



PARENT HANDBOOK

PRE-K COUNTS

14 South 11th Street
Mifflinburg, PA 17844

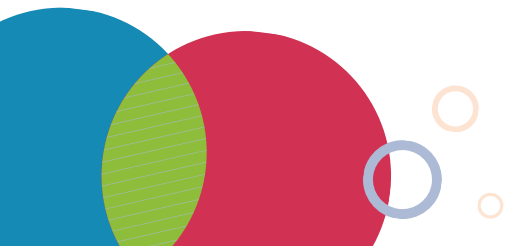
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Welcome to SUMMIT Early Learning

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.

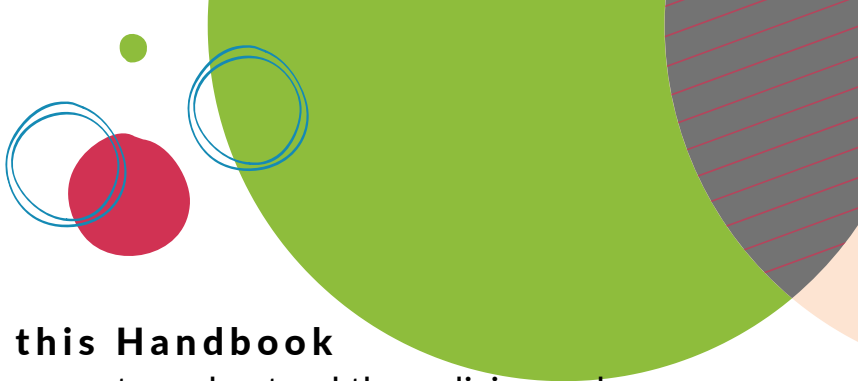
All Families are Welcome!

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!

What We Promise (PA Framework)	How We Do It Together (Head Start PFCE)	What This Means For Your Family
A Welcoming Place	Safe & Supporting Spaces	Your culture, language, and family traditions are visible, respected, and celebrated in our classrooms.
Open, Two-Way Talks	Strong Family Partnerships	We talk <i>with</i> you, not just <i>at</i> you. We use daily chats, apps, and text messages to stay connected.
Learning Success	Parents as First Teachers	We share child progress updates frequently. We give you fun, simple learning activities to try at home.
Family Confidence	Growing as Advocates	We help you learn to navigate school systems confidently so you can speak up for your child's needs.
Shared Leadership	Parent Leadership Roles	You have a real voice here. You can join our Parent Advisory Committee and help make program decisions.
Community Links	Resource Connections	We connect your family to local healthcare, food pantries, libraries, and fun neighborhood events.



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 is essential to your child's success in Pre-K Counts. Children develop important academic, social, and emotional skills through consistent participation in daily classroom experiences. Establishing good attendance habits in preschool helps prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Pre-K Counts is a publicly funded program. State regulations require programs to monitor attendance, work closely with families when attendance concerns arise, and maintain full enrollment to ensure that children benefit from the program and funding requirements are met.

Attendance Expectations

Families are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school every scheduled day and arrives on time.
- Notify the Head Teacher via a Class Dojo message before the start of the school day whenever their child will be absent, and provide the reason for the absence.
- Schedule routine medical, dental, and other appointments outside of program hours whenever possible.
- Plan family vacations during scheduled school breaks.
- Work collaboratively with program staff if attendance concerns arise.

SUMMIT Early Learning will:

- Monitor each child's attendance and punctuality.
- Contact families when a child is absent and no reason has been reported.
- Communicate with families regarding attendance concerns.
- Partner with families to identify barriers to regular attendance and connect them with available supports and community resources.
- Develop an Attendance Improvement Plan when attendance patterns indicate additional support is needed.
- Recognize and encourage positive attendance habits throughout the school year.

Attendance Monitoring

Pre-K Counts requires programs to monitor attendance closely. Absences may be considered excused or unexcused based on the reason provided and program documentation requirements.

If attendance becomes a concern, the program will:

- Review attendance with the family.
- Discuss any barriers affecting attendance.
- Develop an Attendance Improvement Plan, when appropriate.
- Continue to monitor attendance and provide ongoing support.

If a child accumulates 10 consecutive unexcused absences or unexcused absences totaling more than 10% of the enrolled program days, and the family has not responded to outreach efforts or the Attendance Improvement Plan, the child may be disenrolled from the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program in accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Education regulations. Families will receive written communication before any disenrollment occurs.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

SUMMIT Early Learning recognizes that children may occasionally need to be absent from school. Families are asked to notify the classroom before the start of the program day whenever possible if their child will be absent. The reason for the absence will be documented in the child's attendance record.

Excused Absences

An absence may be considered excused for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Illness or injury of the child
- Medical, dental, behavioral health, or therapy appointments
- Illness or emergency involving an immediate family member
- Death in the family or attendance at a funeral
- Religious observances or holidays
- Court appearances or legal obligations
- Family emergencies or other circumstances approved by the program
- Other reasons determined to be excused by the program in accordance with Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts requirements
-

Documentation may be requested for excused absences, particularly when absences are frequent or extend beyond several consecutive days. Acceptable documentation may include:

- A written note or email from the parent or guardian explaining the reason for the absence
- A healthcare provider's note for medical appointments, illnesses, or extended absences.
- Documentation of a court appearance, religious observance, or other official event, when applicable.

Unexcused Absences

An absence will be considered unexcused when:

- The family does not notify the program of the reason for the absence.
- The reason provided does not meet the criteria for an excused absence.
- Requested documentation is not provided when required.

Families experiencing challenges that affect their child's attendance are encouraged to contact program staff as soon as possible. We are committed to partnering with families to identify solutions, provide support, and help every child attend school regularly and succeed.

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, (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, (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, (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, 90 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 100.4 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.

Child Safety and Communication: Notifying us About Injuries

At SUMMIT Early Learning, your child’s safety is our top priority. To help us care for your child, please let us know if your child gets any injury, mark, bruise, or scratch while not at SUMMIT. You can notify us in person, by phone, ClassDojo, or with a written note.

If we don’t receive information about an injury, a staff member will contact you to understand what happened. Thank you for helping us keep every child safe and supported.

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

SUMMIT Early Learning is committed to providing high-quality, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that support every child's growth from birth through age five. Our center-based classrooms use The Creative Curriculum, a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that promotes children's development in the areas of social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts. Lesson plans are individualized to meet the unique needs and interests of each child while aligning with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for children from birth through age five.

To monitor each child's progress, SUMMIT Early Learning uses Teaching Strategies GOLD, an ongoing, authentic assessment system. Teachers regularly observe and document children's learning and development during everyday activities. Formal assessment checkpoints are completed three times each program year to measure progress across all areas of development.

Assessment information is shared with families during parent-teacher conferences, home visits, and other scheduled meetings. Families are encouraged to provide input about their child's strengths, interests, and goals. Together, families and staff use this information to plan individualized learning experiences that promote continued growth and support each child's readiness for kindergarten and future school success.

Schedules

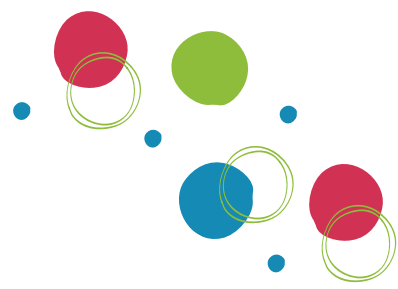
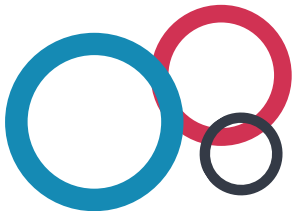
Each classroom posts a daily schedule, including times for free play and structured activities both inside and outdoors. Please take the time to review the schedule posted in your child's classroom and speak with the teacher with any questions you may have.

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

Our Commitment to Children and Families

Providing high-quality early childhood education requires a strong partnership between families and staff. SUMMIT Early Learning is committed to providing consistent, high-quality services while recognizing and responding to the unique strengths and needs of every child and family.

Our staff are dedicated professionals who are carefully selected, well supervised, and committed to continuous professional growth through ongoing training and development. We also recognize that parents and caregivers are a child's first and most important teachers. Because you know your child best and are often the first to notice changes in your child's development, behavior, or well-being, we encourage you to share any questions or concerns with us. Your input is valued, and we are committed to listening, responding, and working in partnership with you to support your child's success.

Positive Child Guidance Philosophy

SUMMIT Early Learning is committed to creating safe, nurturing, and inclusive learning environments where every child can develop the social, emotional, and behavioral skills needed for success. We recognize that young children are still learning to regulate their emotions and behaviors. Challenging behaviors are viewed as opportunities to teach new skills rather than reasons for punishment.

Our approach to positive child guidance is based on the Pyramid Model, an evidence-based framework for promoting the social, emotional, and behavioral development of young children. Preschool classrooms also implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to promote positive behavior, teach social skills, and prevent challenging behaviors before they occur.

Staff incorporate these evidence-based practices into daily routines by:

- Building caring, responsive relationships with children and families.
- Creating predictable, supportive learning environments.
- Teaching, modeling, and reinforcing social-emotional skills and positive behaviors.
- Using visual supports and clear expectations to promote independence.
- Providing individualized positive behavior supports when additional assistance is needed.

Families are essential partners in supporting children's social-emotional growth. Staff work collaboratively with parents and caregivers to encourage consistent expectations and positive guidance strategies at both school and home.

Behavioral Expectations

To support a safe and positive learning environment, children are expected to demonstrate behaviors that promote their own safety and the safety and well-being of others. Behaviors that may indicate a child needs additional support include those that:

- Present a risk of harm to the child or others.
- Cause significant distress to another child or adult.
- Persistently interfere with learning or the classroom environment.
- Do not improve with typical classroom guidance and support.



When Children Need Additional Support

Every child develops at their own pace, and every situation is unique. When a child demonstrates persistent behaviors that are not responding to classroom guidance strategies, SUMMIT Early Learning partners with families to develop an individualized plan of support. Depending on the child's needs, the following steps may occur:

Step 1: Partnering with Families

Staff will meet with parents or caregivers to discuss concerns, share observations, and develop an individualized support plan. Strategies will be implemented consistently at home and at school, and progress will be reviewed regularly.

Step 2: Observation and Additional Support

If additional support is needed, the Disabilities/Mental Health Specialist or other appropriate staff member will observe the child and collaborate with the family and teaching team to develop additional individualized strategies and supports.

Step 3: Referral for Community Services

When appropriate, SUMMIT Early Learning may recommend additional evaluation or support from community providers, such as Early Intervention, behavioral health providers, or other specialized services. Staff will assist families with referrals, accessing available resources, and coordinating services to support the child's success.

Program-Specific Requirements



Program-Specific Requirements

Head Start, Early Head Start, and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts

Children enrolled in Head Start, Early Head Start, and Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts will receive the individualized supports described above in accordance with applicable federal and state regulations.

SUMMIT Early Learning is committed to reducing the use of suspension and preventing expulsion whenever possible. When a child's behavior poses a serious and immediate safety risk to the child, other children, or staff, temporary removal from the classroom or, when permitted by applicable program regulations, a short-term suspension from the program may be necessary while additional supports are implemented. Any temporary removal or suspension will be individualized, limited in duration, and used only when no reasonable alternative exists to ensure the safety of everyone involved. During this time, SUMMIT Early Learning will continue to work closely with the family to support the child's successful return to full participation as quickly as possible.

Children enrolled in **Head Start** or **Early Head Start** will not be expelled or disenrolled because of behavior, consistent with the Head Start Program Performance Standards. If a child is unable to safely participate in the classroom despite intensive intervention, the program will continue to provide services in accordance with Head Start requirements, including alternative service delivery, such as home-based or virtual services, while working with the family and community partners to support the child's return to the classroom.

Our goal is always to work in partnership with families to help every child succeed. SUMMIT Early Learning is committed to using positive, individualized supports to promote children's social-emotional growth while maintaining a safe, nurturing learning environment for all children.

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



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

To protect the privacy of children, families, and staff, parents/guardians must:

- Avoid connecting with staff on social media about SUMMIT-related matters unless they have a personal relationship outside the program.
- Not post or share photos, videos, names, or other identifying information about other children, families, staff, volunteers, or program activities without permission.

These expectations apply to social media, messaging apps, online groups, and other digital communications. SUMMIT may address concerns related to online activity that affects the privacy, safety, dignity, or well-being of others or the program.

Animals in the Center

To protect the health and safety of all children and staff, dogs, cats, and other household pets are not permitted in SUMMIT Early Learning centers or classrooms. The only exceptions are trained therapy animals or service animals, or animals that have received prior approval from the Classroom Supervisor. All approved animals must comply with applicable health, safety, and program requirements.

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.

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.



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/adoptive 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.

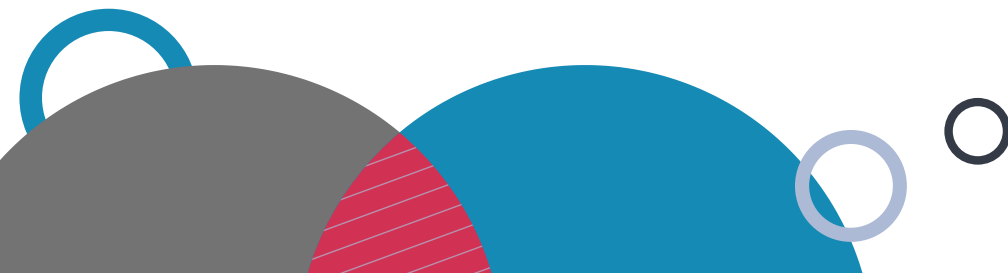


Conflict Resolution

SUMMIT Early Learning is committed to fostering positive relationships and open communication with families. Parents/guardians are encouraged to express concerns or file complaints without fear of retaliation. All concerns will be addressed respectfully, fairly, confidentially, and promptly.

If you have a concern or disagreement related to your child's care or services, we encourage you to address the issue promptly and respectfully using the following steps:

1. Talk directly with the staff person involved. Many concerns can be resolved through open and respectful communication.
2. Request assistance from a staff member, if needed. If you are uncomfortable addressing the issue directly or would like support during the conversation, a staff member may assist in facilitating the discussion.
3. Speak with the staff member's supervisor. If the concern is not resolved, contact the appropriate supervisor to discuss the situation and explore possible solutions.



- Contact the appropriate Coordinator. If additional assistance is needed, the Education Coordinator or Family Engagement Coordinator will work with you to facilitate communication and help resolve the concern.
- Schedule a meeting with the Education Director. If the concern cannot be resolved at the coordinator level, you may request a meeting with the Education Director for further review.
- Request review by the Executive Director. If a satisfactory resolution has still not been reached, you may request that the Executive Director review the matter and meet with the parties involved.
- Agency Personnel and Grievance Committee Review. If a resolution cannot be reached through the previous steps, the matter may be referred to the Agency's Personnel and Grievance Committee for review. The Committee will make a final determination, and the outcome will be communicated to all parties involved.

Families are encouraged to share concerns as they arise so that issues can be resolved collaboratively and in the best interest of the children and families we serve.

Nothing in this conflict resolution process limits a parent/guardian's right to file a complaint with the appropriate licensing, regulatory, or funding agency at any time, including the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), or the Office of Head Start, as applicable.



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

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