



# PARENT HANDBOOK

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| All Families are Welcome                   | 4     |
| Purpose of Handbook                        | 5     |
| Philosophy of SUMMIT                       | 5     |
| Family Engagement                          | 6     |
| Tuition Policies                           | 7     |
| Custody                                    | 7     |
| Children's Records                         | 7     |
| Attendance                                 | 8     |
| Transition                                 | 8     |
| Weather Guidelines                         | 8     |
| Confidentiality                            | 9     |
| Non-discrimination                         | 9     |
| Medication Administration                  | 10    |
| Special Care Plans                         | 10    |
| Emergency Plans                            | 10    |
| Emergency Drills                           | 10    |
| Emergency Safety Response (ALICE Training) | 10-11 |
| Sun Screen                                 | 11    |
| Smoking/Vaping                             | 11    |
| Immunizations                              | 12    |
| Physicals                                  | 12    |
| Dental Exams                               | 12    |
| Illness (when to stay home)                | 13    |
| Accidents/First Aid                        | 14    |
| Mandated Reporting                         | 15    |
| Toilet Learning/Diapering                  | 16    |
| Valuables                                  | 16    |

|                             |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Curriculum                  | 17    |
| Schedules                   | 17    |
| Developmental Screenings    | 17    |
| Child Guidance, Discipline  | 18    |
| Partnership with Parents    | 18-20 |
| Meal Time                   | 21    |
| Nondiscrimination (USDA)    | 21    |
| Clothing & Footwear         | 22    |
| Rest Time                   | 22    |
| Toys                        | 22    |
| Social Media                | 22    |
| Pets                        | 22    |
| Mailboxes & Cubbies         | 22    |
| Video Recording, Photos     | 23    |
| Parties/Celebrations        | 23    |
| Communication via ClassDojo | 24    |
| Parent Transportation       | 25    |
| Arrival Procedures          | 25    |
| Departure Procedures        | 25    |
| Child Pick-up Policy        | 25    |
| SUMMIT Busing               | 26    |
| Home Based Programs         | 27-29 |
| Code of Conduct             | 30    |
| Conflict Resolution         | 30    |
| Phone Number Directory      | 31    |



## **Welcome to SUMMIT Early Learning**

We are happy to have you and your family as part of our early childhood education program. You are welcome to visit the center any time to share in your child's learning experience. This handbook provides information on programs offered within our agency. It includes policies that pertain to you and your child's experience with SUMMIT. Please retain this handbook for future reference.

This is such an exciting time of learning for your child. Over the next year your child will be introduced to many new learning experiences that will build strong foundations for school success. Thank you for trusting us to be a part of your child's journey as a lifelong learner.

If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to ask. We want you to fully enjoy your time with SUMMIT Early Learning.

## **All Families are Welcome!**

Our goal is to create an atmosphere that accepts and welcomes all families. The diverse family structures and the racial, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds of all children and families enrolled in SUMMIT Early Learning programs are not only respected but embraced.

The individuality of families is at the heart of an environment that is rich in learning opportunities.

We strive to provide a safe setting where parents and staff can discuss issues related to diversity with each other.





## **Purpose of this Handbook**

This handbook has been prepared to help parents understand the policies and procedures of SUMMIT Early Learning, Inc. Please read it carefully and keep it where you can refer to it often during the year.

## **Philosophy of SUMMIT Early Learning**

It is the philosophy of SUMMIT Early Learning that the primary purpose of early childhood education is to develop each child's innate love of learning and discovery. Our curriculum follows the principles and practices of top academic research that exploratory play-based learning during early years fosters a lifelong love of learning.

Our philosophy is that children develop at their own rate and in their own way, and learn best through play. Our play-based, child-centered program reflects the integration of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, self-sufficiency, and artistic areas of instruction to foster growth in all areas of development. Meaningful play encourages curiosity, discovery, and problem solving which allows individual growth and development of a positive self-image. We strive to provide a coordinated and progressive program of services and supports that balance structure and exploration and is interesting and appealing.

SUMMIT Early Learning welcomes and includes all children. We recognize the value of including young children with disabilities in programs with typically developing peers. We believe the benefits for all children are considerable and that all children can grow in an inclusive, diverse environment.

We believe in the importance of a strong partnership with families, for within that social grouping are found children's first and primary teachers—their parents. Children learn best when parents are involved in their educational program. The primary bridge between home and school is the involvement of family and community.



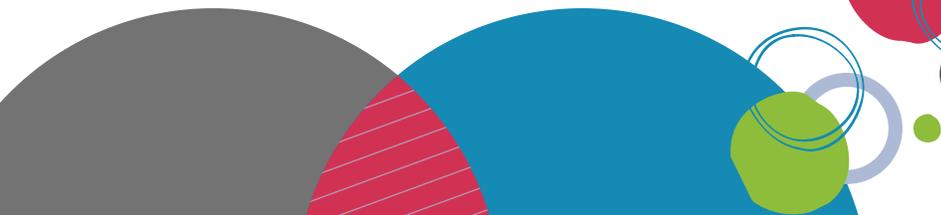
## Family Engagement

Family engagement in children’s early learning supports school readiness and later academic success. Families contribute to the success of their child’s educational and school experiences in many ways. You are encouraged to attend and participate in family events, field trips, parent meetings, and other activities. Parents are always welcome in the classroom as volunteers or visitors/observers. Your suggestions and opinions are valued and necessary to ensure a high quality program.

Families are engaged as equal partners in their children’s learning and development. Staff and families work together to build strong relationships that support information sharing about the children’s learning and developmental progress. Parents are encouraged to suggest topics for trainings, and participate in planning for family events, program activities, etc.

In addition to volunteering in the classroom and on outings, parents serve on the governing board of SUMMIT Early Learning and on the Head Start / Early Head Start Policy Council. Parents are encouraged to join parent committees and attend the various family events that SUMMIT Early Learning offers. Program evaluations completed by parents provide invaluable feedback about SUMMIT Early Learning services and assist the agency with strategic planning.

Family Engagement is an important part of SUMMIT Early Learning! Be sure to check with a family advocate, home visitor, classroom staff, or any program manager to see how you can be involved. We need you and so does your child!





## Tuition Policies

Information about Tuition and options for payment are outlined in the Tuition Policies, which are available by request and may be found on the agency website.



## Custody

SUMMIT Early Learning will comply with court-ordered custody decisions when appropriate documentation is provided. We ask that parents NOT request staff to participate in child custody hearings or determinations or have staff subpoenaed. The parent will be charged a minimum of \$850.00 when a staff person is requested to be present at court or receives a subpoena related to a custody hearing. The family's attorney must contact the SUMMIT Early Learning Central Office in Mifflinburg for documents. (There is a fee for copying records.) Staff will maintain a non-judgmental role.

Home visits and parent/teacher conferences will be scheduled with the enrolling parent. It is the enrolling parent's responsibility to notify the non-enrolling parent. We encourage both parties to attend but may not accommodate separate visits/conferences.

## Children's Records

Children's records are confidential and are stored in locked file cabinets. Classroom staff and supervisors have access to individual screening and assessment results to plan programs for that child. Persons outside of the SUMMIT Early Learning program may view the contents of children's records only with written parental permission. This permission is always sought before making referrals to other agencies.

Parents have the right to inspect their children's records that are maintained by SUMMIT Early Learning. If you would like to review the records, please submit a request in writing and arrange to view the contents in one of the SUMMIT Early Learning offices. Copies of completed Parental Consent Forms are also available upon request.





## **Attendance**

Regular attendance at school and home visits is very important for a child to become comfortable with a regular and consistent schedule. Federal regulations state that children maintain an 85% attendance rate. Attendance is linked to higher student achievement and school success. Consistent daily attendance helps your child develop a routine and will prepare your child to:

- Acquire the skills needed to be “school ready.”
- Maintain positive relationships/interactions with peers and teachers.
- Build a sense of self and confidence.
- Prepare your child to start the morning with friends, which is beneficial to your child’s social emotional development and contributes to their sense of belonging to the classroom community.

There may be times when your child cannot attend class or a home visit. The home visit will need to be rescheduled. When your child is going to be absent or when a home visit is not possible, please call the class, center, or home visitor so we can modify meal arrangements and adjust transportation plans.

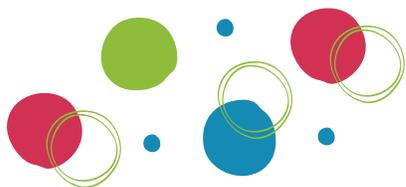
## **Transition**

The goal of our program is to support you and your child in the transition process into and out of our programs. This goal can best be met by communication. As you enter our programs, the information you provide helps us understand you and your child’s needs. If there is additional information you feel is important at any time, let your child’s teacher know. When your child leaves one of our programs or moves within our programs, we want to support you.

SUMMIT Early Learning abides by regulations set by the federal and state government for our preschool programs (Head Start and Pre-K Counts). Regulations state that a child who is age-eligible for kindergarten may not continue to be served in these programs. We have accepted these regulations as the standard for all of our programs, including child care.

## **Weather Guidelines**

SUMMIT Early Learning Child Care programs will close if the state of Pennsylvania declares a State of Emergency. There may be times when a delay in opening or early closing is necessary to allow for staff to drive safely. Parents will be notified, should this occur.



## **Confidentiality**

- All staff, volunteers, and consultants involved in the delivery of services at SUMMIT Early Learning must uphold the agency's confidentiality requirements, as follows: No information regarding children and families of children enrolled with SUMMIT Early Learning will be discussed outside of the work setting.

Information will be discussed within the work setting only as is necessary and related to program operations or business. Information about an enrolled child or family will not be discussed with any other family. Information concerning a child or family may not be disclosed to anyone other than the child's parent or guardian, except in the course of inspections and investigations by the licensing and funding agencies, in compliance with legal requirements.

Any breach of confidentiality is a policy violation and will be handled according to the agency's defined disciplinary procedures. All health information is protected under the HIPAA regulations. Health assessments and immunization information are kept in the main offices.

## **Non-Discrimination**

Admissions, the provision of services, and referrals of clients are made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP), or any characteristic protected by law. Program services shall be made accessible to persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available.

Discrimination complaints may be filed with any of the following:

- SUMMIT Early Learning, 14 S. 11th St. Mifflinburg, PA 17844
- Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, Centralized Case Management Operations, 200 Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 509 HHH Bldg, Washington, DC 20201, Customer Response Center: 800-368-1019, TDD: 800-537-7697, Email: [ocrcomplaint@hhs.gov](mailto:ocrcomplaint@hhs.gov), (within 180 days from the date of incident)
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 801 Market Street, Suite 1000, Philadelphia, PA 19107, Inquiries: 800-669-4000, TTY users only: 800-669-6820, Email: [PDOContact@eeoc.gov](mailto:PDOContact@eeoc.gov), (within 300 days from the date of incident)
- PA Department of Human Services, Bureau of Equal Opportunity, Rm. 225, Health and Welfare Bldg., PO Box 2675, Harrisburg, PA 17120, Inquiries: 717-787-1127, Email: [RA-PWBEOAO@pa.gov](mailto:RA-PWBEOAO@pa.gov), (within 90 days from incident)
- PA Human Relations Commission, 333 Market Street, 8th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101, Inquiries: 717-787-4410, TTY users only: 717-787-7279, (within 180 days from the date of incident)

## **Medication Administration**

The safest place for medications to be administered to your child is at home by you. Please ask your child's doctor to provide you with medications that can be given before or after the hours that your child is in care with SUMMIT Early Learning.

If medication is needed during SUMMIT Early Learning care hours, a one-day notice is best to ensure proper paperwork is obtained. Medication and appropriate paperwork must be given to either a manager or SUMMIT Early Learning medical staff before medication administration approval will be granted. If a dose cannot be given by staff, parents may give the medication in the classroom, but only on a short-term basis; not routinely. Parents must bring the medication in a labeled container and complete and sign the Medication Log in the classroom.

Non-prescription medications can only be administered by SUMMIT Early Learning if your child has a specific medical condition diagnosed by a doctor. Sunscreen SPF 30 or higher, non-medicated diaper cream, and Vaseline do not require additional paperwork. Medications are not routinely transported on SUMMIT Early Learning buses; only with special permission for emergency medications

## **Special Care Plans**

Certain medical conditions and/or medication administrations require the completion of a Special Care Plan by the parent/guardian and physician. These conditions include but are not limited to asthma, diabetes, seizures, and severe food allergies.

## **Emergency Plans**

Every center has an emergency plan that outlines staff responsibilities in case of an emergency. Each site has a shelter procedure in place for security, environmental emergencies, threats, and severe weather.

## **Emergency Drills**

Emergency drills are explained in advance to children and are held monthly to ensure safe evacuation from the facility.

## **Emergency Safety Response (ALICE Training)**

The safety of children, families, and staff is always our highest priority. We are committed to maintaining a secure and supportive learning environment by regularly reviewing and improving our emergency preparedness procedures. As part of these efforts, our program uses ALICE proactive safety strategies to respond to emergency situations, including the extremely rare event of a violent intruder.

### **What is ALICE? ALICE stands for:**

**Alert  
Lockdown  
Inform  
Counter  
Evacuate**

## **Emergency Safety Response (ALICE Training) cont.**

ALICE is an options-based approach, meaning staff are trained to use the safest response based on what is happening in real time.

### **How ALICE Works in Early Childhood Settings**

Early childhood programs require safety procedures that are calm, age-appropriate, and developmentally appropriate. Children will not be taught frightening details or asked to participate in unsafe actions.

### **In our program:**

- Safety decisions are made and led by trained staff.
- Children will be guided using familiar routines such as:
  - staying quiet and close to teachers.
  - moving to a safer location within the building.
  - evacuating the classroom/building if appropriate.
- Staff prioritize keeping children calm, supervised, and reassured at all times.

### **Staff Training**

All staff receive in-person training from a local ALICE Certified Instructor. This training helps staff respond quickly, communicate effectively, and protect children until help arrives.

### **Family Communication**

If an emergency occurs, families will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so. Please be sure your contact information is always up to date.

### **Sun Screen**

Teachers arrange outside time to limit any harmful effects from exposure to the sun, and apply sunscreen to use with all children before outdoor time. Parents must sign permission for staff to apply sunscreen.

### **Smoking/Vaping**

Smoking and vaping are prohibited in and around SUMMIT Early Learning sites and SUMMIT owned vehicles or staff vehicles used for agency purposes. Due to the impact of secondhand smoke, we also ask that individuals refrain from smoking and vaping during SUMMIT Early Learning home visits and other events, including outdoor visits, events and activities.

## **Immunizations**

The PA Department of Human Services requires documentation that all children enrolled in a child care setting be current with immunizations.

An Immunization Exemption form must be completed and signed if any immunizations are not received due to religious, philosophical, or medical reasons.

## **Physicals**

All children must have age-appropriate health assessments as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services:

- Infants to 24 months of age: every six months
- Age two to kindergarten: every year
- Once in grade six
- NOTE: All Health Assessments must be signed and dated by a health professional, 60 days from start date.

A notice will be provided to parents/guardians two months prior to when the health assessment is due.

## **Dental Exams**

Dental care is an important part of a child's health and well being. Early Head Start, Head Start, and Pre-K Counts programs require all children to have a dental examination, including a cleaning and fluoride treatment on a yearly basis (every six months is strongly encouraged).

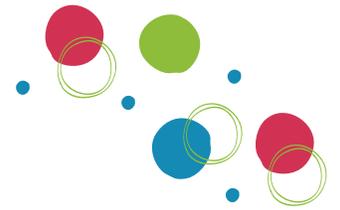


## Illness...& when not to send your child

As guides for exclusion for illness, SUMMIT Early Learning uses Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Programs, and Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Please keep your child home if the following conditions exist. Additionally, children will be sent home on arrival or during the day for these conditions:

1. Temperature over 100 degrees accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. (Children should not return to class until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of a fever reducing medication.)
2. Diarrhea, associated with illness, more than twice per day
3. Vomiting, associated with illness, two or more times within 24 hours.
4. Rashes of unknown cause with behavior change or fever
5. Difficulty breathing, severe pain, convulsions
6. Injuries or illness that prevent a child from participating in program activities (SUMMIT Early Learning will only exclude children on a short-term basis for injuries. Accommodations will be made for children with injuries as per the Americans with Disabilities Act.)
7. Loss of balance or muscle control
8. Vision disturbance
9. Scabies, lice, pink eye, impetigo; children may return after treatment has been started; children with strep throat can return after appropriate antibiotic treatment for 12 hours.
10. Inability to participate in the daily routines for health-related reasons



Children may return to care when the conditions listed above no longer exist, after the start of appropriate antibiotic treatment, or when the child's physician gives permission. SUMMIT Early Learning reserves the right to request a physician's release as a condition for re-admitting a child.

Staff will try to contact parents during the day as symptoms develop to alert them of the possible need for alternate care or a medical appointment. Together they will evaluate the appropriateness of continued care. Staff follow strict sanitation procedures to reduce conditions that foster illness.

Parents can help by keeping children home when they are ill and by reporting promptly when they have been exposed to contagious diseases.

If the child is seen by a healthcare provider, parents are encouraged to obtain and share written information about returning to class.



## Accidents/First Aid

For small bumps, scrapes, and cuts requiring no professional medical care, staff will follow Universal Precautions and basic First Aid procedures. Staff will notify parents of minor accidents or injuries with a “Boo Boo Report.” If a head, facial, or serious injury occurs, parents will be called immediately.

For a major accident requiring medical attention, staff will follow appropriate emergency procedures. Staff will:

- Call 911 immediately.
- Notify the parent or, if parent(s) cannot be reached, any other person on the Emergency Contact/Parent Consent Form.
- Request that the parent or listed person meet the child at the hospital.

It is vitally important that emergency contact information is up to date at all times. It is also important to notify staff if your child has had an injury received at home.



## **Mandated Reporting**

Under PA law, all employees of SUMMIT Early Learning are required to report suspected child abuse. Child Abuse in PA is defined as “the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a person who is responsible for the child’s welfare.”

When we suspect that child abuse may have occurred, as mandated reporters we **MUST** notify Children and Youth Services and Childline. SUMMIT Early Learning staff will work cooperatively with Children and Youth Services staff to support families receiving services from both agencies.

We ask that parents/guardians notify staff when their child has an injury or mark that occurred at home. This notification can be in a written note or phone call to the classroom staff. Staff will contact parents/guardians to inquire about how the injury or mark occurred.

If a parent reports an allegation of suspected child abuse against a SUMMIT Early Learning employee, we will follow strict procedures until the conclusion of the investigation. These procedures may include the immediate removal of the identified staff person, full cooperation with all investigating authorities, and suspension of all services for the child until the conclusion of the investigation.



## Toilet Learning & Diapering

Staff are committed to working with families in this basic area of growth and development. From toddlerhood into the preschool years, children are learning physical control of bodily functions and self-help skills.

When the parent or teacher believes it is time to begin toilet learning, a discussion should occur between the teacher and parent to compare strategies and ensure consistency. Some children will learn more quickly either at home or child care. The range of typical development varies.

Diapering areas are in prominent view, and staff use plastic gloves and/or wash hands before and after diapering. Disposable diapers are used to reduce the spread of bacteria in changing areas, and the changing area is sanitized with disinfectant solution after every diaper change.

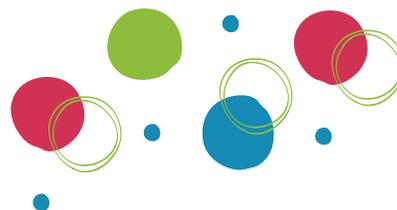
In our Child Care programs, parents are responsible for providing diapers, wipes, and non-prescription diaper cream if needed. Children who are using toilets will be supervised in an open manner by staff standing outside the bathroom. Children are encouraged to use self-help skills appropriate to developmental level when toilet learning and changing garments if an accident should occur.

Please remember to provide many sets of clothing during the toilet learning process. Regulations do not permit staff to rinse or wash soiled clothing. We will put the soiled clothing in plastic bags for parents to pick up at the end of the day.

Diapers are available for children enrolled in Early Head Start and Head Start when they are attending classroom and family events. Parents who want to furnish their own diapers can make arrangements with their child's teachers.

### Valuables

All vehicles on the property should be locked. SUMMIT Early Learning is not responsible for valuables left on the property. Staff, volunteer, and parent purses, backpacks, etc. must be kept out of reach of children at all times. There is a designated area for these types of items in each classroom.



## Curriculum

The Creative Curriculum is used for children birth to age five. Lesson plans incorporate the PA Early Learning Standards for children birth to five. Home-based programs for birth to three use Growing Great Kids, a nationally recognized, research-based, practice-informed curriculum.

SUMMIT Early Learning uses Teaching Strategies GOLD for individual child assessment. Assessments are based on ongoing observations with formal assessments completed three times per year. During parent/teacher conferences or home visits, assessment information is reviewed with parents to gain input and plan goals for their children, supporting development towards school readiness.

## Schedules

Each classroom posts a daily schedule, including times for free play and structured activities both inside and outdoors. Please take the time to review the schedule posted in your child's classroom and speak with the teacher with any questions you may have.

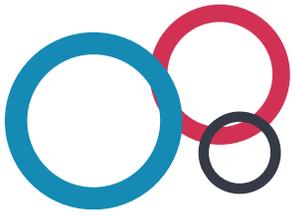
## Developmental Screenings

All children birth to age five are screened for development indicators, and results are shared with parents. If further screening is indicated, the parents will be informed. If the parent provides written permission, SUMMIT Early Learning staff will make a referral for further evaluation by the local early intervention provider.

When and if a child is identified as qualifying for early intervention services, parents are invited and encouraged to be a part of the intervention team, which will design an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

We are committed to working closely with parents and early intervention professionals so that seamless services are provided, not only in the child's best interest developmentally, but also that meet the needs of the family and the program.





## Child Guidance & Discipline

### Partnership with Parents

Providing quality early education is complex and we have therefore established policies and procedures to be sure that programs are provided consistently while still ensuring individualized services.

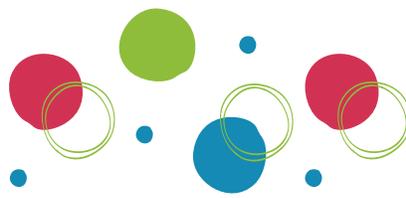
Our staff are highly motivated, well-supervised, and encouraged to grow professionally through ongoing training opportunities. However, we know that parents are a child's first and most important teacher. Since you know your child best and are quick to sense changes, we ask that you come to us with any concerns about your child. Your concerns are important to us and will be taken seriously.

Philosophy of Commitment: SUMMIT Early Learning is committed to meeting the needs of the families we serve. We know that children's needs vary and that families have various abilities, preferences, and comfort levels with regard to assistance and resources.

Our goals of individual adjustment and development are met by staff partnering with parents to achieve the desired outcomes for children. While this commitment to individual families remains fundamental, we are mindful of the needs of all parents and children we serve.

In an effort to encourage the development and enhancement of social skills, we use a social/emotional curriculum, Second Step, and the Positive Behavior & Interventions Support (PBIS) system is utilized in all preschool classrooms, which is enhanced with family involvement.





SUMMIT also uses Positive Child Guidance practices based on “The Pyramid Model” for Promoting the Social Emotional Competence of Young Children.

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) is a research-based strategy that supports behavior and social skills development in the classrooms. It involves the use of a three tiered Teaching Pyramid Model from the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. PBIS is part of our Approach to Positive Child Guidance.

It is expected that staff build their daily routine and embed the PBIS model into every day. The routine includes the following: building positive relationships with children and staff, building supportive environment that include visual supports, teaching of social skills and, when necessary, the use of positive strategies to deal with challenging behavior.

SUMMIT Early Learning provides a learning community that promotes the positive growth of intellectual ability and social skills. For the learning community to be effective, the behavior of all children toward teachers and peers must be acceptable and appropriate. The following types of behavior are not acceptable:

- Behavior that harms, distresses, or places another child in danger
- Behavior that interferes with the effectiveness of SUMMIT’s learning program
- Behavior that is not responsive to the direction of teachers



When there is a pattern of persistent behavior that is not responding to typical classroom child guidance, the following steps will take place. Please note all cases are individual and therefore, steps may vary slightly.

Concerns Identified: Partner with parents to develop an individualized plan that includes home and school working together to develop strategies to support positive child guidance. Parent conferences will include a review of the effectiveness of strategies.

Observation: If a child is still having behavior challenges, an observation will be conducted by the Disabilities/Mental Health Specialist who will develop additional strategies with the parents and teaching team to implement for the child.

Referral: Dependent upon observation and goal planning, there are times when we would recommend additional professional help from outside the agency. Parents will be provided with assistance to obtain behavioral supports and a timeline for outside support from a behavioral health provider to be implemented into the classroom.

Termination of service: Child Care services only: If, during the follow-up period, there had been no significant change in behavior, or if the recommended plan of action cannot be carried out with the resources available to SUMMIT Early Learning, or the parents choose not to seek outside help, services to the child will be terminated.

Parents are informed, verbally and in writing, of the recommendation and the timeline for ending services. The notification includes the following information: specific reasons for termination and the option to request a hearing within 10 days, in writing, with a special ad hoc committee of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will make the final decision. Families that receive child care subsidies have the right to appeal to the Department of Human Services, and that SUMMIT continue to be available to refer the family for additional services.

Non child care programs: If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, SUMMIT Early Learning staff will help the child return to full participation in all program activities as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety in alignment with our plan to reduce suspension and expulsion. SUMMIT Early Learning has the right to terminate or suspend services at any time if we are concerned that continued services jeopardize the safety of children or employees in the center. (Exception: Head Start will not disenroll a child. Home-based or virtual services will be offered to the child and family.)

## Meal Time

SUMMIT Early Learning provides nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and snacks following the nutritional and non-discriminatory standards of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Meals are served family style. All children are encouraged to try all foods served to develop good eating habits. Menus are provided to parents and may offer suggestions for menus to include cultural and ethnic preferences and to broaden the children's food experiences.

It is the parent's responsibility to make staff aware of any food allergies so that a substitute may be offered. Parents are required to provide a statement from a physician to document allergies. Parents may not send food from home to the center/classroom.

## Nondiscrimination (USDA)

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

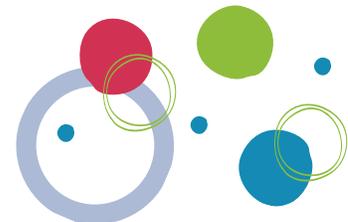
To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



## **Clothing & Footwear**

Clothing should be weather appropriate and comfortable for play, which can sometimes be messy; we paint, glue, play in sand/water, etc. Outside playtime is provided daily.

In the winter, parents should send their children with warm jackets, mittens or gloves, scarves, and hats each day, as well as boots for playing in the snow. In the spring, a light jacket is needed for changes in temperature.

Footwear should be appropriate for play activities and take into consideration the health and safety of the children. Sneakers are best. Sandals, preferably closed-toe, must fasten securely on the back of the foot. Flip flops are not permitted.

## **Rest Time**

Toddler and preschool children that take rests during their time at the program are assigned an individual mat. Children may bring in small blankets, pillows, and a stuffed animal if they choose. Quiet music is played to help children relax and settle into rest time. Most children sleep; for those who do not, alternative activities are offered.

## **Toys**

Our classrooms are filled with fun, age-appropriate games and toys to keep children active, creative, and engaged throughout the day. Because we have plenty of materials to support play and learning, we ask that children do not bring toys from home unless it's a special day planned by the teacher.

## **Social Media**

Employees are prohibited from being “friends” with or “following” parents and children who are receiving services from SUMMIT Early Learning on social media.

## **Pets**

Dogs and cats are NOT permitted in our centers or classrooms unless they are trained therapy animals.

## **Mailboxes & Cubbies**

Each child has a designated mailbox outside of the classroom. Please check your child’s mailbox daily for artwork, important notifications, and other items to take home.

Each child has a designated cubby for coats and backpacks and an extra clothes bin. Please ensure that your child has at least one full set of extra clothes appropriate for the season in the bin.



## **Video Recording, Photos, Cell Phone Use**

Parents may video record or take pictures of performances and special family events for Private Use Only. Since these are for Private Use Only, parents are prohibited from posting videos or pictures of children, other than their own, on any type of social media on the internet, including SUMMIT Early Learning Facebook pages. Staff and parents are prohibited from using their cell phones while in the classroom. We ask parents to refrain from using their cell phone while in the building.

Cameras installed inside and outside of SUMMIT facilities, and on buses, will be used for the safety and protection of children, staff, and visitors. Video footage is used for quality control; parents/families are not authorized to view the video footage. The privacy of children and staff is always taken into consideration. Cameras are positioned to avoid capturing private moments. Cameras are placed in public areas such as classrooms, playgrounds, and entryways. They are not installed in private areas like bathrooms or changing rooms/areas. Cameras on buses record both audio and video; footage and audio recordings are used for quality control, monitoring and safety purposes.

## **Parties & Celebrations**

Celebrations are an important part of our early education program. We often celebrate events that are meaningful to children and our classroom community of learners. Staff will not initiate activities that could be seen as religious in intent, that are not developmentally relevant to the child's age group, and that do not represent differences in a balanced way.

Children's discussions about their family traditions will be acknowledged and supported by the staff. Families are encouraged to come to their child's classroom to share family traditions.

Staff are prohibited from attending any enrolled child's family activity, such as weddings, birthdays, baby showers, etc. Relationships between staff and families must be related to program services and the professional support staff can offer. Parents may bring invitations for their child's parties for the classroom staff to distribute. Personal family activities are NOT sponsored by SUMMIT Early Learning.

**Birthdays:** Families are not required to send anything to the classroom to celebrate a child's birthday. If you do wish to send a treat, please make sure the item is on the approved list - see your teacher for guidance. (Due to allergies and regulations, we cannot accept items that have been prepared at home.)



## Communication via ClassDojo

### What is ClassDojo?

ClassDojo is an interactive communication platform that allows you to see how your child is doing in school. The intent is to “keep teachers, families, and kids connected.” ClassDojo gives our teachers a way to share with and inform families about the happenings in their children’s classrooms.

### Messaging

Messaging is an important part of ClassDojo. You and your child’s teacher can easily communicate with one another about matters pertaining to your child.

Our teachers and other staff may send class announcements and reminders, school events, health related notifications, information on virtual activities, notification of changes to routines, and one-to-one contact for general questions or concerns.

Teachers can also send real-time messages to parents using the Messaging portion of ClassDojo to provide parents with updates on what is happening at school as well as sending individual messages providing information specific to your child. Using this information is a great way to talk to your child about their day.

Staff will respond to messages at their earliest convenience. Please note that staff are not required to respond to messages before or after their work hours.

### How to Sign Up for ClassDojo

In order to participate, parent accounts can be set up with a Parent Code or with an email invitation. Both of these methods can be acquired through your child's teacher. ClassDojo can be used on an app for iOS and Android and from a computer at [www.classdojo.com](http://www.classdojo.com).

### **The safety of children is of utmost importance!**

In order for SUMMIT to maintain each child’s privacy and protection, only a legal parent or guardian may create an account for their child’s classroom.

SUMMIT’s children must obtain parental consent before creating their own account, or a parent or teacher must create an account on their behalf.

ClassDojo stores some limited information that may qualify as “Educational Records” under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). ClassDojo is also fully compliant with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

# Parent Transportation

## Arrival Procedures

The adult bringing the child to the center must accompany the child into the classroom, sign the child in, and be certain that a staff member is aware that the child has arrived. Children cannot be accepted before the scheduled opening time. You will be informed how to enter the center through security systems.

If your child is having difficulties separating, you may want to discuss strategies with the teacher to make the transition easier.

## Departure Procedures

When you take your child home, make certain that a staff member knows that you have arrived. Be sure to sign your child out. An adult must accompany each child off the grounds. This person is responsible for the child once the child is signed out.

## Child Pick-up Policy

No adult other than the parent will be allowed to pick up any child enrolled in a SUMMIT Early Learning program unless:

- Authorized approval is given by the parent on the Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form. (Current/up-to-date information is important!)
- Parent provides verbal notification (in person or by phone).
- Parent gives written permission.
- The adult is the child's natural parent.

The individual picking up the child must be 18 years old.

Unless a court issued order of custody or other court document that prohibits a natural parent to be with or take a child from a center, staff cannot deny the parent.

Anyone unknown to staff will be asked to identify themselves with a picture ID, such as a driver's license.

### Important Reminders:

- Please do not leave your engine running when dropping off or picking up your child.
- Please do not leave your children unattended.
- Please be sure that SUMMIT always has your current telephone number and contact information.

## **SUMMIT Early Learning Bus Transportation (Early Head Start & Head Start Programs)**

- We follow Pennsylvania Child Safety Seat Regulations.
- The bus can wait only a short time (maximum of 2 minutes) when picking up your child.
- Due to the changing nature of bus runs, parents should expect the bus to arrive 10 minutes before or after the identified pick-up time. (Our buses encounter a variety of unique conditions during our routes; please plan for a slightly early or late arrival. We strive to be “on time,” but we cannot guarantee it.)
- Call the bus phone or center if your child cannot come to school.
- Parents must model appropriate conversations and interactions with other adults at the bus/car meeting spot. Please refrain from smoking and vaping for the sake of child and staff well-being.
- Parents may not come onto a bus unless requested to do so by the bus monitor and/or the bus driver to support a safety matter with their child (for example, buckling).
- Children may carry only soft objects such as stuffed animals or blankets. They may not have toys, bottles, sippy cups, etc. because these objects may be dangerous in an emergency situation.
- Diaper bags must be secured on the bus. They can be strapped through the seatbelt of an empty seat, or the diaper bag strap can be laced through the adult’s seatbelt.
- When riding the bus, remain seated and wear a seatbelt at all times.
- Individuals getting children from the bus must be 18 years old.
- Pedestrian safety is important and training will occur at program orientation and throughout the program year.
- If a parent is not present when a child is returned home, the transportation staff will:
  - Help the child feel secure.
  - Notify the office that the child has not been dropped off at home and identify which emergency drop-off contact they will utilize.
  - If the emergency contact is not available, the child will be returned to the center and may remain there, or may be transported to the office to await parent pick-up.



## Home Based Programs

### Home Visit Format

#### Curriculum

We believe that parents are a child's first and most important teacher. While your home visitor will always come to the visit with a prepared topic of discussion, families are highly encouraged to select the areas of the curriculum they feel best meets their needs and ask the home visitor to plan around those topics.

We use the Growing Great Kids (GGK) and Growing Great Families (GGF) Curriculum Series. The GGK Curriculum includes such topics as parenting, bonding and attachment, health and wellness, and child development. Our main purpose for using the GGK Curriculum is to promote a sense of attachment for the parent/child relationship and provide best practice parenting skills for nurturing the development and growth of your child.

The Growing Great Families (GGF) Curriculum focuses on strengthening the family unit and providing support for family values.

#### Attendees

Everyone in the home is welcome to participate in the weekly visit times. However, at least one biological parent or legal guardian must be present at every home visit.

#### Activities

Home visitors will also provide activities for parents to do with their children during the home visit. The activities we use are to promote age-appropriate developmental skills and support parent/child attachment. Because parent/child bonding is so important and necessary, our home visitors will sit back and allow you to be the one to engage with your child.

For that reason, we strive to create a home visit atmosphere that encourages as much parent/child interaction as possible. While your home visitor will always come to the visit with a prepared activity, families are highly encouraged to select the areas of their child's development upon which they would like to focus and ask the home visitor to plan around those activities.



## Home Based Programs

### Attendance at Home Visits

Regular attendance at home visits is very important for a child to become comfortable with a regular and consistent schedule. Attendance is linked to higher student achievement and school success.

Consistent attendance helps your child develop a routine and will help you prepare your child to:

1. Acquire the developmental skills needed to be “school ready.”
2. Maintain positive interactions with the parent and home visitor during home visits.
3. Build a sense of self and confidence.
4. Support your child’s social emotional development and sense of belonging to a community.

When home visits are missed for multiple weeks, this may result in attendance phone calls from the Family Advocate (FA); or, if ongoing, removal from the home-based program. Missed visits may be required to be rescheduled in a timely manner.

### Phone/Email Responses

Each home visitor serves multiple families throughout the area and are not always readily available to take phone calls or messages. Staff will respond to messages at their earliest convenience. Please note that staff are not required to respond to messages before or after their work hours.



# Home Based Programs



## **Class DoJo**

Class DoJo is used both in centers and in the home-based program to support communication between families and the agency. Families using Class DoJo will receive notice of special events, community resources, and educational topics. We also use DoJo to connect with families individually to support program needs. Families are highly encouraged to sign up during orientation to get the most out of their SUMMIT experience.

## **Play & Learns**

The Early Head Start home-based program offers 22 Play & Learn events each year for enrolled families. Attendance at these events is optional, but we do ask that families RSVP in advance to their home visitor if they plan to attend. Due to regulations surrounding our food program, SUMMIT is only allowed to have approved meals, snacks, and drinks during events. For that reason, families are not permitted to bring outside food or drink (with the exception of water) to SUMMIT Play & Learn events or other SUMMIT sponsored activities.

## **Drug Free Policy**

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, concealment, transportation, sale or use of unauthorized substances on SUMMIT Early Learning premises, in vehicles, or during home visits is prohibited. Additionally, for the safety of all involved, SUMMIT staff (home visitors, family advocates, teachers) may end a home visit early if an enrolled caregiver or attending family member displays impairment (under the influence of any drug, legal or illegal, including alcohol or prescription medication, if the drug negatively affects judgment, attentiveness, or cognitive function) during a home visit, whether in the home, at a SUMMIT facility, or at a SUMMIT approved location such as a park, library, or playground.

## **Non-Smoking Policy**

SUMMIT is a smoke-free/vape-free/tobacco-free agency. Smoking, vaping, or tobacco use in a SUMMIT facility or space of any building occupied by SUMMIT is not permitted. This directive extends to all family events including EHS Play & Learn events, regardless of whether they are held on-site (SUMMIT building or grounds) or held off-site (park, library, playground, etc.).

## **Pets**

For the safety and security of all pets and people, families are asked to please crate or keep pets in another room (or outside) during home visits with SUMMIT staff.

## Code of Conduct for Parents & Families

Parents are the primary role models for their children. As parents we must be aware of how our behavior will be viewed by children. While on SUMMIT Early Learning property, parents, volunteers, and staff must conduct themselves in a manner that is courteous and respectful to themselves and others. Violence or threats of violence by a parent/guardian may result in termination of their child's services.

Examples of inappropriate behavior include:

- Threats to staff, parents, or children
- Bullying
- Physical or verbal punishment of a child
- Swearing or profanity
- Shouting and displays of anger, verbal fighting
- Bringing drugs, alcohol, or weapons to program sites or events
- Physical violence
- Inappropriate dress, including, for example, bare midriff or clothes with words or pictures inappropriate for young children.



## Conflict Resolution

Steps for parents to solve conflicts:

- Talk directly to the person involved.
- Involve a staff person to help you to talk to the person involved, if needed.
- If the conflict is not resolved, talk to the staff person's supervisor.
- If the conflict is not resolved, contact the Family Engagement Coordinator .
- If the conflict is not resolved, schedule a meeting with the Executive Director.
- If the conflict is not resolved, the issue will be given to the Agency's Personnel and Grievance Committee for review and final determination; the results of which will be forwarded to all parties involved.



# SUMMIT Phone Number Directory

Central Office: 14 S. 11th St., Mifflinburg, PA 17844 | 570-966-2845

## UNION AND SNYDER COUNTIES

Early Head Start-Snyder/Union Counties 570-966-2845

Lewisburg Children's Center 570-524-0926  
Bus—570-847-3931

Mifflinburg Children's Center 570-966-1851  
Bus—570-939-2495

Mifflinburg Elementary School 570-768-6225

Middleburg Elementary School 570-765-4848

Midd-West High School 570-837-0046 ext. 2210

Middleburg Family Center 570-765-7129  
Bus—570-541-1860

Selinsgrove Elementary School 570-765-5983

Susquehanna Children's Center 570-372-4082  
Bus—570-847-3152

West Snyder Elementary School 570-217-4379  
Bus—570-541-1860

## MIFFLIN COUNTY

Lewistown Children's Center 717-242-3032  
HS Bus—717-440-0911  
717-440-0910

Mifflin County Academy 717-248-3933

Strodes Mills Head Start 717-899-2080  
Bus—717-437-1199