Vail Community Programs

Parent Handbook

Early Childhood, Kinderplus,

Out of School Time, Vail Discovery Camp &

Kinder Discovery Camp

Mission: *We offer innovative community programs that enrich learners of all ages.*

Vision: *Our vision is a community filled with creative and diverse opportunities for discovery and learning for everyone.*

Core Values: *Discovery, Opportunities for Learning and Growth for All, Respect, Interdependency, and Success*

Community Programs District Office *13801 E. Benson Highway, Suite B * Post Office Box 800 * Vail, AZ 85641

Linda Kubiak, Community Programs Director-Phone (520) 879-2032 or kubiakl@vailschooldistrict.org

www.vailkids.org

Important Phone Numbers

Program Coordinator - Sharon Taddeo: 879-3931 or taddeos@vailschooldistrict.org

Community Programs Finance Coordinator: 879-2030

Billing Information: 879-3976 or 879-3938

Free or Reduced Lunch Program: 879- 2072 or 879-2015

Enrichment Programs –Early Childhood and Out of School Time

Acacia:

(520) 879-2268 **Address: 12955 E. Colossal Cave Rd., Vail, AZ 85641**

Cottonwood:

(520) 879-2660 **Address: 9950 E. Rees Loop, Tucson, AZ 85747**

Copper Ridge:

(520) 879-3761 **Address: 17650 S. Canyon Edge Trl., Corona De Tucson, AZ 85641**

Desert Willow:

(520) 879-2313 **Address: 9400 E. Esmond Loop, Tucson, AZ 85747**

Esmond Station:

(520) 879-3444 **Address: 9400 S. Atterbury Wash Way, Tucson, AZ 85747**

Mesquite:

(520) 879-2184 **Address: 9455 E. Rita Rd., Tucson, AZ 85747**

Ocotillo Ridge:

(520) 879-3660 **Address: 10170 S. White Lightning Vail, AZ 85641**

Senita Valley:

(520) 879-3185 **Address: 10750 E. Bilby Rd., Tucson, AZ 85747**

Sycamore:

(520) 879-2579 **Address: 16701 S. Houghton, Vail, AZ 85641**

Enrichment Program Components

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

Skill 1. Focus & Self Control
Children need this skill in order to achieve their goals, especially in a world that is filled with distractions and information overload. It involves paying attention, remembering the rules, thinking flexibly and exercising self-control.

Skill 2. Perspective Taking
Perspective goes far beyond empathy: it involves figuring out what others think and feel, and forms the basis of children understanding their parents', teachers' and friends' intentions. Children who can take others' perspectives are also much less likely to get involved in conflicts.

Skill 3. Communicating
Communicating is much more than understanding language, speaking, reading and writing – it is the skill of determining what one wants to communicate and realizing how our communications will be understood by others. It is the skill that teachers and employers feel is most lacking today.

Skill 4. Making Connections
Making connections is at the heart of learning—figuring out what's the same, what's different and sorting these things into categories. Making unusual connections is at the core of creativity. In a world where people can *google* for information, it is those people who can see the connections, who can go beyond simply knowing information to using this information well.

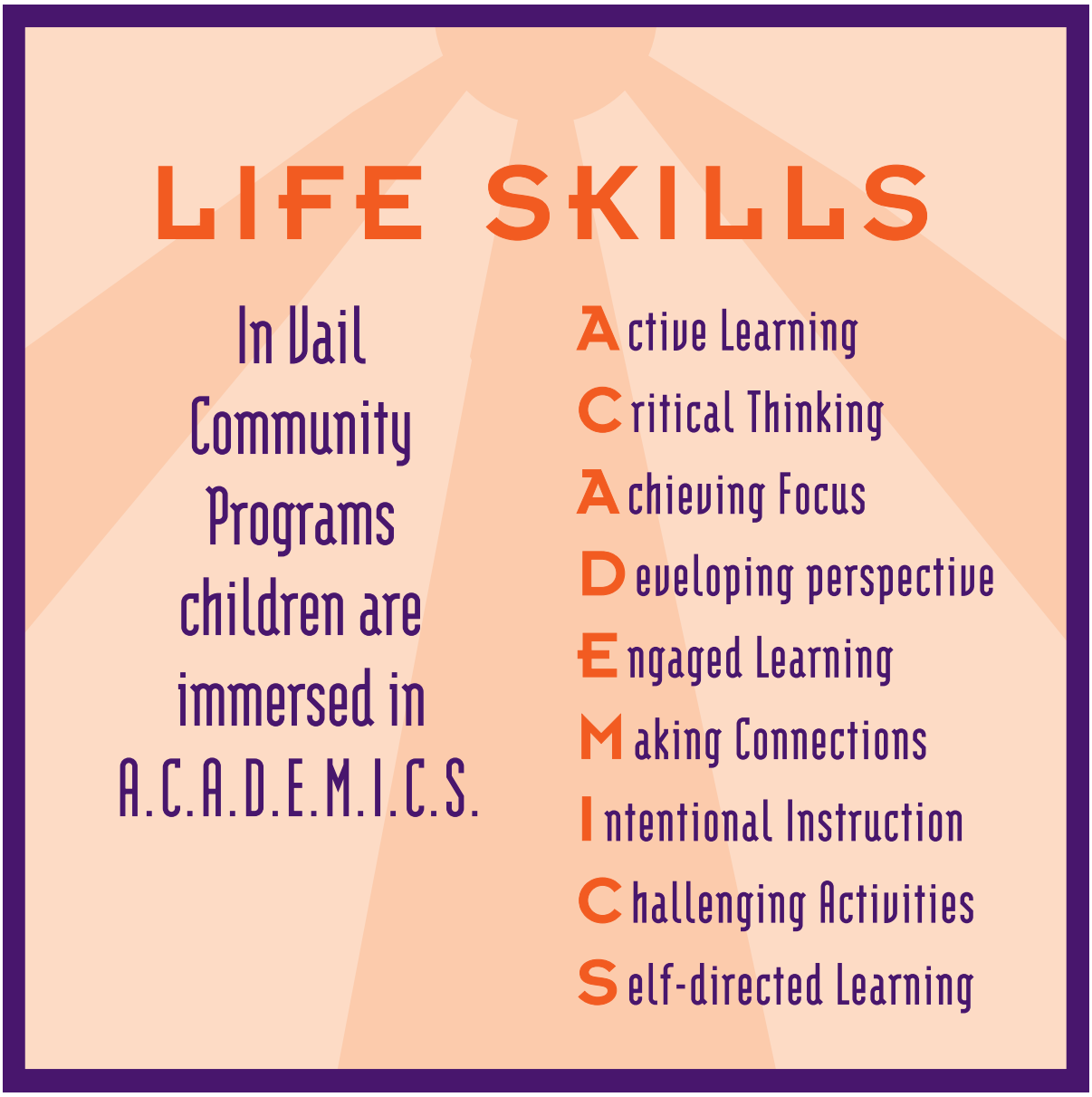
Skill 5. Critical Thinking
Critical thinking is the ongoing search for valid and reliable knowledge to guide beliefs, decisions and actions.

Skill 6. Taking On Challenges
Life is full of stresses and challenges. Children who are willing to take on challenges (instead of avoiding them or simply coping with them) do better in school and in life.

Skill 7. Self-Directed, Engaged Learning
It is through learning that we can realize our potential. As the world changes, so can we, for as long as we live — as long as we learn.

Enrichment Program Components

The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs



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Program Curriculum

Our curriculum adheres to Arizona State Early Childhood Education Standards. Children will study a broad variety of topics of interest and within these topics explore ways to develop necessary skills for reading, writing, math, science and other learning goals.

The environment is intentionally prepared for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, peers, and materials. Staff facilitates and expands intellectual growth by asking open-ended questions, offering suggestions, or adding more complex materials or ideas to a situation. Staff recognizes that children learn from self- directed problem solving and experimentation.

QUALITY FIRST

Our Early Childhood Programs participate in Quality First, a quality improvement program funded through First Things First and dedicated to raising the level of Early Childhood Education in the state of Arizona.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

http://firstthingsfirstaz.gov

First Things First partners with parents and communities to give all Arizona children the opportunity to arrive at kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed.

OUR STAFF

All staff participates in professional development and continuing college education courses on an on-going basis, staff are certified in CPR/First Aid and have passed the Arizona Department of Health Services background check.

Policies/Procedures

ENROLLING/DISENROLLING A CHILD

We require that families meet with the Director to review the program, and tour the program before enrolling. Once offered a spot, parents must complete the on-line registration process. You are required to meet for an individual orientation with your child's teacher. This is a time to discuss expectations, ask questions and share information with the teacher.

- Children ages 3-5* years of age, and able to handle toileting needs, are eligible to participate in our program.

- In order to provide a safe learning experience for your child, we require a plan to meet your child's medical or behavioral needs. If it is determined that a child's needs require specific staff training or assistance, a plan, along with the trained staff member must be in place prior to admittance. Please remember to inform us if your child already has an IEP (Individual Education Plan).
- Policy prohibits staff from babysitting for families, being listed as an "Emergency Contact" on the Enrollment form, or transporting children in their personal cars to or from the program while employed by Vail School District Community Programs.
- When disenrolling your child from our program, **a two-week notice is required.** Please contact the Site Director if you are planning to disenroll, so that we can assist you and your child in preparing for the transition.
- The program does not accept children on a drop-in basis. If you need to change your child's schedule, please contact the Site Director to find out if your request can be accommodated and to update your Enrollment Contract. **There is a $25.00 fee for each contract change.**

CELL PHONES

Please refrain from using your cell phones when dropping off or picking up your child. This is an important transition time, when staff may have information to share with you.

COMMUNICATION

Staff will communicate with families in a variety of ways including direct contact, notes, phone calls, email and newsletters. Each room has a space featuring information about the program, including posted weekly lesson plans and upcoming events. Documentation boards depicting children's work, curriculum objectives, learning standards and teacher reflections are displayed throughout the room.

CONCERNS

If you have a concern with anyone at the program, please speak to that person directly as soon as the issue arises. If your concern does not get resolved, contact the Director or Assistant Director. In the event that you are still not satisfied with the response, please call the Enrichment Program Coordinator, Sharon Taddeo at 879-3931 for further assistance.

DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

Each child is unique, with his/her own individual pattern and timing of growth and development. Different levels of ability and learning styles are expected and accepted. Please talk to staff if you have questions or concerns about your child's development.

Assessments are available in the areas of speech, language, physical and cognitive development through the Vail Inclusive Preschool (VIP) program. A team of specialists, including parents, will develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children who qualify for special education services. Children will attend the VIP program to receive intervention services. Please call 879-1754 to schedule a free screening appointment, or to learn more about the VIP program.

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

Because our programs are located on elementary school campuses, our preschool children have many opportunities to become familiar with the surroundings and daily routines of the campus. Parents of children in their last year of preschool will be invited to attend *Kindergarten Round-Up*. Parent/Teacher Conferences are another opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns you might have about the transition to Kindergarten.

KINDER DISCOVERY CAMP

This camp will be an opportunity during the summer break for children to become familiar with the school campus and daily routines, while interacting with other incoming kindergarten students. Children will be engaged in age appropriate and enriching activities.

Expectations are that students will have the opportunity to experience a kindergarten environment, visit the school campus, and practice their life skills. Some of the areas they will explore will be: practicing independence, self help skills, transitions, small motor skills, following simple directions and more.

Based primarily on social-emotional development rather than academic preparation, this program will help children become familiar with a classroom setting and group norms, while engaging in a learning environment that is supportive of children's comprehensive development. KDC will also prepare families to engage in their child's education and support their child's learning at home.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Our programs serve children ages 3 to 11, are open year-round, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. and end promptly at 6 p.m. Other programs are offered during the school breaks.

PICK UP/DROP OFF

Children **must be signed in and out daily** by an authorized person, in the binders/notebooks provided. Both the first and last name is required when signing a child in or out of the program. Children will only be released to the custodial parent(s) or to persons listed on the emergency card, unless written authorization from a parent is given. Phone authorization for release of a

child will only be accepted when a password plan has been instituted in advance **(Telephone Authorization Code.)** A picture I.D. is required of anyone picking up a child who is unknown to the staff. Persons dropping off or picking up children must be at least age 14 or older.

Preschool children are not allowed to walk to and from the parking lot by themselves.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents are responsible for transporting their child to and from the program. Children with special needs may qualify for District transportation services according to their IEP.

PARKING

To ensure the safety of all children, please observe the school's speed limit and parking signs posted on campus, and avoid the red fire lane zones and bus bays. Violators may be ticketed or towed.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily schedule is arranged to give children the maximum opportunity to fully develop their interests and skills. A copy of the daily schedule, including specific lunch and rest times is posted in each room.

VOLUNTEERING

Whether helping out with a special project, accompanying on a field trip, providing supplies, or joining us in our daily activities, we welcome and encourage parents to join us! For specific information regarding volunteering, please check with the Site Director.

REST TIME

A rest/quiet time will be offered to all children who stay throughout the day. The time frame in which it is offered is determined at each site in accordance with individual children's needs. During rest/quiet time the activity level for non-sleepers does not change. Children who need to sleep will be provided with a mat in a quiet area of the room, typically in the reading/library area. Please let your child's teacher know if you have concerns about your child's resting habits at school. We will do our best to honor parent preferences during rest time with the understanding that we will never force a child to sleep or force a child that wakes up to stay on a mat. We also will not make a tired child stay awake. Our rest/quiet time is guided by each child's individual needs.

HEALTH/SAFETY/MEDICATIONS

The safety and well being of each child is our first priority. We are committed to providing a healthy environment, and we promote this through hand washing, cleaning toys and tables regularly, and teaching healthy habits such as covering coughs and sneezes. Your child will be asked to wash his/her hands several times through the day, beginning upon arrival, before and after eating, when returning from outside play, after using the toilet. However, since it is

impossible to eliminate all germs, children will still get sick. Children need to remain at home if any of the following are present:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Severe coughing
- Pink eye, or other eye irritation or discharge
- Head lice
- Chicken pox, or any other contagious disease Children need to be symptom-free, without the aid of medication unless prescribed by a doctor, for at least 24 hours before returning to the program. A notice will be posted if any contagious illnesses such as pink eye or strep throat have been reported. In the event that your child should become sick at school, you will be notified to pick up your child. Your child will be kept in a quiet area until you or the emergency contact person arrives. It is to the benefit of all children that a sick child is kept at home. A recovering child is more susceptible to illness if appropriate rest and care are not provided. Children need to be picked up within an hour after the parents and/or Emergency Contacts are called. In the case of a minor injury such as a scraped knee, splinter, or nose bleed, the child will be treated in accordance with First Aid procedures and an Incident Report stating what happened and how the child was cared for will be sent home with the child. In the case of an emergency, parents or emergency contact persons will be notified immediately and authorized medical attention will be given. Information regarding allergies, medical conditions or special needs must be listed on the child's enrollment form. In the case of diabetes, or peanut and bee sting allergies, a separate form is required from your child's doctor, listing steps to be taken if an emergency occurs.

No over the counter medications may be administered to any child by the staff unless medical consent is given in writing from the child's physician. All prescribed medications must be brought in the original prescription bottle, with instructions for dispensing and the child's name clearly marked. Any medications given will be logged in on a chart with the time, date, and initials of the administering personnel, and kept in a locked cabinet. Parents must give the first dose of any medication. Please contact staff for the Medication Consent Form. Expired medications will not be accepted. Law mandates that staff contact Child Protected Services (CPS) if there is any suspicion of any type of abuse.

EMERGENCY PLAN

In order to be prepared in the case of a fire or other emergency, "fire drill" practice occurs monthly. Each location has a site-specific emergency plan in the event of a crisis or emergency situation. Lock down and/or evacuation procedures will be followed if necessary, and parents will be notified via phone and/or email.

Portable parent contact information is kept in a notebook easily accessible to staff. In the event that access to communication is interrupted, children will be kept safe until parents can be contacted. Evacuation maps and Emergency Fire and Law Enforcement contact information is posted in each room.

PESTICIDES/HERBICIDES

In the event that the facility needs to be sprayed for insects/weeds, a 48-hour notice will be posted on site, and spraying will occur when children are not on campus, in accordance to the manufacturer's instructions.

WHAT TO WEAR

THE BASICS: Please dress your child comfortably, and in clothes that can get messy! Provide simple, clothing that is free of complicated fastenings. (For example: overalls cause problems with toileting and independence.) Think of the messy materials and the activities that children love such as sand, mud, and water. While we will do our best to protect your child's clothes during extra messy projects, we cannot guarantee that they will not get dirty. Please provide a sweater or jacket as needed. **Label all clothing sent to school. Please keep a complete extra set of clothing in your child's cubby, stored in a plastic bag.**

SHOES: There will be occasions when we permit children to go without their shoes and socks if they choose, and weather permitting. If children do take their shoes off, we remind them to put shoes and socks in an assigned area, so that they are more easily found at the end of the day. Of course, if you prefer that your child not go barefoot, please let staff know.

WEATHER

During warm months, please provide a hat and water bottle with your child's name, and apply sunscreen to your child before arriving at school. If your child stays all day and you feel that re-application is necessary, you may bring a bottle of sunscreen labeled with your child's first and last name. You will need to sign a sunscreen consent form to allow teachers to apply your child's sunscreen while at school. We will apply sunscreen only if given written permission. Consent forms are available from the Director. In the event of a severe weather condition, safety precautions will be taken and parents will be notified, if necessary.

SNACKS/LUNCH

Mealtimes are an important part of our daily routine and offer a wonderful opportunity to enhance vocabulary and language skills, reinforce concepts such as size, shape, and texture, and introduce nutrition education. Children will eat in small groups with adults either seated at the table, or positioned nearby to facilitate positive interactions. Staff will help children utilize self-help skills such as opening containers and unwrapping foods.

Parents are required to provide a daily nutritious snack for their child. Cold gel packs and insulated bags should be included to keep food items fresh. Staff is not allowed to refrigerate or heat any food items, unless it is in conjunction with a planned cooking activity. During the school year, children staying all day may either bring a lunch from home or purchase one through the

Vail School District food service program at an additional cost. Income-qualifying families are eligible to participate in the free or reduced cost school lunch program. Applications are available at the site or by calling Sodexo Food Services directly. During school breaks, when school lunch is not available, children staying all day should bring snacks, a sack lunch and a drink from home. Children will eat in small groups with adults either seated at the table, or positioned nearby to facilitate positive interactions. Children are encouraged, but never forced to eat.

FREE/REDUCED COST LUNCH

Income-qualifying families are eligible to participate in the free or reduced cost school lunch program. Applications are available at the site or by calling Sodexo Food Services directly. During school breaks, when school lunch is not available, children staying all day should bring snacks, a sack lunch and a drink from home.

WELLNESS POLICY

Children who are well nourished learn better. A well-nourished, healthy child is one who eats plenty of fruits and vegetables, lean meats and beans, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. A healthy child is one who gets plenty of physical activity and rest. Children who learn healthy habits at a young age are more likely to continue healthy habits into adulthood. In our program we follow the Vail School District Wellness Policy, which includes regulations for foods given to children during the school day, as well as policies related to nutrition education and physical activity. The policy specifically prohibits school personnel from serving children soda, candy, deep-fried foods, or foods high in fat.

NUT-FREE ZONES

Due to an increase in cases of childhood peanut allergies, some of our sites are either completely peanut-free or have a designated peanut-free area where children with peanut or other nut allergies eat. Depending on the severity and type of allergic reaction, some nuts such as almonds, cashews, walnuts, pecans, etc., may be allowed. Nut-free zones may be established at any time in our program. Parents will be notified of this status.

BIRTHDAYS AND SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

Being a part of a community means celebrating special days and events together, and creating classroom traditions is fun and exciting for children. Each class may celebrate birthdays a little bit differently, so please talk with your child's teacher before making any plans. We must follow the Vail School District Wellness Policy, so providing sugary treats during program hours is not an option. In addition to what the teacher has planned, you are welcome to bring a healthy snack or a special book for your child's special day. Invitations to parties may not be distributed in the program, since the loss or exclusion of an invitation can cause distress.

In addition, each site will plan some evening or weekend events so that staff, parents and children have the opportunity to get to know each other better without the hustle and bustle of daily routines. Many of these events will involve the sharing of meals and/or displays by children.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an exciting way for children to participate in learning experiences outside of the classroom. Vail Unified School District buses and drivers will be used for transportation to and from all field trips. Parents must sign a permission form in order for a child to attend a field trip. All children and families are invited to attend field trips or special events. Information regarding these special days will be sent home in advance. Any costs, associated with field trips, other than transportation, are in addition to your regular fees.

PROGRAM DIRECTORY

Preschool is a wonderful time to build new friendships. You will be invited to share your contact information to be published in a Site Family Directory. This will assist you with arranging for play dates and activities outside of school hours. Only families filling out the directory permission form will be included in the directory.

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOTAPING

Photographs of children, family members and staff are displayed in every room. Documenting class projects and special events through pictures or videos provides a visual record of long-term projects and allows parents the opportunity to see what activities children are involved in on a daily basis. These pictures may be used in newsletters, weekly emails, and handbooks, on the Community Programs Facebook page and at community events. *Community Programs may photograph your family (parents, children, etc.) and/or use your image for publicity/media purposes in newspapers, on-line, TV, brochures, District reports, news releases and videos.* To decline consent to the above, please complete and submit the Visual Image Consent Form to the Director when registering for the program.

TELEVISION/MOVIES/VIDEO GAMES/TOYS

When attending our program, we want children involved in activities that they may not get the opportunity to experience elsewhere. Children are discouraged from bringing valuable toys and electronic games to school. No toy guns or weapons are allowed. **The program does not take responsibility for damaged, lost or stolen items.**

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

Staff guide and redirect children to help them learn to cooperate with their peers. Staff involve children in decision-making and problem solving when conflicts arise. Staff acknowledges appropriate behavior and uses positive guidance techniques.

Conflict provides us with an opportunity to help children develop problem-solving skills, such as brainstorming, negotiation, and compromise. Children are encouraged to resolve their conflicts peaceably and independently. In extenuating circumstances, a child may be redirected to another area or another classroom to help him/her make a better choice. You will often hear staff remind children to make a plan of action, think of next steps and use their words when facilitating children in conflict. The emphasis is always on communication, as well as logical consequences.

HARMFUL BEHAVIOR

At times, children will bite and hit. When biting or a physical incident occurs, an Incident Report is completed and notes are written to the parents of children involved. If the skin was broken or the injury is severe in any way, the parents will be called immediately. All incidents are confidential. Staff and parents will discuss strategies to avoid future occurrences. We encourage the child who has hurt to help provide care and comfort to the hurt child if appropriate.

Repeated behavioral occurrences may indicate a need to establish a consistent, individual plan for a particular child. This is done in partnership with staff, parents, and sometimes with an outside professional. Please do not address the child or the child's parents. Refer to the Adult Code of Conduct.

If harmful and/or dangerous behavior persists, it may be that the child needs a different type of environment to flourish. Parents will be notified if a child is endangering the health and safety of him/ herself or others. Continued inappropriate behavior will result in loss of services. Children will be dismissed or suspended from the program with no warning for major infractions where the safety of the staff or other children are compromised such as violence or evading supervision.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All incidents regarding children's behavior will be kept in strict confidence.

ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT

Staff, parents and other adults are role models for children. The words we choose, our tone, volume and body language leave lasting impressions on young children. Program services will be terminated if any of the following occur:

- Physical punishment or disciplining of any child including your own while on campus or on field trips.
- Inappropriate interactions such as, intimidation, threatening, yelling, or swearing in person, via phone, text, email or other social media.
- Smoking, using alcohol or illegal substances while on campus or field trips. Please support our efforts by being a positive role model to all children.

Payment Information

Please review the **Important Billing Information** carefully before signing the Enrollment Contract. The Vail School District Early Childhood Education Enrichment Program is fully self-supporting and relies on tuition from families to provide quality services. Funds generated are used for facilities, furnishings, outside equipment, supplies, materials, staff training, wages and benefits. When enrolling, families may choose to attend during the VUSD school calendar, or the year-round program. The tuition is prorated for the year, based on actual program costs, and is divided into equal weekly payments for your convenience. Holidays and vacations are taken into account when determining the fees, because of this, fees will be the same amount, week to week, regardless of days off.

As such, there are no reductions in tuition for days missed due to illness, absence of any kind, holidays, vacations or adverse weather conditions. If you need to change your child's schedule, please contact the Site Director to find out if your request can be accommodated and to update your Enrollment Contract. **There is a $25.00 fee for each contract change.**

PAYMENTS

Payments may be made online through the Family Portal, or you may send in a check, money order, or cashier's check. Checks must be mailed to: **VUSD Community Programs**, P.O. Box 800, Vail, AZ 85641. Cash payments may be made in person at the Community Programs office, located at the Vail Education Center, 13801 E. Benson Highway. **Payments cannot be accepted at the school site.** Please contact the billing department at 879-3976 for more information. Payments are due weekly, biweekly, monthly or annually **in advance**.

ABSENCE/ILLNESS/VACATION/ADVERSE WEATHER

Weekly fees are pro-rated for the entire year. **There are no reductions in fees for the days a child is absent due to holidays, illness, vacation, or adverse weather.**

DISCOUNTS

The following are available to families: **Families may access only one discount, if applicable** (includes any subsidies or scholarships)**.**

IBM – Our program participates in a grant for IBM families funded through the American Business Collaborative and Work Family Directions. Funding provides discounts to IBM families for registration and programs offered during school breaks.

VUSD – Vail School District permanent employees will receive a 15% discount on total fees incurred, if payments are current and made through payroll deduction or auto-payments.

Sibling – A 10% discount is given on the lesser fees for each additional child from the same family, when payments are made in advance.

LATE FEE

There is a **$3 per minute late fee** when picking a child up after the 6 p.m. closing time or after your scheduled program time. If additional time is needed, please contact the Director. Services will be terminated if a child is picked up after 6:10 p.m. on more than three occasions in one school year, regardless of the reasons for late pick-up.

If additional hours are needed, please check with the Director to see if space is available.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

We understand that at times, many families experience crisis and financial hardships. If you are unable to pay your fees or experience a financial crisis for any reason, please call the Community Programs Billing Office immediately to arrange a payment schedule. Financial assistance and scholarships may be available to families in need. All requests are confidential. Please contact 879-2030 for more information about financial assistance. Our program accepts payments from Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) and some military subsidies. Please contact the Billing Specialist at 879-3938 for more information.

Regulatory Agencies

Our programs are governed by the Vail Unified School District Governing Board, monitored by the Arizona Department of Economic Security and regulated by the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Our programs carry liability and vehicle insurance. All inspection reports pertaining to our facilities are available upon request.

Arizona Department of Health Services, 400 West Congress Street, Suite 100, Tucson, Arizona, 85701, (520) 628-6541