

Kids Korner Parent Handbook



Providing an affordable, safe, fun and active
learning environment for children.

Located at the Comstock Community Center
& Comstock North Elementary

Amy Beach, Youth & Children Services Director

345-7243

Revised 6/4/09

Mission Statement

Providing an affordable, safe, fun and active learning environment for children.

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Welcome

Welcome to Kids Korner. We are pleased that you have chosen our program to be part of your child's growth and development. We are a state licensed program and offer full and part day schedules for your convenience. The central focus of our programs is the early childhood education for the children enrolled. We foster growth and development not only for the children but also for the whole family. Kids Korner is a year round program, offering a day camp during the off school months. Please refer to the Holidays section of the parent handbook for closing information.

Kids Korner accepts payments from the Department of Human Services. Arrangements must be made for this service through the parent and their DHS caseworker.

***Authorization for Kids Korner to bill the Department of Human Services for childcare MUST be given prior to your child's start date. Any cost for care given prior to the authorization date will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian. This rule went into affect April 18, 2005 by the Department of Human Services.**

This parent handbook contains the policies and procedures of Kids Korner Programs and acts as a reference guide for any questions you may have. Please ask your program's Teacher or the Program Director for further information. Kids Korner reserves the right to add, delete, modify, or amend any policy or procedure it deems necessary, upon thirty days written notice prior to change to parents, unless more prompt action must be taken due to licensing requirements.

Program Philosophy

It is Kids Korner's goal to provide a safe and fun learning environment. We believe that in order to be successful in a child's life we must have an open door communication policy with the child's family. Play based learning is a very large part of our day at Kids Korner. Learning is easier through smiles and laughter.

Requirements for Admission

All children ages 2 ½ to 12 years (5th grade) and fully toilet learned are welcome at Kids Korner regardless of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, financial status, or handicap. Upon admission parents must establish a set weekly schedule for care. Additional care or schedule changes will be accepted on a space available basis.

Required Forms and Registration Fee

The forms listed below are necessary prior to enrollment into Kids Korner and must be completely filled out:

Registration Form
Child information record

Health Form
Signed parent contract
Up to date Immunization Record

A health appraisal form signed by a physician, is required within 30 days of enrollment for Preschool children. School age children must have the health form at time of enrollment.

Failure to complete and return these forms when indicated may result in service denial or interruption.

It is solely the parent's responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of the information contained within those forms and for keeping all such information current. This includes all immunizations acquired after parent has returned immunization record at time of enrollment. Provider assumes no responsibility for keeping forms updated, outside of what is required by state licensing. Parent will be required to review and update the forms to ensure accuracy every 4 months.

A non-refundable registration fee of the first weeks tuition is due at time of enrollment. The enrollment fee is used to offset the administrative expenses incurred in processing enrollment applications and to reserve your child's spot in the Kids Korner Program. This registration fee may not be used to offset childcare fees.

Daily Schedule

Kids Korner is open Monday through Friday 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM. You will receive your particular programs daily activities schedule upon enrollment to that program.

Holidays

Kids Korner follows the Comstock Public School Schedule for holidays. We will be closed on the following days and holidays:

Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving
Week between Christmas and New Years
New Years Eve Day
New Years Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day

A detailed list with dates will be given to parents at the beginning of each school year.

Extra Care

Extra Care Billing for No Public School Days

Kids Korner will remain OPEN on all days Comstock Public Schools are closed, unless otherwise noted on our Holiday closures list. Families will be billed their regular weekly childcare rates for each month according to what they registered their child for regardless of these school closing dates. Parents will have the opportunity to sign up for extra care these days and will be billed additional fees on the next month's bill if they do. You will receive a form or signup sheet to be filled out each time Extra Care is offered. **THERE MUST BE A MINIMUM OF SEVEN CHILDREN NEEDING CARE IN ORDER FOR EXTRA CARE TO BE OFFERED.** If you do not sign your child up for extra care you will not be billed additional fees.

The additional fees are as follows:

- Extra Half day care for Kids Korner students are billed \$7/day.
- Extra Full day care for Kids Korner students are billed \$9/day.
- Half days for non-enrolled students are billed at \$15/day.
- Full days for non-enrolled students are billed \$22/day.

The week of Christmas, enrolled students that sign up for additional care, will be billed:

- Half day care: \$10.00 per day per child
- Full day care: \$17.00 per day per child

You will only be billed for this care if you sign up for these additional days.

***If you sign up for extra care but do not attend you will still be billed for the extra care.**

Absences and Vacations

Please notify Kids Korner of any absences. Parent is required to pay for all time that the child is regularly scheduled to attend the program, regardless of whether the child actually did attend. This policy includes days missed for illness, funerals, doctor appointments, or any other reason.

Families are allowed one week of "free" vacation time per year provided Kids Korner is informed in writing a minimum of two weeks in advance.

Confidential Information

Each child has a right to confidentiality. All information pertaining to the children in the program, including all reports, records, and data are confidential and used for internal purposes only. Information pertaining to children enrolled in the program will not be released to third parties without the express written permission of parent, unless required by statute, court order or licensing mandate.

Parent Participation and Communication

Parents are always welcome at the program any time to observe or spend time with their child. Parents, as well as any other persons, who wish to volunteer will be given a background check by the State of Michigan and the Department of Human Services to ensure that he or she has not been convicted of a crime or named in the central registry database as the perpetrator of child abuse or child neglect.

We encourage ongoing communication between staff and parents. Parents should feel free to ask questions about the program or their child's care. Information about daily and weekly activities and special events will be posted in your child's program room. Additional notes and notices will be placed in each child's cubby box and in the quarterly newsletters.

Parent Conduct

Parents must be aware that adults serve as role models for children. Additionally, the Kids Korner is responsible for protecting the children in their care, and for providing a safe workplace for staff members. Therefore, it is critical that, while on program property, parents conduct themselves in a professional and rational manner at all times. Kids Korner reserves the right to immediately terminate the childcare agreement if a parent behaves inappropriately.

The following actions are grounds for immediate dismissal (please note, however, this is not an exhaustive list of inappropriate behaviors):

- Acts of violence, including assault and battery;
- Harassment of or threats against the staff, other parents or children;
- Possession of illegal substances or firearms;
- Verbal or physical abuse of any child;
- Profanity; or
- Indecent exposure.

Billing Procedures

Bills will be mailed or given out on the 1st week of every month. Payments are due within 15 days of receipt, as stated on the billing statement. You may make payments in the front office of the Comstock Community Center or in the classroom. You may also mail them to:

Comstock Community Center
6330 King Highway P.O. Box 34
Comstock, MI. 49041

Parents may pay childcare fees with cash, check, money order, or credit card (credit cards are only accepted at the Community Center).

If you need to make payment arrangements please contact the Kids Korner Director or Account Manager to set one up. We will work with you and accommodate your needs to the best of our ability. We want to offer you and your family a quality program, and wish to make your time with us as pleasant as possible.

A late fee of \$10.00 will be added to the outstanding childcare balance, unless arrangements have been made prior to the due date. If no payment arrangement has been made prior to statement due date and payment in full has not been made within two weeks after the statement due date the child will not be allowed to attend Kids Korner until a zero balance has been acquired. The child's space in the program will not be held and may be given to another family during this time.

Parents who receive assistance from the Department of Human Services (DHS) are responsible for payment of all fees not paid by DHS.

Clarification on Holiday Billing, Vacations and Absences

We would like to clarify our Holiday closings billing. As a benefit for you, and to show our appreciation for your business, Kids Korner does not bill for days we are closed for holiday observances in excess of one day. No childcare tuition will be charged for the following holidays when Kids Korner is closed more than one day at a time: Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Labor Day, Memorial Day, and Independence Day are paid holidays because Kids Korner is closed only that day for each of those holidays. Childcare tuition will be charged for these days when they fall on Monday through Friday. Kids Korner reserves the right to observe Independence Day on the preceding Friday or following Monday when it falls on the weekend. There will be no credit for these three holidays.

Should Kids Korner be open a couple days during the time Comstock Public Schools are closed for Christmas vacation, childcare tuition will be charged for students who sign up in advance for those days, whether or not they are actually in attendance on those days, and for students who attend and sign in for childcare on those days. Tuition for these special circumstances will be billed on the next month's billing cycle. We ask that you give us notice, at least two weeks in advance, if your child will or will not be in attendance on these extra days that childcare is offered. **If there are not at least seven children signed up at any of the three childcare locations for an extra day, the respective childcare location will not be open on that extra day.**

Please notify Kids Korner of any absences. Parents are required to pay for all time that their child is regularly scheduled to attend the program, regardless of whether the child actually did attend. This policy includes days missed for illness, funerals, doctor appointments, or any other reason.

Families are allowed one week of "free" vacation time per year, provided Kids Korner is informed in writing a minimum of two weeks in advance. For example, when you notify

Kids Korner two weeks in advance that your child will be on vacation and not in attendance for a certain week, you will not be charged (or you tuition will be credited for that week) only one time during the school year. If your family takes a two week vacation and you notify Kids Korner of this at least two weeks in advance, one week is free, the second will be charged as normal. Please note that if you enroll in our summer program you have the option to sign up for the weeks you need. If you are planning a vacation DO NOT sign up for that time or you will be billed for it.

Effective March 10, 2009 this CURRENT BILLING POLICY will be enforced:

As described in the current Parent Handbook families received upon enrollment, Kids Korner bills are distributed during the first week of the month and are due 15 days after the statement date written on the bill. If you are unable to pay the complete amount due, payment arrangements may be made with our Childcare Accounts Manager or the Youth and Children Services Director. However, if no payment is made and no arrangements have been approved prior to the due date you will be assessed a **\$10 late fee**. If your account has not been paid in full and no payment arrangements made within two weeks after the original due date your childcare services will be suspended. Your child will not be allowed to attend Kids Korner until a zero balance has been acquired. Your child's spot in the program will not be held and may be given to another family during this time.

Effective June 15, 2009:

Beginning with our summer program on June 15, 2009, families currently enrolled in Kids Korner will be required to pay weekly for childcare services. In addition, childcare fees will be due each Friday for the following week. Invoices will be given for the entire month; however, payment will be required weekly in advance.

Effectively immediately, **NEW** families wishing to enroll in Kids Korner will be required to pay the first week of childcare in order to register their child. In addition, childcare fees will be due each Friday for the following weeks. Bills will be given for the entire month; however, payment will be required weekly in advance.

You may have noticed our new early pay incentive terms: **2% 10, Net 15**. A 2% discount will be given to every family that pays for the entire month in advance, within 10 days of the invoice date. All invoice balances are due in full within 15 days of the invoice date.

Again, if you have any questions, please call Amy at 345-7243. To make payment arrangements, please call Cindy at 345-8556 ext. 18. (Cindy is in the office on Thursdays only. Please leave a detailed message.)

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Again, if you have any questions, please call Amy at 345-7243. To make payment arrangements, please call Cindy at 345-8556 ext. 18. (Sindy is in the office on Thursdays only. Please leave a detailed message.)

Late Pick Up

A late pick up fee of \$1.00 per minute past 6:30 PM (6 PM during summer program), or the child's scheduled pick up time for half day children, will be charged to the parents and added to their monthly bill each time the offense occurs. If late pick up is a constant problem Kids Korner reserves the right to terminate the child care contract and remove the child from the program.

Child Illness Policy and Health Care

Kids Korner requires that parents keep their child home when he or she is ill. A sick child may rest more comfortably in his or her own home. More importantly, however, keeping sick children home helps to prevent the spread of contagious illnesses to other children in the program. If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, please keep them home for a minimum of 24 hours or until they are completely recovered.

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- Any type of rash
- Head Lice or nits (Lice eggs)
- Pink Eye
- Impetigo
- Ringworm
- Scabies
- Strep Throat
- A communicable Disease such as chicken pox, measles, mumps

In cases of communicable diseases, the child must have a note from a doctor stating that he/she is clear to return to school. If there is a communicable disease outbreak, any child having an immunization waiver for that disease will not be allowed to attend school until the outbreak is over.

If a child becomes ill at Kids Korner, staff will call his or her parents to pick them up immediately.

Children are encouraged to wash hands every time after bathroom use, blowing their nose, sneezing and coughing to prevent the spread of germs.

Staff is required to do the same. In order to prevent and control the spread of germs staff is required to clean and sanitize all equipment, including toys, on a regular basis. All classrooms are cleaned daily and as needed throughout the day. Clean up of bodily fluids (blood, urine, feces, throw up, spit) are done in accordance with Blood Borne Pathogen training and Health Department regulations and codes.

All Kids Korner programs follow Kalamazoo County Health and Human Services guidelines and regulations. A more detailed Health Care Policies and Procedures manual are available upon request.

Medication

Kids Korner will not administer the first dose of **ANY** medication. Over the counter medication will only be given with signed permission from parent or guardian and with the understanding that parent or guardian assumes responsibility for any drug reactions. All over the counter medication must be in its original package and will only be given as indicated on the label. Prescription medications must be in the original bottle with the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, the date of the prescription, child's name, instructions, name and strength of medication and shall be given in accordance with those instructions. Kids Korner will not honor any instruction from a parent that contradicts the instructions of the physician for prescription drugs, and as written on container.

A medication administration form must be completed by a parent prior to their child receiving medication at the program. This form is available in your child's program.

Sunscreen

Kids Korner strives to take the children outdoors for play on a daily basis. Over time, exposure to the sun increases the risk of sun cancer. Children are particularly sensitive to sun exposure. Use of sunscreen can protect skin from damage caused by exposure to the sun. Parents are asked to consider the affects of sun on their child's health and must either provide sunscreen and written consent for application to their child to Kids Korner or sign a written election authorizing their child to play outdoors without sunscreen. Both forms are available at the program your child is enrolled in.

Emergency Medical Care

Please keep all emergency information up to date. If your information changes, please notify your child's teacher immediately.

Parent gives permission to provider to call 911 in the event of a serious emergency. Any costs or charges incurred for 911 emergencies are the sole responsibility of the parent.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

As a licensed childcare provider, Kids Korner and its employees are required by law to report any instances of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. They must also report any instances in which there is a “reasonable suspicion” that abuse or neglect may have occurred. Kids Korner takes these responsibilities seriously and will report any actual or reasonable suspicions of abuse.

Discipline and Guidance

Kids Korner uses positive methods of discipline to encourage self-control, self-direction, high self-esteem and positive social interaction in a classroom setting. It is the goal of the staff to use positive reinforcement with all children to foster a safe and healthy environment. If a child breaks a classroom rule or is involved in a conflict, staff will talk with the child, stating the inappropriate behavior and restating the rule; discuss with the child alternate ways to solve the conflict; and supervise to see if the child is able to work out the situation himself/herself, then intervene as needed. The child may then be directed to an alternate activity; lose privileges to play in a certain area for a portion of playtime; or be asked to take a “break” to regain control of him/her. During a “break” a child is asked to sit down at a table and do quiet activities (books, puzzles, color) by themselves.

Food and Nutrition

Kids Korner does not provide lunch to the children. Lunches are the responsibility of the parent to bring. Kids Korner does not have access to a refrigerator to keep lunches cool or a microwave to warm them up. Please plan lunches accordingly. We do provide morning and afternoon snacks. There is also a monthly snack calendar (in preschool) in which we ask a child to bring a snack for all children on a particular day. All snacks provided by Kids Korner follow the nutritional guidelines set forth by the Department of Agriculture’s Food Guide Pyramid.

In compliance with state licensing requirements, we encourage children to eat healthy foods first before treats. We encourage children to develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime. At no time will a child be forced to eat more than they can handle or to eat something they do not like.

Children are encouraged to eat or taste new food that may reflect individual or cultural differences. Please let staff know of any specific dietary needs or allergies that may affect your child at time of enrollment. Food allergies should also be noted on the white emergency card and health appraisal form.

Transportation

Kids Korner has a mini-bus on site for field trip use. Only teachers who have been road tested and have the appropriate operator's license will drive the bus. Children are asked to bring booster seats appropriate to their age, weight, and height. If a parent does not want their child to be transported in the Kids Korner bus is advised to either leave their child at home the day of the field trip or accompany our group, driving their child separately. A child may not stay behind at the center if the parents do not want them to participate.

At no time will staff drive children in their personal vehicles.

Field Trips

Kids Korner will occasionally take the preschool children on field trips such as to swimming lessons, the library, and local businesses. Permission to participate in field trip activities is covered on the child placement contract. Parents are required to fill out a form denying field trip attendance at time of enrollment. Parents will be notified of all additional field trips as soon as they are planned.

Swim Lessons

Kids Korner offers weekly swim lessons to its preschool children as an added benefit to their education. Gross motor skills, basic swimming skills, water safety, and comfort in the water is what parents can expect their child to learn. Lessons are given by certified swim instructors at the local YMCA.

Outside Care

Kids Korner staff is prohibited from accepting offers for babysitting or nanny services for any child enrolled in the program. Employees who violate this rule are subject to disciplinary action.

The program asks that parents refrain from requesting that any employee of Kids Korner engage in private childcare duties for any of the children in the program.

Personal Items From Home

Children are asked to keep all toys and personal items at home, with the exception of a small naptime blanket and cuddle toy, if necessary. If a child does bring personal items from home Kids Korner is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen items.

Extra clothing such as underwear, shirt, pants, and socks, which can be kept in your child's cubby, is a good idea. Sometimes we get messy or a bathroom accident may incur.

Clothing

Parent is required to provide appropriate attire for the weather conditions. Kids Korner strives to go outside on a regular basis. If a child does not have the necessary clothing they cannot go outside. The program does not always have extra staff that can stay inside and a parent will be called to bring the necessary clothing or to pick up their child. Please dress your child accordingly with the appropriate outdoor attire so that all children can participate.

Termination

Either parent or Kids Korner may terminate the childcare agreement at any time with two weeks written notice to the other party. If parent does not provide two weeks written notice they will still be required to pay for the two weeks regardless if child attends.

Kids Korner reserves the right to terminate this agreement immediately, without notice to parent if child care fees and/or other fees are not paid when due; the child's continued participation in the program creates a direct threat of harm to the child, other children, or staff; parent engages in inappropriate parent conduct as defined in the parent conduct section.

Child Pick Up and Drop Off Procedures

All children must be brought into the building and signed in by the parent (or other authorized person) on the sign in/sign out sheet. Children should never be left unattended. At pick up time, parent (or other authorized person) must enter the classroom, notify the child's teacher that they are picking up the child and sign the child out on the sign in/sign out sheet.

The full name (not mom, dad, grandma, etc...) of the person picking up and time of pick up/drop off must be written in the spaces indicated on the sign in/sign out sheet.

Child Release Policy

At time of enrollment parents must supply the name of at least two individuals to whom Kids Korner may release the child to in the event of an emergency or parent's inability to pick up child. These names must be written on the white emergency information card.

Kids Korner will not release a child to someone who has not been authorized, in writing, by the parent.

Only individuals over the age of 18 may be authorized to pick up your child.

Before Kids Korner releases the child, if the individual is unknown to staff, then the staff will require picture identification in the form of a valid Michigan Driver's license or State ID card. Other forms of identification, such as work identification, are not acceptable.

Parents must be aware that Kids Korner staff is not properly trained to make assessments relating to intoxication or other impairment and therefore assume no responsibility to assess the competency or condition of any individual appearing to pick up the child.

Kids Korner staff respect the family's privacy. However, when questionable child release situations occur, we have a duty to maintain our role as child advocate. If we do not feel it is safe for the child to be released we will contact the parents, ask if someone else is available to pick up the child, or call the authorities to ensure the safety of the child.

Should a parent wish to have a one time special exception to allow an individual not listed on the white emergency information card to pick up child, parent must leave a signed, dated, written note with Kids Korner the morning of the release. Parents are not allowed to change release instructions orally.

Kids Korner assumes no responsibility for any injury or harm to the child who has been released to a person on the white emergency information card or identified in the written exception request process.

With respect to child custody disputes, until custody has been established by a court order, neither parent may limit the other from picking up the child, nor Kids Korner will release the child to a known identifiable parent. Kids Korner is required by state licensing mandate to have an official copy of any court order prohibiting a parent to pick up a child at the center.

Emergency Policies

Kids Korner has developed an Emergency Management Plan to be implemented in the event of an emergency situation. In developing this plan, we have worked with local emergency agencies (fire, police). The plan has been designed to provide a plan of action in the event of natural or man-made disaster, intruder, physical threat or other crisis.

If an emergency should occur, Kids Korner will follow our crisis management plan developed using the instructions of the local authorities. The instructions may be to stay at the facility in a lockdown situation or to evacuate. If we are instructed to evacuate, children will be taken to the designated evacuation location and parents will be notified immediately. Unless otherwise instructed by emergency personnel, the Comstock Public Library is our evacuation site from the Comstock Community Center and the Church of

God across from North Elementary on 26th St is the evacuation site from North Elementary.

We understand that parents and family members will be concerned about the safety of their children and will want to pick them up as soon as possible. If we have remained at the program site we ask that you wait until the authorities have issued the all clear before picking up your child. This request is made for the safety of all the children, families, and staff.

If evacuation was necessary children will be released to parents or authorized persons as they arrive to the designated evacuation site.

As part of our crisis management plan we ask that you update the information on your child's white emergency information card whenever something changes. This is to ensure that Kids Korner has the current contact information (home, work, cellular numbers) for all persons on the card. All evacuation procedures are posted inside the classroom near the exits.

Kids Korner is required by state mandate to conduct a minimum of four fire drills, quarterly, and at least two tornado drills during the months of April and October in order to be prepared for such disasters. Every attempt will be made to hold drills during good weather conditions.

Snow Days

In the event of a snow day, all Kids Korner programs will be **CLOSED**. Please tune into your local news and radio stations for this information. If Comstock Public Schools are closed we too will be closed. If early release from Comstock Schools is needed due to weather, school age children enrolled with us will be sent to the Kids Korner program or the place they would normally go to that day, unless other arrangements have been made by the parents with the bus garage. Please make sure the bus garage knows where your child should go in case of emergency. We ask that you make every attempt to pick up your child as soon as possible from Kids Korner so that our staff may get home safely as well, however, please let us know if you will be unable to until normal pick up time.

Photographs

From time to time, Kids Korner will take photographs of the children participating in program activities or field trips. The photographs will be posted on the bulletin board and/or website for parents and visitors to enjoy. If a parent wishes that photographs not be taken of their child, a written notice must be delivered to the Kids Korner Director.

Kids Korner Child Placement/Parent Contract

I _____, hereby acknowledge and agree with the following:

I agree to pay all childcare fees on a timely basis and understand the penalties, as described in the handbook, if I do not.

I agree to allow my child to participate in all field trip activities, including swimming lessons (preschool child only), or have provided a written statement to Kids Korner stating otherwise. In addition I understand alternate arrangements on these field trip or swim lesson days are the sole responsibility of the parent.

I agree to allow my child to play on all Kids Korner playground equipment and participate in classroom activities. I further understand that my school age child will be playing on a playground that, although is approved by the Michigan Department of Education, may not meet State of Michigan Licensing requirements. I understand Kids Korner will make every effort to maintain my child’s safety while on the school playground.

I agree to allow Kids Korner to take photographs of the children as described in the handbook or have submitted a written declaration to the Director that I do not want photographs to be taken of my child.

I have received and read a copy of the Kids Korner Parent Handbook and agree to comply with the policies contained in the handbook which govern the terms of the childcare contract. I understand that the handbook reflects the current policies and procedures of Kids Korner and that it replaces and supercedes any prior policies, procedures or handbooks. I further understand that these policies may be amended, modified, or terminated by Kids Korner with 30 days written notice to parents unless required by State licensing to be done immediately.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Child’s Name: _____ Date: _____

Director Signature: _____