the bus at the appointed time. The driver and rider cannot leave the bus. The drivers can wait no longer than three minutes for a child to be brought to the bus. Please be aware that pick-up and drop-off times may vary slightly when weather is bad, children are absent or a substitute driver is driving.
- You must be present to pick up your child when he/she is driven home from school. If you are not present, the driver will return your child to the Institute and you will be called. If we are unable to reach you or an emergency contact by 6 p.m. it is our policy to call the Department of Human Services.
- A change in residence could affect your child's transportation status. Please call the office immediately to discuss any change of address that may affect your child's transportation availability, route and times. Institute staff will notify Durham with the appropriate information. The route change may take up to 10 business days. You will need to make arrangements to transport your child until the change is in place.
- Please do not ask that Durham pick-up or drop-off your child at a different location for one day.
- Severe weather conditions may necessitate cancellation of transportation. Durham follows Hamilton County Department of Education in canceling or delaying transportation due to weather. Listen to your radio and local TV for information on school and transportation cancellations and/or delays. In the event that the HCDE closes for an extended amount of time, we may decide to open without providing the services of Durham. Please watch the local news stations for information regarding Siskin Early Learning Center.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The needs of children and their families can best be met through a coordinated team effort. Parents are very important members of this team. Parental involvement is essential to help a child meet his/her optimum level of achievement.

Parents are involved in each step of the programming process for their child. We encourage you to visit the center and to volunteer through various opportunities. We do ask that you make an appointment with your child's teacher or therapist if you wish to discuss your child's program or observe within the classroom. We would like to ask families to consider the timing of classroom visits. The children and staff are busy most of the day going about the business of playing and learning. We would like to ask you to check with your child's teacher

about good times for visits inside the classroom so their routine is disrupted as little as possible. Your child's classroom observation room is always open if you would like to observe routines and activities. As a reminder, the school day is from 7:50 a.m. to 2:50 p.m. Late arrivals and early pick-ups, unless absolutely necessary due to doctor's appointments, etc., can be equally disruptive. In addition, your child might be missing fun activities or specific learning opportunities from which they could benefit. For those interested in volunteering on a regular basis, we ask that you set a schedule for volunteering that is consistent from week to week (month to month, etc.). If you are unable to attend, please call the office to cancel and/or reschedule an appointment. Always sign in with the office before going to a classroom.

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

Each Siskin Early Learning Center family completes a family involvement agreement to volunteer 18 hours per year to support their child and the center. Many opportunities are available, including: attending IEP/IFSP team meetings, parent-teacher conferences, parent education/support group meetings, Siskin Family Association, medication training, attending/observing your child's therapy, assisting teachers with field trips and outings, preparing learning materials and participating in special events. We do ask that a minimum of two of these volunteer hours be spent in your child's classroom.

Please be sure to complete a family involvement card each time you participate in an activity that supports the center and/or learning opportunities for your child (ren). Cards are located in various places around the Institute (center office, conference room and lending library). Institute teachers will assist parents in fulfilling their volunteer hours and the center will track and report volunteer time. Family members are expected to be supportive of center personnel and follow center policies and procedures (available upon request in the center office).

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

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

CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES

Siskin Early Learning Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a Federal entitlement program administered by the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) and funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Child nutrition and mealtime learning are important components of the educational programming at Siskin Early Learning Center, and this program meets the developmental requirements of young children ages 1 to 6 years by serving foods that are developmentally appropriate, high nutritional value, promote good health and reinforce the development of lifelong healthy eating habits. Enrolling in the meal program offers children the opportunity to be exposed to a variety of foods and sharing this experience with their peers.

Food services are provided to all enrolled children at a cost to be determined by the CACFP Pricing Program. Families must complete an income eligibility application for free or reduced meal expenses. All participants are assured confidentiality as it relates to income eligibility.

Children enrolling into the meal program are to complete the **Nutrition Screen Form** in the application packet. Infants under the age of one, enrolling into the meal program must have a written physicians order and complete the **Infant Feeding Form**.

For students enrolled in the CACFP meal program, regulations allow substitutions of a required meal component if students are unable, because of medical or other special dietary needs, to consume or restrict such food(s). A written statement from a recognized medical authority must be provided. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must provide in writing on the Infant Feeding Form or Nutrition Screen Form food(s) to be restricted or substituted for religious or cultural preferences. The Nutrition Department will provide an appropriate substitute meeting the nutritional guidelines of the CACFP meal components. A parent may choose not to participate in the meal program. They are requested to meet the guidelines of the CACFP meals.

Concerns regarding your child's meals, food preferences, or diet changes must be arranged through nutrition services. This includes but is not limited to physician's orders, food allergies, food modifications and food or beverage restrictions. Contact Betty Owens, Nutrition Coordinator, at 648-1778 or betty.owens@siskin.org.

Payment Procedure

For children enrolled in the early intervention and HCDE preschool programs, food service payments are to be made in advance on a monthly basis by bank draft or credit card. For children enrolled in the tuition program, food services are included in the tuition. Please see the Financial Information section for more information.

Food served to children must be prepared by an approved vendor to fulfill guidelines, to ensure sanitation and to protect the safety of children with food allergies/food restrictions. Therefore, food prepared in home kitchens or by un-licensed person(s) cannot be served to children. Food brought in for consumption by the children must be sealed, labeled, dated and purchased from an approved licensed vendor. (Examples of approved vendor include grocery stores, super markets, bakeries, restaurants, etc.)

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

CIVIL RIGHTS/TITLE VI COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lesley D. Farmer, Esq., Director, Office for Civil Rights Tennessee Department of Education 710 James Robertson Parkway, 6 th Floor Nashville, TN 37243-0383 615-253-1550	Rebekah McNair Civil Rights/Title VI Coordinator Siskin Children’s Institute 423-648-1722
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FAMILY CONFIDENTIALITY

Our staff operates under a strict confidentiality philosophy and do not share any information about a child unless it is in the context of a professional relationship that involves people working directly with the child. But parents play a critical role in our confidentiality policies, too.

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

It is not appropriate to:

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

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

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

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

- If the parent, teacher or other professional cannot resolve the question, concern or complaint, a meeting should be convened with the Director of School Operations within one (1) week and a decision should be given in writing within one (1) week. Within this meeting, the person filing the grievance will also be provided Student Rights and Parent Responsibilities Booklet or The Rights of Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs, as applicable.
- If a satisfactory solution cannot be reached from the procedure described above, the Institute may be consulted. The President will provide a response to the person filing the grievance within one (1) week.

- If the President is unable to resolve the situation, an appropriate committee of the Board of Directors will be consulted. The committee will provide a response to the person filing the grievance within one (1) week.
- If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, an appointment with an impartial third party shall be made. This person should be someone familiar with issues surrounding exceptional children and their educational programs. In addition, the person filing the grievance may be given the agency names and numbers below to contact to pursue the issue outside of the Institute.

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

The ARC of Hamilton County (Association for Retarded Citizens)

Chattanooga (423) 624-6887

Tennessee Protection and Advocacy

Nashville (800) 342-1660

The Office of Early Childhood Special Education Programs

Nashville (800) 852-7157

State Department of Education

Division of Special Education

Nashville (888) 212-3162

KNOWLEDGE OF RESEARCH AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Siskin Early Learning Centers are unique environments dedicated to the lifelong learning of a community of learners including children of all abilities, their families, staff, and trainees. To support the recruitment, training, and retention of professionals in the field, the Early Learning Centers serve as hands-on learning labs and model demonstration sites for many area students, professionals, and community members. The Outreach and Resource Center and the Center for Child and Family Research provide current and future educators and health professionals with knowledge, resources, and experiences to help them serve children with special needs and their families.

Training

The Early Learning Centers partner with area high schools, colleges, and universities to provide dynamic and collaborative training opportunities. Professionals from area child care centers and education agencies, as well as pediatric residents, participate in training opportunities at the Early Learning Centers. These opportunities include classroom observation, hands-on experiences, on-site courses, and a variety of workshops.

In order to promote the safety of our children, all training participants must complete a registration and orientation process including a confidentiality agreement, verification of TB screening and verification that their name is not listed on the child abuse registry. Training participants are identified with visible identification badges and Institute staff is responsible for the supervision of all training participants while at the Institute. Trainees may participate

in programming at various levels (observation, awareness, knowledge, and implementation) determined appropriate by Siskin Early Learning Center and the partnering institutions. Each participant is oriented to the Institute mission and philosophy and may be offered but not limited to:

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

Research

Siskin Children's Institute also serves as a research and development center for best practices in early childhood education. The Institute has the Center for Child and Family Research, which studies effective practices in early childhood education and family support. Research carried out in the Early Learning Centers will usually be related to instructional strategies, child development, play, curriculum development, or environmental design and will only be allowed if the methods used pose no threat to the well-being and confidentiality of children and staff. No child will be included in a particular study unless informed consent has been obtained from his/her parents/caregivers. Parents may refuse to have their child(ren) participate in any given study; however, it is expected that there will be some involvement in research studies while attending the Siskin Early Learning Center.

The Early Learning Center classrooms are used by the Center for Child and Family Research to try out innovative interventions, data collection methods, and staff training procedures. This means children and teachers are observed as part of the research planning process.

Again, informed consent from families will be obtained before any actual studies are conducted.

RIGHT TO REVIEW ALL EDUCATIONAL RECORDS

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

information on your child and other children, you may only review the information related to your child. Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) must also be provided, upon request, a list of the types and location(s) of educational records collected, maintained, and/or used by the school. This may include screenings, evaluations, assessments, eligibility determinations, individualized educational programs, individual complaints dealing with the child or family, and/or any other area involving records about the child and family. If the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) feels that certain records are inaccurate, misleading or violate the privacy or other rights of the child or family, they have the right to request that they be removed or amended. The center must make the decision to either remove or amend the record within a reasonable time (no more than 45 days from the date of the request) or inform you of your right to request a local hearing. If decided in the hearing that the information is inaccurate, misleading or violates the child's rights, the center/LEA must inform you of this and amend the record. If decided at the hearing that the information is not inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child, the center/LEA shall inform the parent/legal guardian or eligible student of the right to place in the education record of the student a statement commenting on the information or setting forth any reasons for disagreeing with the decision of the center/LEA. Any such amendment or explanation placed in the child's records must be maintained by the center/LEA as long as the child's records are kept by the center/LEA. Any time the center/LEA releases/discloses the child's records, the amendment and your explanation must also be released/disclosed.

ADVOCACY SERVICES

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

Tri-State Resource and Advocacy Corporation: A federally funded Center for Independent Living covering 10 Tennessee counties, eight Georgia counties, and two Alabama counties whose purpose is to provide and enhance opportunities for individuals with disabilities to lead full and independent lives through peer counseling, advocacy, job assistance and computer training. Phone: (423) 892-4774 Online: www.4trac.org

Tennessee Voices for Children: A state agency designed to improve services for children with severe emotional disturbance from birth to 21 years old. Services include advocacy, behavior resources, parent education, support groups, child care consultations, and a newsletter. The East Tennessee division serves 29 counties. Phone: (800) 670-9882/ (865) 609-2490 Online: www.tnvoices.org

The Arc of Hamilton County: Serves individuals with developmental disabilities. Services include advocacy, specific disability information and independent support coordination. Covers Hamilton County and 10 surrounding counties. Phone: (423) 624-6887 Online: www.archamilton.org

Epilepsy Foundation of Southeast Tennessee: Provides services for individuals with epilepsy. Services include advocacy, camps/summer programs, financial assistance, housing

information, public awareness, community education, specific disability information and support groups. Phone: (423) 756-1771 Online: www.epilepsyfoundation.org

Kidney Foundation of the Greater Chattanooga Area: Serves Hamilton County and 10 area counties. Services provided are: advocacy, financial assistance, newsletter, public awareness, community education, specific disability information, support groups, transportation, emergency grants, medical assistance program, nutritional supplements and medical alert tags. Phone: (423) 265-4397 Online: www.kidneyfoundation.com

Hearing Loss Association of America: Provide advocacy, deaf and hard-of- hearing program, newsletter, public awareness, community education, support groups, information about captioned movies and speakers' bureau. Serves Hamilton and three other counties. Phone: (423) 697-2432 Online: www.hearingloss.org

Other Tennessee Advocacy Contacts:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Online</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Area Agency on Aging & Disability, Southeast TN District	www.state.tn.us	(423) 266-5781
Chattanooga Area Brain Injury Association & Support Group	www.utc.edu/~cabisg	(423) 634-1572
Disability Coalition on Education	www.thearc.tn.org	(423) 248-5878
Family Voices of Tennessee	www.tndisability.org/familyvoices	(615) 383-9442
Hamilton County Learning Disabilities Association	n/a	(423) 892-0675
Mental Health Associations of Tennessee, The	www.tennessee.gov/mental	(615) 242-7122
Multiple Sclerosis, National MS Society, Mid-South Chapter	www.ms.midsouth.org	(615) 269-9055
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), TN	namitn.nami.org	(865) 602-7900
Office of Consumer Affairs & Civil Rights	www.state.tn.us/mental/oca2.html	(615) 532-6500
People First of Tennessee, Inc., Statewide Office	www.people1sttn.org	(615) 898-0075
Special Needs Advocate for Parents (SNAP)	www.shapinfo.org	(888)310-9889
Support & Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP)	www.tnstep.org	(800) 280-7837
TennCare Consumer Advocacy Program	www.tenncareadvocacy.org	(615) 313-9972
TN Council on Developmental Disabilities	www.state.tn.us/cdd/	(615) 532-6615
TN Disability Coalition	www.tndisability.org	(615) 383-9442
TN Health Care Campaign	www.thcc2.org	(615) 227-7500
TN Human Rights Commission	www.state.tn.us/humanrights	(615) 741-5825
TN Mental Health Consumers' Association (TMHCA)	www.tmhca-tn.org	(615) 250-1176
TN Protection and Advocacy, Inc. - Knoxville	www.tpainc.org	(865) 689-9020
TN Protection and Advocacy, Inc., Nashville	www.tpainc.org	(615) 298-1080
TN Respite Coalition	www.tnrespite.org	(615) 483-5538
Wheel Me On	www.wheelmeon.org	(931) 551-9204

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

- Please immediately notify the office regarding any change in information you have previously provided us (address, phone numbers, physicians, employment, emergency contact, medications, allergies, special diet requirements, etc.).
- Please label anything you send to the center with your child's name (clothes, diapers, backpack, etc.). Please do not send sharp, hard or pointed objects with your child to the center as well as personal toys. The center will not be responsible for lost or stolen items.
- In the event of special circumstances or bad weather, please watch the local news channels for closings or possible opening delays. Siskin Early Learning Center will make an independent decision to open/close during the above mentioned circumstances.
- Phone calls to the classrooms are answered by voice mail to avoid interruption of your child's day; please leave a message and the teacher will return your call when appropriate for the classroom. Emergency calls will be answered through the office at 648-1700.
- It is the parent's responsibility to keep the child's immunizations current. Please provide the Center with a copy of the Department of Health Preschool Immunization Record (yellow or white copy) each time that the child's immunizations are updated.
- Outside play is a part of our daily program. The Department of Education licensing requires that we take children outside daily with the temperature (adjusted for wind chill and heat index) is between 32 degrees and 95 degrees and not raining. Children should be properly dressed depending on weather conditions. If your child is not well enough to play outside, he/she is not well enough to attend school.
- Siskin Early Learning Center serves as a volunteer and training site for many area students, professionals and community members. All volunteers and trainees must complete an orientation process and are always supervised by staff. Numerous individuals may be observing and working with children in the classroom on a daily basis. Each group will be identified by their badges:

Green= college/high school students; yellow=volunteer; red=pediatric residents; white=visitor
- In an effort to advocate, educate and promote disability awareness, many visitors tour the Institute. The Institute also participates in many media and promotional activities to support community outreach and fund-raising efforts.
- We strive to provide many opportunities for center -wide communication and we encourage your participation and feedback. Many avenues of communication are provided, including classroom bulletin boards, individual communication notebooks, an Institute bulletin board located in the school lobby, monthly school newsletters, surveys, workshops, Siskin Family Association, parent/teacher conferences, comment boxes, our website, etc.

- Birthday Celebrations: A registered dietician is available to assist in making healthy choices for your child's birthday celebrations at the center. A list of age appropriate snack items is available to all families. If off-site birthday invitations are distributed at the center an invitation must be given to all children in the class.
- Siskin Early Learning Center employs qualified staff. Parents are permitted to access the professional credentials of staff upon request. An employee directory is also available in the lending library. The Center's policy and procedures are also available to parents upon request.
- Siskin Children's Institute makes every effort to ensure that all stakeholders avoid personal, ethical, legal and financial conflicts of interest which would impact their obligations to the Institute or its welfare.
- In accordance with federal and state education laws, custodial parents, non-custodial parents and legal representatives have access to any portion of their child's educational record at any time.
- Any portion of the educational record may be released to the custodial parent upon oral or written request. Non-custodial parents must make a written request to receive any portion of the educational record. Note that release of information to a non-custodial parent is prohibited in the event a judicial decision has closed the non-custodial parent's access to information regarding the child. To make a request contact Records Assistant at 648-1769. Parents and legal representative are provided a maximum of one copy of the record free of charge.

PHONE NUMBERS

Administrative Numbers

Director of School Operations - <i>Dr. David Cook</i>	648-1760
Administrative Assistant - <i>Lonna Harris</i>	648-1759
Supervisor of Special Education - <i>Gayle Coleman</i>	648-1765
Early Intervention Coordinator - <i>Gayle Coleman</i>	648-1765
Administrative Coordinator - <i>Maria Stammen</i>	648-1768
Records Assistant - <i>Renee' Robinson</i>	648-1769
Nursing Services - <i>Libb Davis</i>	648-1770
Nursing Services - <i>Betsy Triplett</i>	648-1771
Nutrition Coordinator - <i>Betty Owens</i>	648-1778
Curriculum and Institute Coordinator - <i>Jennifer Williams</i>	648-1752

Classroom Numbers

Classroom #1	648-1801
Classroom #2	648-1802
Classroom #3	648-1803
Classroom #4	648-1804
Classroom #5	648-1805
Classroom #6	648-1806
Classroom #7	648-1807
Classroom #8	648-1808
Classroom #9	648-1809
Classroom #10	648-1810
Classroom #11	648-1811
Family Training	648-1784

Business Development and Outreach

Director of Outreach and Resource Center	648-1761
Family Support and Resource Coordinator	648-1757
Librarian	648-1754
Director of Finance	648-1720
Front Desk/Safety Coordinator	648-1700
TTY #	648-1739
ELC - Downtown Fax #	648-1780

www.siskin.org