

Parent Manual



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WELCOME TO THE CHILDREN'S CHOICE SCHOOL-AGE CARE PROGRAM

What is Children's Choice?

Children's Choice Child Care Services, Inc., is dedicated to facilitating the positive development of children and youth by developing and maintaining programs that are a model of quality – programs where children play, learn, grow, and make friends – programs where children are nurtured and develop life skills. Children's Choice will use these programs as a source of training and technical assistance for the child and youth development profession.

Children's Choice is all about afterschool programming for elementary school kids and creating extended learning opportunities during their out-of-school-time hours. It's about (1) keeping them safe, (2) teaching important life skills and social skills, and (3) supporting academic learning through fun and enjoyable activities, clubs, and classes. We provide top-quality, nationally accredited, 5-star licensed, full-service, year-round child care to more than 1000 students.

In addition to that we provide quality enrichment classes in the fine arts, performing arts, cognitive skills, life skills, healthy habits, science, technology, engineering, math, literacy, and language. We push the envelope of what the absolute best afterschool programs should and could be and we take that model around the country showing other programs how to do what we do.

Why do this? Because kids are especially vulnerable afterschool when they are often home alone in front of the TV or out on the streets getting into risky behaviors. Because kids in quality afterschool programs have reduced: childhood obesity, aggression, and all delinquency factors like drug abuse or sexual experimentation. Because kids in quality afterschool programs have increased positive feelings toward school, more positive social behaviors, and better academic achievement.

We provide enrichment clubs and classes to give kids the opportunity to experience learning in areas that they might not get a chance to experience in the normal school day. We do this to help create a SPARK, to get them fired up and interested to learn NEW things.

We believe that quality School-Age Care is more than a safe place for kids to be while their parents are working, and it is more than a fun place to be. It is one of the few times in a child's day which provides the opportunity to interact positively with children of different ages. It is perhaps the only time in a day that caregivers, who have the time to give significant one-on-one attention to your child, are available. We have the unique ability to teach the social skills that are essential in youth development, delinquency prevention and the development of the future citizens of this country. We join the family and the school in the role of participating in the positive development and education of your child.

The goal of this Parent Information Booklet is to provide a written orientation to the school-age care program and to share with you Children's Choice goals, policies, procedures and other information. Please take time to read the booklet thoroughly. We have also posted a video parent orientation on our website at <http://www.childrens-choice.org/parents.html>

We are happy to welcome you and your child into our Children's Choice family. You and your child are now a vital part of this working model.

Contacting Us

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to call us. The phone number for Children's Choice is (505) 296-2880. All of our staff members are actively involved in the program, so please be aware that the office line is for leaving non-urgent messages. Visit our web page, which links into many resources for parents and children. During program hours please feel free to call your child's program directly.

Web Site: <http://www.childrens-choice.org>
...or e-mail Chelsea at chelsea@childrens-choice.org
...or e-mail Mike at ashcraft@childrens-choice.org

THE PEOPLE BEHIND CHILDREN'S CHOICE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS



Mike Ashcraft, Co-Founder/Director of Children's Choice holds a Master of Arts Degree in Education with an Emphasis in School-Age Care from Concordia University. He is a doctoral candidate with Nova Southeastern University in the Ed.D. Organizational Leadership program. He has more than 20 years of combined experience in child care and education. He is a former training and technical service contractor for the New Mexico Public Education Department, an adjunct professor at Concordia University, teaching college courses in school-age care programming. He is a past President of the New Mexico School-Age Care Alliance, and the New Mexico Association for the Education of Young Children. He is the co-author of *Best Practices: Guidelines for School-Age Programs*, the *Best Practices Workbook*, and *Leading to Learn: Learning to Lead – Organizational Leadership for the Child Care and Youth Development Director*.



Chelsea Ashcraft, Co-Founder/Director of Children's Choice, holds a Master of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education and Administration from Nova Southeastern University. She has more than 20 years of experience in child care: as a teacher, a camp director, a school-age child care coordinator, and a corporate child care center director. She has extensive training and experience in school-age child care and has shared her knowledge as a presenter at many state and national training events. Chelsea serves on the faculty of Central New Mexico College, teaching college courses in child development, guidance, leadership, and teaching strategies. She is a former accreditation endorser for the National Afterschool Association. She is the co-author of *Best Practices: Guidelines for School-Age Programs*, the *Best Practices Workbook*, and *Leading to Learn: Learning to Lead – Organizational Leadership for the Child Care and Youth Development Director*.

Youth Development Director.

DIRECTORS OF PROGRAMMING



Leann Sommers, Programs Coordinator of the Children's Choice school-age care programs, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the University of New Mexico. Leann is responsible for providing mentoring, guidance, support and supervision to the Site Directors of Manzano Mesa, Arroyo del Oso, Double Eagle, Comanche, and Georgia O'Keeffe. She is responsible for program implementation and evaluation. She assists in developing the mission, goals, and policies for the program. She assists with organizational development, including management of human resources. She has many credit hours in Child Development, Family Studies, and Communication. Leann has over fifteen years experience and

training with school-age children. She has shared her knowledge at national conferences and annual conferences in other states. She served as an accreditation endorser for the National Afterschool Alliance and is a certified Quality Advisor for the National Institute on Out of School Time.



Catherine McAllister, Programs Coordinator of the Children's Choice school-age care programs, holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Political Science from Capital University in Columbus, Ohio. Catherine is responsible for providing mentoring, guidance, support and supervision to the Site Directors of Bandelier, Sombra del Monte, Zuni, John Baker, North Valley Academy, and North Star. She is responsible for program implementation and evaluation. She assists in developing the mission, goals, and policies for the program. She assists with organizational development, including management of human resources.

She has more than ten years experience working with school-age children and extensive training in the field. Catherine led the CC site at Sombra del Monte to national accreditation by the National Afterschool Association. Catherine also holds the National Administrative Credential.



Carrie Walker, Programs Coordinator of the Children's Choice school-age care programs, holds a Bachelor of University Studies Degree with a Psychology and Fine Art focus, from the University of New Mexico. Carrie is responsible for providing mentoring, guidance, support and supervision to the Site Directors of Bandelier, Arroyo del Oso, and Comanche Elementary. She is responsible for program implementation and evaluation. She has more than fifteen years experience working with school-age children and extensive training in the field. Carrie led the Children's Choice site at Bandelier to national accreditation by The Council on Accreditation. Carrie also holds the National Administrative Credential.

PHILOSOPHY ON THE ROLE OF THE ADULT

The purpose of our program is to be not only a safe and fun place for children to be, but also a place for growth, nurturance, and development of life skills. The role of the adult working in this program is to be a facilitator of the positive development of children through healthy interactions. We work to establish and encourage realistic boundaries and high expectations for children. High expectations provide children with the appropriate challenges and feedback necessary for brain enrichment. We plan for interactions with fun, caring, authoritative and mature adults, who are experts in child development. We plan for interactions between children of different ages who model responsible behavior and share a sense of community.

SITE/AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Children's Choice Site/Program Directors are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program. They supervise the teachers, communicate with families, build relationships with the school staff and faculty, and oversee all program activities.

The Program Directors lead the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Teams. CQI Teams are a group of parents, faculty, staff and kids who evaluate the program according to national accreditation standards of quality and create action plans for quality improvement.

The Children's Choice Program Directors are required to have a combination of experience, education and professional preparation. New directors (not promoted from within the organization) must have a bachelor's degree in a related field with at least one year of experience OR a bachelors degree in an unrelated field with six credit hours in child and youth development, and at least three years of experience.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

The School-Age Associate Director (AD) is a training position, reserved for those working toward the position of Site Director. Associate Directors are responsible for learning and assisting in the general administration and operations of assigned program sites, according to the Children's Choice mission, philosophy and standard of quality. The AD will assist in the development of program activities and environments that are models of quality. The AD will also be the model caregiver, providing supervision and care for school-age children through a caring, positive, authoritative relationship.

The Children's Choice Associate Directors must have a Bachelor's Degree in a related field, OR a Bachelor's Degree in an unrelated field with one year of experience, OR two years of college with two years of experience.

CAREGIVERS/GROUP LEADERS

The Children's Choice School-Age Care Program Staff must meet the staff qualifications of The *NAA Standards for Quality School-Age Care*. Many of our caregivers and group leaders have college degrees, child development and education coursework, and extensive experience. In order to be hired, at a minimum, all caregivers must have a HS Diploma or GED. All staff must have CPR and First Aid Certifications, and a Criminal Records Check.

Staff development is a critical link in the success of a school-age care program, so all staff must complete at least 24 clock hours of appropriate continuing education per year. It is the philosophy of Children's Choice that school-age caregivers act and be treated as professionals. We put much effort into building professionals and into showing appreciation for superior efforts. High quality staff recruitment, development and retention is a key to quality in school-age care, and Children's Choice believes it is critical to fulfilling the mission of providing a model of quality. Staff members attend frequent meetings and training sessions to ensure a quality program. Children's Choice provides a time of learning and fun for staff as well as children.

WHAT DO CHILDREN'S CHOICE KIDS GET TO DO?

Philosophy on Growth, Development, and Learning:

We are school-age care professionals who understand and appreciate elementary childhood as a dynamic period of growth and development. We champion the interaction of school-age children with their peers and adults alike in a safe environment. We recognize, value, and promote the unique opportunities children encounter in school-age care.

Childhood is characterized by many early stages of intellectual, emotional, physical, and social growth. We enhance classroom learning by providing children with opportunities to practice skills they have learned in the

classroom and apply them in real-life situations that have personal meaning. We offer safe activities and environments staffed by caring, authoritative, competent adults and are a result of collaborative efforts between families, schools and the larger community.

A unique opportunity lies in our flexibility to focus on the entire breadth of developmental needs of children. In this way, we are uniquely positioned to facilitate the positive development of a wide variety of competencies

Philosophy on Environment:

The school-age care environment sends important cues to children about the way they should behave and feel, so we provide an environment that encourages desirable behavior. We first provide an environment, which meets the basic biological needs of children such as safety, nutrition and water. Then we create a variety of areas where children can involve themselves in diverse ways: art, construction (fine motor skills), quiet conversation, food, science, strategy games, dramatic play, and outdoor play. We provide novelty and enrich the environment through new colors, posters, child's art, and music. The program environment is a warm, nurturing and encouraging climate, a place where children are challenged in a non-threatening way.

Philosophy on Curriculum:

Intentionality is the key to programming. Quality school-age care programming provides balance in a child's life – balance between work and play; rituals and novelty; choice and community-building. Constructive pedagogy teaches how important active, hands-on experiences are in the learning process, so we use many resources to ensure the program focuses on the positive development of the whole child, integrating strategies for physical, intellectual, emotional and social development.

The activities are but one component of intentional programming that we consider. We provide a developmentally appropriate routine that is consistent and stable yet flexible, a routine that allows for the individual developmental needs of school-age children. Every child has unique needs. Some kids need to relax quietly right after school, some need a snack, some kids need to run off some energy, and some need to talk to their friends. Our routine allows kids to make these choices and explore and experiment with many other child-directed activities when the school bell rings. Children need some time to settle in before beginning the staff-directed activities that are integrated into the schedule.

It is important that children have the opportunity to develop and practice social skills during activities so most activities involve mixed-age groups and a lot of interaction and playfulness. Novelty in experiential learning is a key to brain development, so we provide a variety of experiences such as field trips, guest speakers, role plays, long- and short-term projects, and enrichment clubs.

The school-age care curriculum focuses on a variety of skills through the implementation of enrichment clubs that may emphasize art, math, science, theater, physical education, music, journalism, the environment or public service. Through these enrichment clubs, we teach life skills such as cooking, earning/saving money, wise consumerism, health, nutrition, and safety; as well as social competencies such as problem solving, decision-making, negative peer pressure resistance skills, conflict resolution skills, friendship skills, and comfort with people of different backgrounds.

Program Goals:

It is the goal of the Children's Choice school-age care program to give each child an opportunity to...

1. Develop physical, intellectual, and social skills.
2. Develop a sense and understanding of positive values.
3. Develop self-confidence, self-respect and self-reliance.
4. Develop good decision-making, leadership and social competency skills.
5. Develop positive family and peer relationships.
6. Develop interpersonal and cultural competencies.
7. Develop interest, respect and understanding of our natural world.
8. Develop sportsmanship, teamwork and a sense of fair play.
9. Develop a commitment to learning.
10. **HAVE A WHOLE LOTTA FUN!**

Children's Choice will offer a variety of well-rounded daily activities for children to choose from that are safe, fun and educational. There will be child-directed activities, teacher-directed activities, clubs, field trips, special events, daily snacks, and presentations/visits from outside groups. We plan more teacher-directed activities on extended care days, vacation breaks, **summer camp**, etc. Activity schedules are planned in advance and outlined on an activity calendar that families may use for home-time discussions and planning. Each day the activity area is transformed into a model school-age care indoor environment, which includes a quiet home-like area appropriate for relaxing or doing homework, special interest areas, a fine motor area, an open-ended art area, a dramatic play area, an active play area, a strategy building games area, a snack area, and more!

Much of the before- and after-school program routine is based on a "Snacks, Laps, Raps & Naps" philosophy. At most times during the day children can choose to eat a snack, burn off some energy in active play - running laps, sit and talk with their friends - sit and rap, relax in the quiet area - take a nap, or do homework, etc. During winter, spring and summer camps, a more structured activity schedule will be used which includes more field trips, more enrichment clubs and more adult-directed activities. We offer artsy arts and crafty crafts, imaginative indoor activities, outrageous outdoor games, science and nature, music and drama, field trips, homework time, daily snacks and special events.

A schedule of activities is made available to parents in advance. Please especially note the field trip return times. If the time conflicts with the time you pick up your child, he/she may need to be picked up from the field trip site.

Child-Directed Activities:

Children can CHOOSE from a variety of child-directed activities - open-ended activities that require little or no help from adults. Each day the activity area is transformed into a model environment, which includes child-directed interest centers:

- a quiet home-like area - appropriate for relaxing or doing home work
- a fine motor skill area - each week a new manipulative (legos, lincoln logs, k-nex, bristle blocks, marble tracks, and many more).
- an art area - artsy arts and crafty crafts (playdough, markers, stencils, stamps, glue, beads, and many more).
- dramatic play area - each week a new theme (restaurant, hair salon, construction, grocery store, firefighters, and many more).
- a strategy games area - dice, card, and board games for all age levels that promote math and strategic thinking.
- snack area - multiple CHOICES and always self serve, family-style, and all you care to eat.

Teacher-Directed Activities:

As if that wasn't enough, we plan a variety of staff-facilitated activities to **CHOOSE** from - activities which require adults to help lead the club. Some examples of staff-facilitated activities are active games, team sports such as soccer or softball, other activities such as a cooking or sewing project, or a more complex art project.

Clubs: Clubs are special-interest groups that children may **CHOOSE** to join which require significant teacher facilitation. Some examples of club themes are science, drama, journalism, fitness, Spanish, cooking and the environment.

Enrichment Classes: Classes are taught by instructors who have expertise in the class topic. Classes are free to children enrolled in the program on the day the class is held, and children not enrolled in the program may sign up to take the class for a tuition fee. The number and type of classes to **CHOOSE** from varies from site to site. Examples of enrichment classes are ballet, stop-animation, sculpting, karate, brass instruments, photography, French, and science.

Celebrations: Children's Choice encourages children to be involved in planning activities. This may involve a diverse range of events that are celebrated in their family life including: birthdays and holidays.

Field Trips & Transportation: Our kids go on lots of fun and exciting field trips. At Children's Choice there is never an extra fee for field trips. Children are allowed to bring extra money to spend in field trip gift shops/snack bars when appropriate. Children should wear Children's Choice shirt on field trips. Most times children do not have the choice of staying back from the field trip. We can't justify leaving a teacher back to stay with only a few kids. If you have to pick up your child before the scheduled return time, you should make arrangements to pick him/her up from the field trip site. Please note the field trip return times on the activity schedule.

We charter transportation from a charter bus company, and sometimes the buses are late, so parents need to be aware of the fact that we are sometimes late returning from field trips through circumstances that are beyond the control of the staff. Children are also transported in the Children's Choice bus/van by drivers with a clean driving record and all required licenses. The use of seat belts is mandatory in the van.

Daily Snacks: Children's Choice snacks consist of at least two food choices from different food groups and 100% fruit juice and/or milk. Snack will be served family style, so children will be able to choose not only the type of snack but the amount of snack that they wish. During vacation camps and extended care days, we will serve a morning and an afternoon snack.

Meals: Children's Choice does not prepare meals. During times when the school is closed (holidays, and vacation camps), children must bring non-perishable meals that do not require cooking. (No refrigeration or microwave available)

FAMILIES GET INVOLVED!

We will establish for parents a place in the program called a "Family Corner", which will be located in a quiet area away from the doorway. At the Family Corner, families will find a place to daily sign their children in and out, activity calendars, program evaluation forms, newsletters, resources for parenting and family classes, special events, and ideas for things to do as a family.

We recognize and respect parents as the most important influence in the lives of their children. We feel that parents have both the right and the responsibility to share in decisions about their children's care and development. We understand that parents need to be happy with the program in order to meet both Children's Choice and the school's goals. We strive to involve parents through a variety of activities. Families may choose to volunteer in one or more of many different areas that are designed to use their own individual strengths or specialties. We understand how busy, working families who need child care are and ensure that the ways to be involved are designed to meet your busy schedule. We would like to communicate with you through daily informal contact, parent conferences, newsletters, activity calendars, phone calls, parent meetings, etc. We would like to invite every parent to drop by the school-age care program announced or unannounced at any time to see what we are doing and have some fun with us!

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Team: The self-study team for program improvement and accreditation. The CQI Team composed of parents, staff, faculty, community members and children meets on an as needed basis. The team conducts program observations, collects and tallies staff, child and parent evaluations, and builds an action plan for program improvement.

Community Collaborative: As part of the CQI Team and separately, school faculty, CC parents, Non-CC parents, and members of the community at large meet several times per year to discuss and communicate their need for out-of-school-time programming. They develop resources and advise us on what enrichment classes or other services are wanted and needed by the community.

Family Events: As part of the CQI Team or separately, parents meet on an as needed basis to plan special events such as family nights, talent shows, appreciation events, etc .

Programming: Are you interested in doing an arts & crafts project, teaching any type of game or activity, hosting a field trip to your place of work, going on a field trip to help-out?

Resource Development: Will you collect dramatic play items for dress up, medical care, pretend business, military, beauty salon, etc.? Are you willing to ask businesses to donate items for raffles, prizes, etc.?

Please indicate on your child's registration form which one of these or any other way you would like to be involved!

HEALTH & SAFETY

Children's Choice is committed to safety. We are licensed by the Children, Youth and Families Department of the State of New Mexico and comply with the regulations governing facilities providing care to children, which are intended to establish minimum standards in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of children. Our activity space and our supplies and equipment are high quality and maintained in good repair and are inspected by the licensing authority. Parents as well as school faculty are involved in observing and the program using a guided accreditation tool, documenting the fact that we meet our own standards of quality, which exceed the minimum licensing regulations. For example, licensing regulations require a child-staff ratio of 15:1, but Children's Choice provides a ratio of 10:1, so for a site with 45 children we provide five staff when licensing regulations requires only three. We know that child-staff ratios are the number one predictor of quality and safety in a child care program.

School-Age Care Program Registration: Safety starts here! Please take the time to fill out both sides of the registration form completely and **notify us immediately of any changes.**

Staff Certifications: Children's Choice staff receive 24 clock hours of training per year when the licensing regulations only require 8 hours per year, and every staff person is trained in infant, child and adult CPR, First Aid and Safety even though the licensing regulations only require that one person at the site have this certification.

Check in/Check out procedures: In the morning we ask parents to sign in their children with a caregiver. We do not follow-up on children who do not show up in the morning. Once in school-age care program care, the children are dismissed directly to school or to someone with written parent authorization only.

After-School Program: Children check-in with the school-age staff. If a child who is enrolled for the afternoon does not check-in, we call parents in an attempt to find out why the child is not present. This is a safety precaution we are committed to, but making phone calls prevents caregivers from interacting with the children. **Please let us know if your child will be absent.**

Children must be signed out: We will check children out to authorized persons only. We ask that anyone authorized to pick up your child be prepared to show us identification. Also, for the first few weeks of the program, while we are getting to know all of you, we will ask this of you as well. Please be patient. The children's safety is important to us.

If a person other than those authorized arrives to pick up your child, we will not release your child to that person unless we have received permission from you first. Please notify us in advance of such occurrences.

Missing Children Procedures: Once in the care of Children's Choice, if a child becomes missing and cannot be located after ten (10) minutes search by the staff, the parent, the police and the Director will be notified by the staff member in charge. Important: This procedure applies to children who check into the program and subsequently become missing, not to children who fail to show up for the program.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect Procedures: The prevention, identification, treatment and reporting of child abuse and neglect is important to Children's Choice. All staff members are trained in the following reporting guidelines.

Reporting: Any staff member who suspects that a child serviced by Children's Choice has been abused or neglected must immediately notify the Director of such suspicion. State law requires any adult over the age of 18 years of age who suspects child abuse or neglect to report this suspicion to Child Protective Services.

If the Director receives a verbal report of suspicion, he/she may require a written report. The report would require such information as the Director may deem necessary including the circumstances under which the person required to report first became aware of the child's injuries, abuse, maltreatment or neglect; whatever action was taken to treat, shelter or otherwise assist the child and any information which the Director or person furnishing the report deems helpful, as well as any information that Child Protective Services may require.

Handling Medications Procedures: We will dispense medication only with written permission from a parent, guardian, or prescribing physician using the Permission to Administer Medication form. All medicine must be in the original container. In the case of prescription medication, the prescribing physician must complete the Permission to Administer Medication form. Permission must include clear and specific directions. In the case of over-the-counter medication, written instructions must be consistent with packaging instructions. Parents are encouraged to come to the program and give any medications as needed.

Sick Children Procedures: Children may not attend school or the school-age care program if they have any disease listed as communicable. A list of communicable diseases is posted in the activity area. If a child becomes sick during the program, we will call parents and/or emergency contacts to come care for the sick child. While waiting for a parent to arrive, we will attempt to make the child comfortable in an area away from the rest of the children. We will not give any medication or other treatment without written permission from the parent.

Student Accidents: In the event that a child is injured during the program, a staff member certified in first aid will administer appropriate first aid. We will provide an accident report to the parents, which will include a description of the accident, any treatment given or other action taken. In case of serious injury requiring emergency medical attention, we will notify the parents and call for emergency transport immediately. Supplemental student accident insurance is available - contact the elementary school for more information. Parents have full financial responsibility for any necessary hospitalization, medical attention, surgery, etc.

Emergency Closing and Disaster Preparedness: Children's Choice will follow the APS decision on snow days or other emergency or safety-related school closing situations. When school is closed because of snow, emergency, or any safety concern Children's Choice is also closed. In case of an emergency in which there is a safety hazard inside the school, requiring evacuation children may be walked/transported to an alternate site.

Evacuation Sites:

- **Arroyo Del Oso:** Outside = Sister Cities Park, SW Corner of McKinley & Harper; Inside = Del Norte High School 5323 Montgomery Blvd NE, 883-7222.
- **Bandelier:** Outside = Hyder Park adjacent to Bandelier on SW corner of Pershing and Wellesley; Inside = Highland High School, 4700 Coal Ave SE, 265-3711.
- **Comanche:** Outside = Comanche ES Park; Inside = Sandia High School, 7801 Candelaria NE, 294-1511.
- **Double Eagle:** Outside Double Eagle ES Park; Inside = North Star ES, 9301 Ventura NE, 856-6578.

- **Georgia O’Keeffe:** Outside Georgia O’Keeffe ES Park; Inside = Eisenhower Middle School, 11001 Camero Ave NE, 292-2530.
- **Hubert Humphrey:** Outside = Academy Hills Park; Inside = Eisenhower Middle School, 11001 Camero Ave NE, 292-2530.
- **Inez:** Outside = Taylor Park across Indian School from Inez; Inside = Zuni Elementary, 6300 Claremont Ave NE, 881-8313.
- **John Baker:** Outside = Holiday Park South side of Comanche just North of Holiday St; Inside = Hoover Middle School 12015 Tivoli NE, 298-6896; alt Onate E.S. 12415 Brentwood Hills Blvd NE, 291-6819.
- **Manzano Mesa:** Outside or Inside = Manzano Mesa Multi-Generational Center, SW corner Southern & Elizabeth, 275-8731.
- **North Star:** Outside = North Star ES Park; Inside = Double Eagle Elementary, 8901 Lowell St NE, 857-0187.
- **Osuna:** Outside = Osuna ES Park; Inside = Hubert Humphrey, 9801 Academy Hills Dr. NE, 821-4981.
- **Sombra Del Monte:** Outside = Aztec Park, SE corner Moon & Cherokee; Inside = Madison M.S. 3501 Moon St NE, 299-4735.
- **Zuni:** Outside = Quigley Park NW corner San Pedro & Claremont; Inside: Cleveland M.S. 6910 Natalie Ave SE, 881-9227.
- **All Schools -** Outside of Neighborhood Location: 10601 Lomas Blvd NE, Albuquerque NM 87112. (505) 296-2880.

Evacuation Procedures:

1. If fire, smoke or explosion occurs, activate the fire alarm.
2. Director/Senior Staff Member in Charge will gather the following items: Attendance Sheet; Field Trip Backpack with first aid kit, sunscreen, and child registration forms.
3. For children with special needs or chronic medical conditions, provide any needed assistance, and add any meds or inhalers to the field trip backpack.
4. Teachers gather students at the primary exit or secondary exit.
5. Ensure all students, staff, and visitors exit the building and gather at the designated location.
6. Take attendance.
7. If the nearby area outside of the school is deemed unsafe, walk to the designated evacuation location above.
8. Take attendance.
9. If appropriate, call the main office and ask to be transported to our main office at 10601 Lomas Blvd NE, Albuquerque NM 87112; phone (505) 296-2880.
10. Once all children are safe, notify parents through the mobile app notification system, and follow up with individual phone calls until all parents have been reached. Follow normal checkout procedures when reuniting parents and children.

Shelter in Place Procedures: Similar to a lockdown, except that the students and staff are allowed to move around inside the designated room, continue with activities, and to have organized and supervised restroom breaks, medical attention, food, and water. No one is allowed into or out of the building. In case of emergency in which the outdoors are less safe than indoors (toxic spill, severe weather, a wild/dangerous animal outside). If authorities provide directions to shelter in place, or if you otherwise learn of unsafe conditions outdoors, take the following steps.

1. Close and lock any openings to the outside.
2. In case of toxic spill or smoke outside, turn off heating, ventilation, and cooling system, and use duct tape and plastic sheeting in the emergency kit to seal cracks around doors
3. Gather essential emergency supply kit.
4. Select an interior room furthest away from the hazard.
5. Instruct anyone with their own phone to call their emergency contact to let them know where they are and that they are safe, but to remain inside until the hazard is eliminated, and authorities tell you all is clear.
6. Change the greeting on the phone to state that the program is closed and that everyone is safe and remaining in the building until authorities say it is safe to open again.

Lockdown Procedures: If a lockdown is ordered by APS Police, Bernalillo County Sheriff, or Albuquerque Police Department if a dangerous person is on or near the school take the following steps:

1. Close and lock any openings to the outside.
2. Close blinds. Leave lights ON.
3. Select an interior room furthest away from the hazard and exterior windows and doors. The gross motor room has the fewest windows, and a hard-wired telephone, so select this room if appropriate.
4. Take attendance.
5. Remain quiet until authorities lift the lockdown completely or until authorities instruct you to go from lockdown to shelter-in-place.

Continuity of Operations: If some emergency or disaster has occurred that makes resuming operations in the school impossible, the program will be temporarily housed at 10601 Lomas Blvd, NE. This facility is ADA compliant, has water, restrooms, fire alarm system, food, school supplies, plenty of indoor active and quiet spaces, and all records for children and staff.

Notifications: Children's Choice will notify parents and guardians in writing of any incident, which has threatened the health or safety of children in the program. Children's Choice will report to licensing any incident that has threatened or could threaten the health and safety of children and staff members, such as, but not limited to: a lost or missing child; the death of a child; the abuse or neglect of a child; any incident, including but not limited to accidents, illness, and injuries, that requires medical care beyond on-site first aid; fire, flood, or other natural disaster that creates structural damages to a program or poses a health hazard.

OTHER POLICIES

Equipment & Supplies: Children's Choice will make all types of equipment and supplies available to the children for use during free play and group activities. Equipment and supplies can be checked out freely, but all children will be expected to return equipment in the same condition in which it was loaned. Children who have lost or damaged equipment due to carelessness will be asked to replace the items.

Lost & Found: Please put your child's name on everything he/she brings to the school-age care program! The lost and found really piles up. We find that children often toss valuable personal belongings on the ground and forget about them. We work with the children on being responsible for their own belongings, and remind them when leaving areas to bring their things with them. We make every effort to reunite found labeled items with their owners. Please encourage your child to remember what he/she brings to school-age care program and check for missing belongings each day. Every two months non-labeled items will be donated to a worthy cause.

Hours & Days of Operation: Based on the needs of the families, the school-age care program will operate Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. whenever school is not in session and from 7 a.m. until school begins and from school dismissal until 6 p.m. during regular school days. This means we provide care during conference weeks, in-service days, vacation breaks, and some holidays! Vacation Break Programs will be offered during the winter, spring and summer vacations. (The location of the program during these extended and vacation periods may be limited to only a few of the Children's Choice program sites) Children's Choice will be closed on the following days: January 1, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas and Christmas Eve. If the national holiday falls on a Saturday, we will be closed the same day the federal government observes the holiday. We are also closed on "snow days."

Photos & Video: Children's Choice celebrates and documents everything we do. We often take photos and videos in the program. These photos and videos are only used within the program. For example photos might be posted in the program environment, or added to a lesson plan, or videos might be shown at a parent event at the school.

In addition, Children's Choice publishes materials that help us share our model and accomplish our mission. We create lesson plans we share with other organizations; we have a blog about our program activities; we create brochures and flyers; we share resources on our website; we show images in our presentations and workshops, we have a YouTube channel where we post videos about program ideas and activities (<http://www.youtube.com/user/CCafterschool>). We only use images of children whose parents have initialed the photo release statement on the registration form for these materials. Children's surnames do not appear with any images used.

Confidential Information: Children's Choice will not release private personal information to outside parties without the informed, written authorization of the parent or guardian on record. Exceptions: The registration form and payment contract will be readily accessible to licensing officials. Under extreme circumstances such as suspicion of child abuse or neglect, we are legally permitted/required to release information without parent consent.

Special Needs: Children's Choice provide services to children, without regard to disability providing that the child will not:

- constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of himself or herself or others in a group child care setting, or
- require supervision, educational services, and/or personal services beyond that reasonably expected of the existing staff, or services not provided for children without disabilities, or
- require specialized equipment not present or available to the program.

Initial enrollment decisions will be based on reasonable judgment concerning the likelihood that the child's participation in a group child care setting can provide adequate educational, physical, and social/emotional adjustment, given the nature and extent of the disability. Initial enrollment may be provisional for a period to be stated by the Director at the time of enrollment. Continued enrollment may be reconsidered at any time, for any child, based on the above provisions.

We will make reasonable accommodations to provide fully inclusive child care for any children with special needs who are enrolled in an elementary school which hosts our program. Reasonable accommodation may include adapting space and activities so that all children can participate fully. Accommodations that would fundamentally alter the nature of or create an undue financial burden on the program, such as one-on-one care, cannot be made. Children who are assigned a one-on-one Behavior Management Specialist (BMS) may only attend the program when the BMS is present. Parents must provide all pertinent information regarding the child's special needs, and any educational plans that would assist the staff in the care of the child.

RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS & GUARDIANS

Rights:

- Parents have the right to visit the program at any time. Any custodial parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the program is permitted unlimited access to the program during operating hours for the purpose of contacting the child or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises the parent or guardian will notify the staff of his/her presence.
- Parents have the right to a full explanation of the services offered by Children's Choice Child Care Services, Inc.
- Parents have the right to select the services that meet their needs.
- Parents have the right to expect their personal information will be maintained in a confidential manner.
- Parents have the right to appeal any decision made regarding their account with the Executive Director/Financial Director.
- Parents have the right to be treated with respect and have the same services that are available to others.

Responsibilities:

- Parents are responsible for signing their child into and out of the program.
- Parents are responsible for picking up their children from the program by closing time – 6:00 p.m.
- Parents are responsible for paying for services in advance of services rendered. Payment is due on the Monday morning of the week that service is rendered.
- Parents are responsible for notifying us in advance about any change in attendance.
- Parents are financially responsible for any medical attention or treatment provided.
- Parents are responsible for picking up their child from the program immediately if their child is suspended for a major behavior infraction that is deemed to jeopardize the health or safety of any other person.
- Parents are responsible for knowing and following the policies of Children's Choice and the Parent Code of Conduct.

Parent Code of Conduct:

Parents and staff are role models for children and must therefore act accordingly. Parents are responsible for behaving appropriately and working respectfully and cordially with the staff to resolve any problems. Failure to do so may result in loss of childcare services. Parents must refrain from:

- Physical punishment of children.
- Verbal abuse, yelling, swearing or cursing.
- Threatening staff, other parents, or children.
- Smoking.
- Quarreling with other parents or staff.
- Disciplining other people's children.

RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN

Rights:

- Every child in the program has the right to be safe.
- Every child in the program has the right to be treated with respect and kindness.
- Every child in the program has the right to have and share their opinions and desires.
- Every child in the program has the right to participate in all activities if they have met their responsibilities.

Responsibilities:

- Children are responsible for following the instructions of staff and enrichment instructors the first time given.
- Children are responsible for remaining in supervised program spaces.
- Children are responsible for showing their whereabouts on the accountability system (clothes pin accountability board) on site.
- Children are responsible for showing respect for their fellow program participants and staff.
- Children are responsible for treating the supplies and equipment with care and respect.
- Children are responsible for following posted program rules and posted rules for interest centers.
- Children are responsible for cleaning up their own messes and participating in program-wide clean-up activities.
- Children are responsible for the care and supervision of their personal belongings.

STAKEHOLDER GRIEVANCES OR COMPLAINTS POLICY

- All stakeholders have the right to file a grievance about any program incident or decision without interference or retaliation. For purposes of this policy, a grievance is an official statement of a complaint or conflict over an alleged violation of an approved policy, procedure or practice, or applicable local, state or federal law. For the purposes of this policy, stakeholders may include program applicants, program participants, or the family members of participants.
- Step 1: The stakeholder is encouraged to discuss the issue with the person involved, and to have a witness present if desired. Complaints or grievances, which are not adequately addressed with the person directly involved, may be referred to that employee's supervisor.
- Step 2: If the issue is not resolved to the stakeholder's satisfaction, the stakeholder can request written or verbal notification of the resolution and an explanation of any further appeal, rights or recourse, including the name of the person responsible for supervising the person about whom the grievance is being made. A stakeholder who is unable to read will require a verbal notification. The stakeholder can expect a timely notification based on how much time it takes to investigate and discuss the issue – typically 24 – 48 hours.
- Step 3: If the issue is still not resolved to the stakeholder's satisfaction, the stakeholder has the right to appeal to the person responsible for supervising the person about whom the grievance is being made.
- Step 4: In exceptional cases where a solution cannot be reached, stakeholders have the right to file a written appeal to a CEO/Executive Director. The stakeholder can expect a timely notification based on how much time it takes to investigate and discuss the issue – typically 24 – 48 hours.
- Final authority over any grievance rests with the Executive Directors. In exceptional cases where a grievance involves the Executive Directors, the stakeholder may file a formal, written grievance with the Board of Directors. The Board will then determine the method it will use to resolve the grievance, and its decision will be final. No stakeholder who has filed a complaint in good faith will be unlawfully interfered with or disciplined or otherwise retaliated against.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

We believe in a positive form of guidance and behavior management. Our role in guidance is to teach children how to make good choices and help them develop autonomy and self-discipline, and a sense of caring, fair play, and maturity. We encourage individuality and independence, but each child must be able to interact within the group's limits. We have frequent discussions involving the children in creating the standards of behavior in the program, a social contract, so the children are aware of the following basic rules. **Dress Code:** Children's Choice kids and staff must follow APS dress code.

SCHOOL-AGE CARE PROGRAM RULES

1. Follow the instructions of Children's Choice staff the first time given.
2. Respect and care for other people and their possessions.
3. Respect and care for the supplies, the equipment and the facility.
4. Be responsible for your own actions, possessions, and messes.
5. Walk slowly and speak softly in the multi-purpose room.
6. Use playground equipment the way it was meant to be used.
7. Stay in areas that are supervised by Children's Choice staff.
8. Show citizenship by participating in site clean up activities.
9. Be honest and trustworthy in all you do.
10. Be fair when playing games and using equipment.
11. Have Fun!

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Our educators first attempt to prevent misbehavior by creating high-quality learning environment that encourage desirable behavior, creating empowering routines and activities that engage kids in appropriate self-guided behavior, and building caring and supportive relationships that promote prosocial behavior. Unfortunately there are times when children display inappropriate behavior. There will be "No Tolerance" for major infractions such as unprovoked violence, threats of violence toward children or staff, or evading supervision, in which case we will ask the parent(s) to pick up the child from the program immediately. For other infractions, the following procedures take place.

Step 1. Warnings:

We let the child know specifically what he/she is doing that we want to stop, and what consequences they can predict will happen if this behavior continues. Note: When children break rules that they know and understand, especially those with automatic consequences that are established in advance, they don't get warnings.

Step 2. Follow Through on Warning:

Forfeit Privileges: A child who is abusing equipment forfeits his/her privilege to use that equipment that day.

Children who are arguing forfeit the privilege of playing together that day. A child who is defiant forfeits all CC privileges until he/she complies with appropriate staff instructions.

Receive a Logical Consequence: Children may be required to complete a logical consequence in order to restore the privileges they forfeited by making a bad choice. Consequences are not punishments or angry reactions from educators. Logical consequences are related to the misbehavior, reasonable for the developmental level of the child, and respectful of children. A child who chooses to engage in destructive behavior will correct the damage and engage in some type of constructive behavior such as organizing the equipment. A child who chooses to throw trash on the ground will pick up that trash, plus extra trash. A child running in a walk slowly area may have to go back to where they started running and walk slowly.

Reparations: This is the, “you broke it, you fix it” consequence. A child who accidentally causes another child to be injured may be asked to help administer first aid. A child who vandalizes property or destroys equipment will be asked to restore or replace the item. A child who insults another child may be asked to think of and say a number of things that are good about that child.

Restitution: This more advanced stage of guidance, is for children who have already learned about logical consequences and reparations. This is the, “you broke it, so **how** are **you** going to fix it” stage. The child will be involved in deciding what action will “make it right” to the victim, creating a personal solution and building the skill of recognizing mistakes, admitting mistakes, and fixing mistakes. The victim may be an individual child, the organization, or the CC program community.

Parent Notification: Parent will be notified of the problem and be asked to talk to the child on the phone, or pick up the child from the program.

Step 3. Parent Conferences: During the parent conference the problem will be discussed and possible solutions examined. A behavior contract outlining expected behavior and the staff’s, the child’s and the family’s role in the solution will be drawn up.

Step 4. Follow-Up: A follow up meeting with the parents and Children's Choice staff may be scheduled to review the child’s progress.

Step 5. Suspension: In the event that the child’s behavior does not improve, a week-long suspension will be invoked.

Step 6. Dismissal: If the child’s behavior upon return from suspension is not improved, he/she will be dismissed from the program. Children's Choice makes every effort to work positively with each child, but the fact remains that our environment is not conducive to every child, and not every child has the skills or the desire to benefit by our type of program.

Note: Children may be dismissed or suspended from the program with no warning for major infractions where the safety of the staff or other children are compromised such as violence, threats of violence, or evading supervision.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Child Care Assistance is available. Call the Child Care Bureau at 841-4800. Ask for child care assistance information. If you qualify for financial assistance, your co-payment will be based on the size of your family and your family's income. If you have questions about this process or if you desire assistance with this process, please call our Billing Manager, Sara, at 296-2880.

ENROLLMENT, PAYMENT OPTIONS & POLICIES

Registration for all programs is online. During this process, you will be asked what days your child will attend the program. YOU WILL BE CHARGED REGARDLESS OF ATTENDANCE.

During the school-year, you have two options on how to be billed for this service:

Option 1: This option is good if you need your child to attend every day of the week or have a set schedule every week. Select all the days you want us to expect your child. You will be billed REGARDLESS OF ATTENDANCE for any days you select. If you select 4 or 5 days, you will be billed at the discounted weekly rate. If you select 1-3 days, you will be billed at the daily rate based on this schedule REGARDLESS OF ATTENDANCE. If you attend an additional day not scheduled, you will be billed separately for that extra day. By creating a schedule, your child will be expected on these days and we will contact you if they do not check-in to the program on a scheduled day. Please notify the Site Director if your child won't attend on a scheduled day. All schedule changes on this option must be done in advance by emailing your request to sara@childrens-choice.org. There are no refunds or credits for days missed. If your child will not attend Children's Choice programs for an entire week during the school-year, there will be no charge if advance notice is given in writing by e-mail to sara@childrens-choice.org. A confirmation from Sara is verification of your credit.

Option 2: This option is good if you need Children's Choice on a drop-in basis. Don't select any days - leave the schedule blank. You will be billed at the beginning of each week for any days attended the previous week. (The charges will be based on actual attendance, so cannot be billed until after your child has attended). Your child will always be welcome to attend the program, but will never be expected and therefore you will not be contacted if he/she doesn't check-in. If you want this option, but want your child to be expected on a particular day, you will need to contact the Site Director to make special arrangements.

During the summer, you select each week you need. There is a price difference if you register after the early-bird deadline. You have two options on how to be billed for this service:

5-Day Option: This option is good if you need 4 or 5 days of care in the week. You will be billed the weekly rate REGARDLESS OF ATTENDANCE. You will be billed for all weeks selected REGARDLESS OF ATTENDANCE after the registration deadline, so please pay close attention to the dates listed in the on-line registration descriptions.

3-Day Option: This option is good if you need 3 or less days of care in the week. You will be billed the 3-Day rate even if your child attends less than 3 days. If your child attends more than 3-days (providing you receive advanced approval from the Site Director based on availability) you will be charged \$36/day extra. You will be billed for all weeks selected REGARDLESS OF ATTENDANCE after the registration deadline, so please pay close attention to the dates listed in the on-line registration descriptions.

There is no drop-in option during the summer.

There is a \$40/child/school-year APS building usage fee.

There is a \$20/child/school-year APS building usage fee.

	Weekly Fee*	Daily Fee
Bandelier, Sombra Del Monte, John Baker, Hubert Humphrey, & Manzano Mesa		
Before-School only	\$42/wk	\$12/day
After-School only	\$60/wk	\$17/day
Early Release Wed. PM		\$25/day (note: HH & MM only)
Before School & Early Release PM	\$67/wk	(note: HH & MM only)
Before and After-School	\$70/wk	

Arroyo Del Oso, Comanche, Double Eagle, Georgia O’Keeffe, North Star, Osuna & Zuni (2 pm release schools)

After-School	\$73/wk	\$21/day
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Inez

Before-School only	\$32/wk	\$9/day
After-School only	\$64/wk	\$19/day
Before and After-School	\$74/wk	

All Schools

Full-Day (Vacation Camps)	\$135/wk	\$36/day
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* All weekly fees include care on school in-service days, conference weeks and some school holidays.

Note: To ensure proper credit if paying by check or money order, please write your child's first and last name on the memo line.

PAYMENT POLICIES

1. Children’s Choice accepts checks and money orders, which may be dropped in the on-site payment box, or mailed to 10601 Lomas Blvd NE, Suite 101, Albuquerque, NM 87112. Children's Choice only accepts cash at the main office. Credit card payments can be made by logging in to your Parent Portal. Children's Choice accepts Visa, Master Card, and Discover. You can pay online through your parent portal after your account has been processed and approved. You can set up Automatic Payments by logging in to your Parent Portal and entering in your credit card information under the "Auto Pay" tab. Auto Payments will be run every Monday of each week.
2. All accounts must be paid in advance; meaning payment is due on Monday morning of the week that service is rendered.
3. Accounts that have a balance at least 4 days past due will be charged a late fee of \$10 per week for unpaid balances.
4. Children may not participate in any programs if the account balance is \$150 or more or is 14 or more days unpaid whichever comes first.
5. Accounts will be charged a \$30 fee for any check returned for non-sufficient funds.
6. Children must be picked up no later than 6:00 P.M. Parents will be charged \$1.00 per minute, per child for late pick-ups to cover the cost of overtime for staff.
7. Children’s Choice accepts CYFD contracts. All CYFD contract co-pays must be paid by the first week of the month. All other fees that the CYFD contract doesn't pay must be paid by the contract holder. Any changes in the contract that would affect CYFD payments must be communicated with our Billing Manager at 296-2880 or sara@childrens-choice.org. Full tuition must be paid if the CYFD contract expires and your child(ren) continues to attend.