Youth In Need
Early Learning Programs

FAMILY HANDBOOK

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Welcome to Youth In Need's Early Learning Programs!

Dear Families,

Welcome! We are honored that you have chosen Youth In Need to be part of your child's early learning journey. Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning for another year, thank you for trusting us with one of the most important people in your life.

At Youth In Need, we believe every child deserves to feel safe, loved, challenged, and celebrated every day. The first years of life lay the foundation for everything that follows, and we are committed to providing nurturing relationships, engaging learning experiences, and joyful environments where children can grow with curiosity, confidence, and wonder.

We also believe that families are a child's first and most important teachers. Your knowledge, experiences, and dreams for your child matter to us. Together, we will celebrate milestones, navigate challenges, and create meaningful opportunities that support your child's learning and development.

Our commitment extends beyond the classroom. We are dedicated to creating welcoming spaces where every family feels respected, valued, and supported. We hold ourselves to high standards because your child deserves the very best. Our educators and staff are passionate professionals who continually strive to provide exceptional care, meaningful learning experiences, and strong partnerships with families.

As you begin the school year, I encourage you to ask questions, share your ideas, participate in family events, and build relationships with your child's teachers and our staff. Your involvement makes a lasting difference, and we are grateful to partner with you.

Every day, our team has the privilege of helping children discover the world around them while ensuring they know they are safe, capable, and deeply valued. It is work we never take for granted.

Thank you for trusting us with your child. We are excited to partner with you this year as we learn, grow, and celebrate together.

Welcome to the Youth In Need family. We look forward to an incredible 2026–2027 school year!

With gratitude,

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YOUTH IN NEED'S HISTORY & OVERVIEW

Youth In Need (YIN) is a non-profit child and family services agency, headquartered in St. Charles, MO. Through a variety of crisis prevention and intervention programs, Youth In Need is dedicated to building positive futures for the community's most vulnerable children, youth, and families. For additional information and to check out our Mission, Vision and Core Values please visit our website: Youth In Need.

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

Early Learning Program (ELP) Service Options

Provide a variety of services to meet your family's needs, including center-based services (full and extended day), home-visitation services (including prenatal) and community childcare providers. We individualize our programs to meet the needs of the children we serve.

Center-Based Services

Youth In Need's center-based programs offer a variety of individual learning experiences and individual activities especially designed to promote intellectual, social, emotional, physical, self-help, and wellness skills to children in a group classroom environment. We provide formula containers for transporting breast milk, food while in the classroom, and diapers/wipes for all our children, as needed.

All centers are licensed by the Missouri Department of Health's Bureau of Child Care Safety and Licensure and are equipped with cameras and video monitoring for internal use only. Center attendance is offered in two options, Full-Day, and Extended-Day.

Full-Day Services

The Full-Day option for Youth In Need's Head Start day is a 6-hour program and is free of charge. Due to community needs, the days and hours may vary. For additional information on exact days and hours, contact your Center Manager.

Tuition Based Services (Formally known as Extended Day Services)

Tuition Based hours are designed to meet the needs of parents who are working, in job training, and/or are going to school. Tuition Based services have limited space, are not available in all classrooms and are on a first-come, first-serve, and eligible basis. For specific Tuition Based hours at your center, please contact your Center Manager.

Fee for Tuition Based Services

Families must apply with the Division of Social Services for childcare subsidy. Families who do not qualify for childcare subsidy will be charged a fee. If you are interested in learning more about the Tuition Based hours, speak to your Center Manager.

Home-Visitation Services: Individualized Education Visits

Weekly 90-minute home visits provide the opportunity for your family to receive individualized services that strengthen your skills in identifying and meeting the needs of your children and family. Visits are scheduled at a time that is consistent and convenient for you. We believe parents are the first and most important educator. During home visits you will take on the role as your child's Teacher with support from your Family Educator, you will plan experiences that support your child's developmental goals through the utilization of everyday items. Families are expected to fulfill 46 home visits with their Family

Educator during the program year. The number of visits is prorated for families enrolled after the official start of the program year.
In addition to home visits, the Home-Visitation program plans socialization events twice per month. Socializations are provided to develop social skills, interactions with peers and are individualized based on the age and developmental goals of your child. Talk to your Family Educator today to find out more about the fun, engagement, and learning that takes place during socialization events!

Prenatal Services

Through our Home-Visitation program, we offer services to pregnant people and their families, including prenatal and post-partum information, education, and services. For more information talk with your program staff.

Community Child Care Providers

Youth In Need has formed partnerships with eleven childcare centers in the community with the purpose of expanding high-quality early learning opportunities. The program integrates comprehensive services and resources into an array of traditional childcare and family care settings. These sites are supported to meet the highest standards of quality for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE—Policy Council

Policy Council provides program parents/guardians and representatives from the community to participate in shared decision-making for the growth and development of ELP Programs. Policy Council Parent Representatives are elected by their local Parent Committees. If you would like more information about Parent Committee and/or Policy Council, please talk with your ELP Staff.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Philosophy

We believe that every child deserves the commitment to grow up safe, nurtured, healthy, and educated. We respect and strongly believe that parents are their child's first and most important Teachers. We value and respect inclusion and diversity, and we believe it is highly important for children and families of all abilities and cultures to become integral members of Youth In Need's ELP.

Curriculum

We utilize a researched and evidenced-based curriculum, recommended by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Office of Childhood, which aligns with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes and the Missouri Early Learning Standards. All curriculum covers all areas of development—social/emotional, physical/health, cognitive, language, and literacy. Contact your Manager for specific and detailed information on the curriculum used in your program option. Visit the website for more information on the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.

Guidance Practices/Discipline

Conscious Discipline is the Social/Emotional Curriculum we use in our program. Conscious Discipline provides behavior management strategies and classroom structures that are used to turn everyday situations into learning opportunities. It equips Teachers with the ability to integrate social/emotional learning, discipline, and self-regulation.

If children exhibit behaviors which jeopardize the safety and security of the classroom environment, responsive measures will be put in place. In the event that all efforts, strategies, and resources have

been exhausted, and it is determined that YIN Early Learning Center (ELC) placement cannot fully support the child's success, program staff will work collaboratively with the family and community entities to further develop individualized plans and identify alternate service options that best meet the child's needs and promote school readiness.

Developmental Screening and Assessment

Every child enrolled in ELP receives a comprehensive assessment and developmental screening. Developmental screenings include hearing, vision, motor, language/communication, cognitive, and social/emotional development. On-going assessment of each child's development is monitored, utilizing the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and according to the curriculum we use. All families will have two Parent-Teacher Conferences with their child's teacher and Center-Based families will have a minimum of two Educational Home Visits.

Inclusive and Individualization Services for Children

Children learn in a variety of ways and at individual rates. Youth In Need collaborates with families and other professionals to identify a child's strengths & needs, develop strategies for support, and to create plans that are individualized and lead to success and learning. We are an inclusive program and bring together all children to nurture the acceptance of diversity among children. We coordinate with existing service providers and parents to ensure each child's needs are being met. We participate in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for preschool-age children with disabilities and Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP) for infants and toddlers with disabilities. There are times when YIN ELC Classrooms may not be the least restrictive, or best place, for your child. If that determination is made, we will support your family in identifying alternative services in the community that will meet the needs of your child and family.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mental Health Program for Children and Families

The Mental Health Program promotes positive mental health practices to enhance the social and emotional wellness of the children and families in ELP through *prevention, identification/referral,* and *treatment/support.* If you are in immediate crisis and need to speak with someone, please call Life Crisis at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Trauma-Informed Care

Youth In Need staff receive initial and annual training in trauma-informed care. We utilize the Trauma Smart model and Conscious Discipline approaches to support safe, responsive, and relationship-centered environments for children, families, and staff.

Our approach:

- Engages families as partners, recognizing their strengths, knowledge, culture, and role in their child's development.
- Supports staff well-being by building awareness, self-regulation, and strategies for responding to stress and challenging behaviors.
- Creates safe, predictable, and nurturing classrooms that promote connection, emotional regulation, and resilience.
- Responds to behavior with empathy and curiosity, recognizing behavior as communication and addressing underlying needs.
- Strengthens relationships among children, families, teachers, and support staff to promote lasting, positive outcomes.

HEALTH SERVICES

Youth In Need Staff must be informed about any health problems your child may have before entering the program. Special health issues, including allergies, should be brought to the attention of Program Staff. All allergies of children will be posted confidentially for easy access to staff. Food allergies will also be posted in the kitchen.

Health Policies

ELP must have a health record for each child that shows the child has received health screenings and immunizations at the ages recommended by national experts. The Missouri Department of Health has established certain requirements and guidelines regarding children's health in a childcare center. We ask for your cooperation in complying with these mandated health rules.

Immunizations

In accordance with state and licensing laws, Youth In Need Early Learning Program *shall notify the parent or guardian of a child enrolled in or attending the facility, upon request, of whether there are children currently enrolled in or attending the facility for whom a medical immunization exemption has been filed. To request information regarding enrolled children with a medical immunization exemption please contact your Manager. An exemption (no names or identifying information will be given). If there is a confirmed case of a communicable vaccine preventable illness, children with a medical exemption will be sent home and required to stay home for the entire incubation period of said illness. If additional cases are confirmed, the incubation period starts over for the medically exempt child.*

Health Requirements in Our Program:

Youth In Need Staff must be informed about any health problems your child may have before entering the program. Special health issues, including allergies, should be brought to the attention of the Center Manager or Family Educator. All allergies of children will be posted confidentially for easy access to Staff. Food allergies will also be posted in the kitchen.

ELP Staff will work with you to obtain the following documentation:

1. ***Health History***–-Program Staff will complete with you.
2. ***Blood Lead Test and Hemoglobin Test***—we require a copy of the results of your child's most recent test conducted at 12 and/or 24 months of age. Children under 12 months of age are exempt. Children over 24 months of age, who have not had this test conducted, still need testing to ensure healthy Blood Lead and Hemoglobin levels. Blood Lead Testing is required annually for children who live in high-risk areas. St. Louis City and Montgomery County are considered high risk areas by the Center for Disease Control and Infection (CDC).
3. ***Dental Exam—***a form must be completed and signed by a Dentist within the last 12 months. This needs to be in our files *within 90 days of enrollment.* Beginning at 6 months of age children should see a dentist for regular check-ups.
4. ***Immunizations—***A copy of your child's immunization record **MUST be up to date before your child enters the center per licensing.** Immunizations for children **younger than three** years of age must be up to date for their age, and **kept up to date**, as they get older.
5. ***Physical Exam—***a physical exam including growth measurements - must be completed, signed by your child's Health Care Provider, and dated within the last 12 months. **This MUST be in our file before your child starts class in the center-based option per licensing. Scheduled Well Child Checks must be kept up to date for children younger than three years of age and documented in our files.**
6. ***Medical Exam Form***—Must be completed and on file per Missouri Licensing.

The above listed requirements are essential for enrollment in our program and must be in our files **within 90 days** of enrollment unless otherwise noted.

Child Illness

The following symptoms could indicate a contagious or communicable illness:

- Fever/pain
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Shortness of Breath
- Extreme fatigue
- Diarrhea (2 abnormally loose stools)
- Swelling/redness of throat/trouble swallowing
- Skin rash
- Vomiting (2 incidents of vomiting)
- Reddened, discharging/draining eyes, ears, or other organs
- Draining wounds or sores

Please keep your child home from the classroom or socialization and notify your Family Educator if they exhibit any of the above symptoms. If any of these symptoms develop while at the center or socialization, the child will be sent home. A *Child Illness/Injury Form* will be completed with a copy being given at the time of pick-up and a copy kept in the child's file. Communicable disease will require a statement from the child's physician. **Children will be admitted back to the classroom/ socialization group or for home visits when they have been symptom free and have not required fever/pain medication for a minimum of 24 hours. In the event of a Pandemic, guidelines for admitting back to the classroom/socialization and home visits may change. Further information will be provided at that time.**

Accidents & Injuries

Licensing requires that parents be contacted immediately (usually by phone), for all injuries and accidents that occur to a child. Program Staff will complete the *Child Illness/Injury Form.* If the injury occurred to the head, the *Head Injury Form* is also completed, and a copy will be provided. For medical emergencies, Staff will call 911 and notify the parent/guardian immediately. Program Staff receive CPR and First Aid Training.

Medications

If your child must take medications during the time he/she is in the classroom or attending a socialization, the following must be done:

1. If medication is to be given by Staff, it must be brought in by parent/guardian in the **original container** (a prescription bottle or over-the-counter bottle which is labeled).
2. The parent/guardian must sign a *Medication Consent Form*.
3. All medication must have a completed form stating directions for use with signed instructions and permission from the parent/guardian. Medication brought without the above will not be administered.
4. Staff will keep the medication in a locked storage container. Emergency medications, such as an Epi-Pen, may not be locked, but kept out of reach of children.
5. Staff will log and initial each dose given.
6. Any change in a medication dosage requires a new-signed form by the Physician and the parent.

Head Lice

Children suspected of having head lice will be checked by Program Staff. If lice or nits (eggs) are found, parents will be notified at the end of the day. The child can return the next day after a single treatment with over-the-counter medication. For additional information on head lice, treatment, cleaning, tips, etc.:

- Head Lice (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Head Lice (American Academy of Pediatrics)
- Head Lice: What Parents Need to Know

NUTRITION SERVICES

Youth in Need recognizes that it is important to establish healthy eating habits in young children that will promote healthy development and lifelong well-being. The goal of nutrition services is to achieve this by providing nutritious meals, evaluating children's nutritional status, and educating children and their families about nutrition.

In accordance with Federal and civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Parents will receive the pamphlet *Building for the Future (English) or in Spanish*, upon enrollment.

CACFP Non-Discrimination Statement:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Center-Based Food Service

Children in classrooms partake in nutritious family style meals that comply with the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines, Head Start Performance Standards and provide ½ of the children's daily nutrition. Menus are distributed to parents and posted at each facility.

All infants will have an infant diet plan that outlines the type of formula/food and the amounts that are to be given (as discussed with the parents upon entrance into the center) and feeding schedules will be individualized for each child. Youth In Need provides baby food for all infants and toddlers. If your infant/toddler requires a specific formula or baby food, please talk with your Teacher/Family Advocate.

Home Visitation Food Service

Children in the Home Visitation setting will be served a nutritious snack during socializations.

Nutrition Education

Youth in Need Staff provide opportunities for children to learn about food and nutrition in the classrooms and on home visits. You are welcome to join your child for these educational opportunities as well as for meals. If you are interested, please talk to your Manager.

Youth In Need ELP strongly supports and encourages breastfeeding for infants and provides designated space for mothers to breastfeed their children. Storage containers and traveling coolers are available to carry breast milk back and forth to ELP sites, as needed. If you are in need of these items or have questions, please contact your Manager.

NUTRITION POLICIES

Food Ordinance

Food may not be brought into or taken out of centers for the following reasons:

- Food served to children must be in compliance with the food safety and nutrition regulations set forth by the USDA Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP).
- The Missouri Health Department regulations & Missouri Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers mandate that no food or drink, including bottles, which are prepared or served in the center may leave the center or be sent home. This is to protect children from food borne illnesses and allergens.
- These same regulations mandate that food made at home may not be served in the classroom or at any ELP family function to protect children and families from foodborne illnesses and allergens.
- Commercially prepared/purchased foods may not be brought into the classroom in order for the program to stay in compliance with CACFP regulations and Head Start Program Performance Standards related to nutrition.

Food Allergies, Peanut Allergies, and Dietary Restrictions

Please inform program Staff of any allergies/dietary restrictions a child might have. Youth In Need operates facilities that are peanut-free when needed, however classrooms within community operated buildings may not be peanut-free, many individuals' allergic reaction can be triggered by eating, touching, or even smelling peanut products. It is extremely important that Staff are made aware of all allergies that your child may have prior to attending centers, socials, or after-hour events. Documentation of food allergies from the child's Physician is necessary so accommodations can be

made. Families desiring food restrictions for religious reasons must submit a written statement to the Center Manager.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Family Partnership Agreement Process & Family Goal Setting

The Family Partnership Agreement Process refers to the opportunities that we offer your family to develop and implement individualized goals. This is an on-going process, to support child and family growth and development. Staff partner with you to assess your child's and family's strengths, needs, and interests to develop meaningful goals and provide the highest quality services. Center-Based families will have three or more family partnership meetings with their Family Advocate, with one meeting being in the family's home. For Home-Visitation families, Family Educators will incorporate these meetings into their regular home visits. Visit the website for more information on The Family and Community Engagement Framework.

Community Services and Resources

Staff make referrals for families as needed, and Staff meet with families individually to offer support and information to assist families with their needs, interests, and goals. Youth In Need partners with many agencies, organizations, and businesses. For more detailed information please contact program Staff.

Family Literacy Services

Youth In Need supports the development of the home language and culture. English Language Learning (ELL) classes are available through agencies in the community. For more information, contact your child's Teacher, Family Advocate, or Family Educator.

Family Engagement

We encourage parents to take an active role in all family engagement opportunities. In addition, trainings are offered to Staff, parents and community members, these trainings are intended to increase personal and professional knowledge, to enrich the program, to improve overall administration of the organization, and to transfer knowledge to the community. As parents/guardians and families of ELP children, there are many ways for you to become involved and stay engaged in your child's school family. If you are interested in becoming involved or attending a training, please contact program Staff.

Family Outcomes Child Plus

Youth In Need ELP utilizes a web-based instrument called Family Outcomes Tool, which measures the parent experience and impact of our program's engagement efforts. This evidence-based tool aligns with the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. The information you provide helps staff work with families on setting and achieving goals, meaningful family engagement opportunities, and enhancing quality services.

In-Kind & Volunteers

In-Kind is the donation of time and/or materials used in the program that would otherwise be purchased by Youth In Need. In-Kind provides funds necessary to operate our program. Volunteering is one way to provide In-Kind for our program. There are a number of various opportunities to volunteer in our program, and we are always looking for individuals and groups in the community who are interested in donating their time and/or resources to assist with various needs. Volunteer participation, donations, identifying individual goals, and working on activities with your child all count as In-Kind. If you are

interested, please contact ELP program Staff, or call 636-946-5600 for more information. The most valuable contributions come from you.

In-Kind:

In order to meet our Federally enforced in-kind goals, our expectation is that each family spend a minimum of approximately 30 minutes per day or 15 hours per month completing in-kind activities. This does not need to be 30 minutes every day, but it can be an average per month. Work with your teacher or family educator to process how you can best achieve your monthly in-kind goal, whether that is in the classroom, at your site, in your home, or just with your child.

GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Discrimination

Youth In Need does not discriminate in its enrollment, program services, and employment practices resulting from differences in race, sex, gender identity or expression, age, income, faith, ability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, cultural background, marital status, or veteran status.

Confidentiality

It is the policy of Youth In Need to protect, to the maximum extent possible, the privacy of every child, youth, and family that we serve by following strict confidentiality guidelines. Generally, information is not shared outside of Youth In Need without your written consent. For specific information refer to Youth In Need's Notice of Privacy Practices. Permitted disclosures include use of information for quality, aggregated outcome data, and auditing reviews. All employees are trained in Youth In Need's HIPAA policies and procedures to ensure compliant operations.

Children's files are kept in locked file cabinets and are only accessible to Staff. Only parents and legal guardians may view their child's file or records. Requests must be received in writing to review or receive copies of documents in your child's file. For more information contact your Manager.

Accreditation and Quality Improvement

Youth In Need is committed to providing exceptional services to all the children, youth, and families. Global and nationally recognized models and tools are utilized to deliver strength-based care while demonstrating solid overall organizational results. Youth In Need is nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA) and all ELC's are licensed through the state of Missouri.

Safety

Youth In Need is committed to providing safe environments for learning and education. All adults in the facility, Staff, and volunteers undergo extensive background screening.

Adult anger, threats, or violence will not be tolerated. Staff will call 911 in the event:

- An adult yells at another adult or child and is unable to calm down.
- An adult has a weapon or threatens to use one.
- An adult physically attacks an adult or child.

Spanking and/or any form of physical punishment is not tolerated on Youth In Need's property or at supervised Youth In Need events such as picnics and field trips.

Lockdown Procedures

A lockdown is a precautionary measure in response to a threat directly to the school or in the surrounding community. In the event of a lockdown **no one** will be admitted into or released from the building for any reason until the lockdown has concluded. Parents will be notified of a lockdown at your site through our automated phone system as soon as possible and upon conclusion of the lockdown.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

All Staff members are ***mandated reporters*** of child abuse and neglect and receive annual training on what is required to be reported. When feasible, Youth In Need employees try to include the parent/ primary caretaker in the hotline call process. In keeping with Youth In Need's mission and adherence to the Strengths Based Philosophy, conversations with parents/caretakers are to be discreet, assume positive intent, and respectful. Determination of suspected child abuse and neglect is completed by the Missouri Department of Social Services—Children's Division. Youth In Need complies with Missouri law, which requires all Staff working in the program to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Children's Division Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. If you would like help in coping with any area of your child's behaviors, please speak with your child's Teacher, Family Advocate, Family Educator, Center/Home Visitation Manager.

Tobacco Free Environment

Smoking, including e-cigarettes, is not permitted by Staff, volunteers, community members or parents within Youth In Need's buildings, offices, agency vehicles, employee vehicles when transporting clients for agency business, outdoor play areas, during home visits, all off-site program activities, or in the visual presence of our clients.

Inclement Weather & Youth In Need's Automated Announcement System

Safety permitting, every effort will be made to keep classrooms open in the event of inclement weather. When we need to close our centers, cancel home visits, or have late start days due to unsafe weather conditions, your family will receive an automated message from Youth In Need and information will be posted on each program's Facebook page. Please remember to notify your Home Visitation Staff if there are unsafe conditions at your home prior to the visit and ensure your contact information is up to date with the number you wish to receive a message. In addition, you may receive reminders about program events, meetings, or requirements, as well as other important information.

Holidays/Celebrations

Youth In Need will be the leader and driving force for future generations in helping children, youth, and families to realize their potential and positively impact their communities by providing opportunities to see other cultures and traditions in an inclusive environment. Our curriculum supports the celebration of the customs and traditions of all children. For information on how you can become involved contact your Manager.

****The use of balloons is prohibited around children because they pose a choking hazard.**

Clothing

Please dress your child in play-clothes that are comfortable, washable, and suitable for all activities, both inside and outside. We encourage messy play, learning, and exploration! In addition, make sure your child has a full change of clothing during all program activities. Please mark all items with your child's name. Parents are encouraged to dress their children in closed toe shoes for safety and

comfort. Clothing should be appropriate for school. Scary, play, or costume masks are not appropriate to wear at school.

Weather

Licensing rules require us to go outside every day for a minimum of one hour. Please be sure to send your child with jackets, hats, and gloves suitable for outside play. We follow St. Louis Children's Hospitals Guidelines for outdoor play activities.

Personal Toy Guidelines

Personal items are often comforting to children and may assist parents in transitioning children from home to school. Items promoting violence or aggression will not be allowed and Youth In Need Staff are not responsible for personal items brought from home. Please talk with your child's Teacher if you have additional questions.

SPECIFIC POLICIES & OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Rest Period

Licensing requires that all children attending a full-day childcare program rest for a minimum of 30 minutes each day. After 30 minutes, children who are awake will be offered quiet activities. Napping children will be undisturbed for approximately 1-2 hours.

Safe Sleep Practices for Infants and Toddlers Policy

This policy ensures our compliance with state licensing regulations, which are in place in order to protect the safety of infants and toddlers while napping and sleeping. Families are strongly advised to apply these practices within their own homes to support the health and safety of infants & toddlers.

The General Requirements of Indoor Nap & Sleep Furniture and Equipment for Infants and Toddlers include:

1. An individual cot or bed with an individually assigned sheet and blanket must be provided for each child who naps or sleeps. An individually assigned sheet and blanket shall be provided for each child over twelve (12) months who naps or sleeps.
2. All bedding must be clean with sheets laundered at least once a week. Once bedding has been used by a child, it shall not be used by another child until it has been laundered.
3. If two-year-olds are in care, they shall be napped in an area separate from the other children so they can sleep undisturbed longer than the older children.
4. Sleeping equipment shall be arranged to provide at least a two-foot (2') aisle on one (1) long side of the equipment.
5. An individually assigned crib, portable crib or playpen must be provided and used for each infant and toddler. Stack cribs shall not be used.
6. With written parental consent on file, cots may be used for napping or sleeping for toddlers twelve (12) months and older.
7. Cribs and playpens must meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission and ASTM International safety standards for full size baby cribs.
8. The crib mattress or playpen pad must be sized correctly to the crib or playpen, in good condition, waterproof, and kept clean and dry, be firm, and maintain its shape even when the fitted sheet designated for that model is used, such that there are no gaps between the mattress and the side of the crib or playpen. Only tight fitted sheets should be used and must be changed immediately when soiled or wet.

9. Cribs and playpens shall be left consistently in place for infants and toddlers who use them for napping.
10. Soft materials or objects such as pillows, quilts, comforters, or sheepskins, even if covered by a sheet, must not be placed under a sleeping infant. If a mattress cover to protect against wetness is used, it must be tightly fitting and thin.
11. Cribs, portable cribs, and playpens must be free of soft objects/toys, loose bedding, or any object that can increase the risk of entrapment, suffocation, or strangulation. Examples include bumper pads, pillows, quilts, comforters, sleep positioning devices, sheepskins, blankets, flat sheets, cloth diapers, bibs, pillow-like toys, wedges, infant positioners, special mattresses, special sleep surfaces, and other similar items.
12. Blankets or other soft or loose bedding must **not** be hung on the sides of cribs or put under the fitted sheet. Covering cribs or playpens with blankets or bedding is prohibited. Only sleep clothing that is designed to keep an infant warm without the possible hazard of covering the head or face may be used during sleep or nap time.
13. In accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics; American Public Health Association; the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Childcare and Early Education and Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards, 3rd Edition--no longer recommended or believe it is necessary to swaddle infants. Therefore, we will no longer swaddle infants in our care. Infants will be placed only in approved sleep sacks and/or sleep clothing designed to keep them warm.
14. Sitting devices such as car safety seats, strollers, swings, infant carriers, infant slings, and other sitting devices shall not be used for sleep/nap time. Infants who fall asleep anywhere other than a crib, portable crib, or playpen must be placed in the crib or playpen for the remainder of their sleep or nap time.

Care of Infants and Toddlers while Napping and Sleeping:

1. Infants and toddlers must have constant care and supervision at all times including while napping. Home monitors or commercial devices marketed to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) are not to be used in place of supervision while children are napping or sleeping.
2. Caregivers must be alert to various needs of the child at all times while napping and sleeping.
    a. At least one staff person must supervise the napping area at all times and monitor all children for signs of distress.
    b. Lighting in the napping area must be enough to ensure staff can visually monitor children for signs of distress.
    c. Physical checks to ensure children are not overheated or in distress must occur at least every 10-15 minutes.
    d. Sound machines or music players must not interfere with staff's ability to hear a child's signs of distress.
    e. Smoking is prohibited in child centers at all times. Refer to Smoking Policy for additional information.

Daily Activities for Infants and Toddlers Must Include:

1. Supervised "tummy time" for children under one (1) year of age to promote healthy development.
2. A supervised nap period that meets the child's individual needs must meet the following requirements:
    a. A child under twelve (12) months of age must be placed on his/her back to sleep.
    b. An infant's head and face must remain uncovered during sleep.
    c. Infants unable to roll from their stomachs to their backs and from their backs to their stomachs must be placed on their backs when found face down. When infants can

easily turn from their stomachs to their backs and from their backs to their stomachs, they must be initially placed on their backs but shall be allowed to adopt whatever positions they prefer for sleep.

d. An infant must not be overdressed when sleeping, to avoid overheating. Infants should be dressed appropriately for the environment, with no more than one (1) layer more than an adult would wear to be comfortable in that environment.
e. When, in the opinion of the infant's licensed Health Care Provider, an infant requires alternative sleep positions or special sleeping arrangements that differ from those set forth in this rule, the provider shall have on file at the facility written instructions, signed by the infant's licensed Health Care Provider, detailing the alternative sleep positions or special sleeping arrangements for such infant. The caregiver(s) shall put the infant to sleep in accordance with such written instructions. *[Unless a written exception from a child's physician is on file at the facility, a child under twelve (12) months of age must be placed on his/her back to sleep. An infant's head must remain uncovered during sleep.]*
f. Pacifiers, if used, shall not be hung around the infant's neck. Pacifier mechanisms or pacifiers that attach to infant clothing must not be used with napping or sleeping infants.
g. After awakening, an infant may remain in the crib as long as s/he is content, but never for a period longer than thirty (30) minutes.
h. Toddlers shall be taken out of bed for other activities when they awaken.

3. Encouragement in the development of motor skills by providing opportunities for supervised "tummy time," reaching, grasping, pulling up, creeping, crawling, and walking.

Safe Sleep Staff Training for Staff:

1. Within thirty (30) days of employment and annually thereafter, all Staff that provide care for infants less than one (1) year of age shall successfully complete department-approved training regarding the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) safe sleep recommendations.
2. The training will be documented and maintained in each employee's file.
3. Upon Center-Based enrollment the parent(s) or guardian(s) of each child less than one (1) year of age will receive a copy of the Safe Sleep policy and will sign a statement indicating the receipt of the policy.

Transportation

Youth In Need does not provide transportation services, you are responsible for getting your child to the center. All children must be properly restrained according to the law.

As a reminder, and as required by law:
Never leave your child unattended in a vehicle, not even for a minute!

Emergency Contact/Child Release

Staff will only release your child to authorized adults. Upon enrollment you will complete the E*mergency Information Form* giving authorization in writing with the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of adults you allow to pick up your child. Children will not be released to anyone under the age of 18 years (with the exception of biological teen parents) without written consent and a state issued photo identification card. For your child's safety, it is extremely important that you notify

Program Staff immediately if your address, phone number, or emergency contact numbers change. The local police department or Children's Division will be called if, after several attempts, you or the emergency contact person cannot be reached in the event of an emergency.

In the event that we observe a parent/guardian using, under the influence of drugs/alcohol or in an otherwise diminished capacity, we are not permitted to release the child. We will work with the parent/guardian to find an appropriate solution by contacting another authorized person to pick up, provide transportation, if possible, and/or work with local law enforcement to ensure everyone makes it home safely.

Arrival and Departure

Parents are asked to have their child to school by the start of the ELC school day so that children benefit from all the services we provide. It is also important to let your children know when you are leaving and when you will be back. Parents should advise all people who pick up their children of Youth In Need's pick-up/departure process. Youth In Need is required to abide by all legal paperwork, such as Orders of Protection, Custody Documentation, Parenting Plans, etc.

Arrival Procedures

- Escort your child to their classroom and notify the classroom Teacher of your arrival.
- Sign your child in.
- Write down any special instructions for the day.
- Let the Teacher know you are leaving, this places the child in their care.

Departure Procedures

- Notify the Teacher you are there to pick up your child.
- Check your child's cubby and folder for items that need to go home.
- Sign your child out.

Attendance/Absentee/Late Arrival Policy

Attendance: ***Regular attendance required for each child's progress in the ELC program.***

- Please notify Staff before 9:00 a.m. if your child is going to be absent or late that day.
- We are required by Program Performance Standards to contact you by phone or home visit if we have not heard from you by 9:00 a.m.
- The phone conversation or visit will be documented in the child's file.

Center Absences: Parents must contact their ELC by 9:00 a.m. if their child will be absent for the day. ELC staff will determine if the absence is excused or unexcused.

- You can call to notify Staff that a child will be absent from the center or leave a note at the center or arrange to have someone else call the center.
- Excessive excused absences are defined as three (3) or more consecutive or five (5) total absences in one month (first to last day of any given month).
- Parents should notify Staff when circumstances change, and a full day classroom option no longer meets their family needs.
- Staff can assist families with needed resources, referrals and/or education in areas that are affecting their child's consistent attendance.

Excessive Absences and/or Excessive Late Arrivals: In the event of excessive absences or late arrivals (arriving after 9:00 a.m.) we will work with you to eliminate barriers that cause these issues. Excused/Unexcused excessive absences/late arrivals may result in termination from the Center program option and services may be maintained through the Home Visitation program option.

Late Pick-Up Procedure*

The hours of operation for the ELC full day and Extended day program vary from site to site. Please check with your Center Manager for exact days and times. Children are required to be picked up by their designated time for full day extended day programs.

Procedure for Late Pick Up

If your child is left at the center after their designated pick-up time for full day or extended day hours, the following procedure will apply:

- Staff will contact by phone all emergency contacts and individuals authorized for pick up. Staff will continue to contact all above stated individuals until child is picked up or arrangements are made for pick up.
- After 1 hour (60 minutes), Staff will contact the Family Support Division and/or the local police department.
- At the time of pick-up, the parent or the person designated to pick up the child is required to sign a *Late Pick-Up Form.*
- The parent or the person designated to pick up the child will receive a copy of the signed *Late Pick-Up Form.*
- **Three (3)** pick-up incidents are considered to be chronic and will be reviewed by the Center Manager, Director of Operations, and the Vice President of Early Childhood.
- Excessive absences/late arrivals may result in termination from the Center program option with alternative options being offered.

Home Visit Cancellation Policy

The *Family/Staff Agreement Form* signed upon enrollment states the parents will make every effort to contact the Family Educator if a scheduled visit needs to be cancelled and Family Educators (FE) will make every attempt to reschedule any cancelled Home Visits (HV). Home Visits will be conducted with the parent, Monday through Friday (7:00 am—7:00 p.m.), if there is no response to program contact after two missed visits, a drop letter will be sent giving one week for contact to be made in order to remain in the program.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILTIES

The Parent/Guardian Rights and Responsibilities is a list of your rights as parents as well as your responsibilities while enrolled in the Early Learning Program. You can find the complete list on the Youth In Need Website's Early Learning Page or click on the link above.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Youth In Need Early Learning Program Parent Code Of Conduct

It is Youth In Need's policy that the business of the company be conducted according to the highest ethical standards. In support of this policy, a set of ethics and standards of conduct are essential for Youth In Need. All Staff, volunteers, and governing body members are subject to abide by the regulations and Code of Ethics set forth by law and by the staff's professional licensing board, as applicable. If a Staff member is not licensed in the state of Missouri, they are subject to abide by the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

All employees and volunteers must abide by the following established standards of conduct. These standards include, but are not limited to:

1. Respect and promote the unique identities of all children, youth, families, and staff, and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of race, sex, gender, identity or expression, age, income, faith, ability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, and cultural background.

2. Follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, youth, families, and employees.
3. All children and youth must be supervised and not left alone while under the care of Youth In Need.
4. Positive methods of child guidance shall be utilized. Engaging in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, or humiliation is prohibited; in addition, methods of discipline that involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, and the denial of basic needs are not to be utilized.

The Parent Code of Conduct will include, but not be limited to, the following items:

1. **Parents will address the misbehavior of their children attending an ELP function or classroom in a positive way.** No physical or verbal punishment of children is allowed at an ELP function or classroom. This includes, but is not limited to, striking your child in any way, or cursing at your child at an ELP function or classroom.
2. **Parents will direct all concerns regarding other children at an ELP function or classroom to ELP Staff immediately.** It is never appropriate for a parent to discipline another child at an ELP function or classroom. It is not the intent of this standard to stop a parent from helping a child who is in immediate danger, but to use common sense in a situation where a child may be at risk of being harmed.
3. **Parents will treat ELP Staff members with respect and follow agency policy regarding disagreements or concerns.** It is never appropriate for a parent to threaten a Staff member in any way.
4. **If a parent has a disagreement or problem with another parent at an ELP function or classroom, that problem will be addressed with respect.** It is never appropriate for a parent to threaten another parent at an ELP function or classroom.
5. **When in the presence of children at an ELP function or classroom, parents will use language appropriate for young children to hear.** Cursing/swearing is not allowed.
6. **Smoking, including e-cigarettes, is not permitted by Staff, volunteers, community members, or parents within Youth In Need's buildings, offices, agency vehicles, employee vehicles when transporting clients for agency business, outdoor play areas, home visits, and all off-site program activities. In addition, smoking is not permitted in the visual presence of our clients.**
7. **To promote a safe, happy environment for our children, parents will address problems with other parents and Staff in private, away from children attending an ELP function or classroom.** No quarreling in front of children at an ELP function or classroom is allowed.
8. **To ensure the safety and health of all children, all safety rules, including but not limited to the following, will be enforced:**
    a. **According to the law, all children will be placed in appropriate vehicle restraints at all times.**
    b. **Parents will supply current emergency contact information to ELP Staff at all times.** It is the parent's responsibility to keep this information accurate, including changes in names, addresses, and phone numbers for themselves and emergency contacts. Parents must meet with ELP Staff every three months to update this information and provide the current information any time between meetings when changes occur.

In the event of a dispute regarding discipline due to a child's redirection, a parent may request an informal investigation of the situation.

Failure to comply with the policies outlined herein may lead to a staff member or designated Policy Council representative to approach the parent(s) involved. It is not our wish to exclude or terminate the enrollment of any child or family. If a situation arises, however, that places staff, children, or family members at harm, the Youth In Need Early Learning Program reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of a family if Youth In Need deems that the appropriate action.

**Parent Code of Conduct is reviewed and approved by Policy Council on an annual basis with the Family Handbook. See Policy Council minutes for details.*

GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCEDURE FOR CLIENTS, PARENTS/GUARDIANS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The Grievance Policy and Procedure is an informal and formal process for individuals to express and resolve their concerns and complaints to be heard, addressed, and resolved in a timely manner to the satisfaction of all parties. You can find the complete policy and procedure on the Youth In Need website on the ELP page or click on the link above.

Regulations

Youth In Need Programs operate in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

Department of Health and Human Service, Office of Head Start
Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS)
https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/

State of Missouri, Department of Health, and Human Services
Child Care Licensing Rules and Regulations
https://health.mo.gov/safety/childcare/

Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services
Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP)
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program

CACFP Eat Smart Certification
https://www.health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/eatsmartguidelines/pdf/BeAnEatSmartChildCare.pdf

Council on Accreditation

In addition, our facilities are accredited through the Council on Accreditation. Accreditation is the benchmark of quality among programs. Accreditation means a program has met recognized standards for high Quality.