



Executive Child Development Center

At Diplotots Child Development Center

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Family Handbook

ECDC's Family Handbook
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We are pleased to have you join us and hope that you and your child will have an enjoyable learning experience during your stay at DCDC. This handbook describes certain policies pertinent to your enrollment with Executive Child Development Center at Diplotots in conjunction with the most recent Enrollment Agreement and Health and Safety Manual. The policies contained herein supersede all previous manuals.

If you have any questions, please ask the Director.

Mission Statement

ECDC provides quality child care and education to children of diverse economic and ethnic backgrounds from infancy through school-age. ECDC's multi-cultural environment cultivates a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to meeting the needs of our families. In the broader community, ECDC seeks opportunities to advocate for the well-being of all children.

Philosophy

ECDC has been founded on the premise that each child, regardless of circumstance, claims the world as their own. Respect, positive regard, and learning opportunities are cornerstones for healthy and happy families.

ECDC strives to provide a "community of inquiry" where children and adults are continually translating experience into meaning.

Guiding Principles

- Active exploration is essential to learning.
- Learning is a social endeavor, an exchange of ideas which results in deeper conceptual understanding.

- Foundational skills and achievable challenges create the stepping stones to future learning.
- Learning strategies must be developmentally appropriate, individualized, and personally meaningful.
- A positive and secure environment opens the door to true learning.

Program Goals/Outcomes

- Creating a safe, secure “neighborhood” community for all families.
- Preparing children for future academic success.
- Motivating and supporting staff to continue their progress towards excellence through continued education.
- Allowing children opportunities to fully participate in group settings while expressing their own unique individuality.
- Respecting and nurturing families in their efforts to raise caring and contributing members of society.
- Enjoying each other in our respective roles.

<h3><i>Description of the Program</i></h3>

Diplotots, Inc. has been in operation since 1995. Diplotots serves Department of State employees and federal employees. Executive Child Development Center (ECDC) is currently serving the Center as its child care provider.

ECDC is a non-profit, parent corporation providing child care for the National Institutes of Health employees (NIH) and federal employees. The members and Board of Directors are composed of community members and parents/guardians of the children enrolled in the child care program. The Center has been open and operating since 1975.

The Diplotots' Board of Directors was established in 1995 to oversee the child care provider contract and administer a tuition assistance program. The Board operates under the authority of its Articles of Incorporation as a 501c(3) charitable organization and in accordance with its bylaws.

The elected Board meets monthly to discuss pending issues with the contractor and review new tuition assistance applications from families of the center. The childcare director, PAC chairperson and Department of State liaison attend these meetings.

Tuition assistance is awarded on a calendar year basis and is based on financial need. Applications can be obtained from the center director.

The Board also actively identifies possible methods for fundraising to include participation in the Combined Federal Campaign, partnerships with local grocery stores and events held throughout the year.

DCDC is licensed by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education. The Center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Children

DCDC serves approximately 100 children of diverse economic and ethnic backgrounds ages six weeks through five years. During the summer, DCDC also serves children ranging in age from 5-10.

The children at DCDC benefit socially and intellectually from being in a multi-cultural environment which allows them to learn respect and appreciation for people of different countries and backgrounds.

Staff

ECDC is known for its highly qualified personnel. Our policy is to employ teachers of mixed ethnic backgrounds, and to provide children with a balance of both male and female teachers. All staff must submit and be found suitable for work with children by the Federal Protective Services Security Bureau.

Education is a priority at ECDC for all ages. In order to maintain quality personnel, ECDC offers education scholarships to staff members to further their knowledge and expertise.

Assessments and Parent/Teacher Conferences

Assessment is an integral part of any quality program for the purposes of identifying children's needs and interests, and for improving curriculum, teaching practices, environment, and family involvement.

In an effort to demonstrate children's growth, all children will receive a developmental screening within three months of enrollment at DCDC. Ages and Stages Questionnaires, which is a nationally-recognized, normative based instrument designed to be used by caregivers will be used. All results will be shared with parents/guardians. Ongoing informal assessments including observations, checklists, rating scales, and work samples will be collected and shared at your parent/teacher conferences. All areas of learning including cognitive skills, language, artistic expression, physical growth, and social-emotional development will be covered. If needed, these results will assist us in making appropriate referrals for services. Additionally, multiple data assessment of children will assist teachers in making sound decisions regarding curriculum content, daily planning, and personal interactions.

Semi-annually through staff meetings and literature searches, ECDC actively engages in a literature search for the most appropriate screening/assessment tools published.

Parents/guardians will be informed if the assessment instruments and procedures are changed. Parents/guardians are invited to help guide our assessment process to best meet the needs of their children.

Parents/guardians will be provided information, verbally or in writing on a quarterly basis with written reports at least two times each year.

All children's files will remain confidential unless a parent/guardian gives written permission to ECDC to release the information to a third party. Staff who interact regularly with your child will have access to ECDC-generated reports.

Program Evaluation

We are continually evaluating our curricula, policies, and procedures. At least annually, we will ask you to fill out formal evaluation forms. The results will be shared with DCDC's families. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome, so please communicate with us. No concern is too small!

Parent/Guardian Participation

Parents/guardians of children enrolled in ECDC programs are encouraged to participate in the program. We invite you to visit the Center anytime. Accompanying your child on field trips and sharing your cultural practices and home traditions with your child's class are wonderful ways for parents/guardians to be involved with their children's education. Please arrange these visits with the appropriate teacher.

DCDC is delighted to host luncheons, open houses, graduations, and other celebrations throughout the year. These are great opportunities for parents/guardians to get to know their child's friends as well as other parents/guardians. If you have any suggestions for an event, please feel free to share your ideas with your child's teacher or the administration.

Please check the bulletin boards and your child's classroom cubby daily for information about activities, projects, trips, and special notices. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to read announcements and return forms and field trip fees.

DCDC offers a list-serv to facilitate communication between the center and the parents/guardians by sending reminders and important announcements. You can join at any time by signing up at the front desk, adding as many email addresses as you'd like.

DCDC offers a student directory to assist parents/guardians in communicating with each other. You may choose what information to share with other DCDC families, or you may opt to not be included in the directory.

Committees and Boards

Parents/guardians are invited to participate on DCDC's Parent Advisory Committee and Board of Directors.

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is a non-executive, non-voting adjunct to the Diplotots Board, and holds general meetings several times during the year. The PAC coordinates teacher appreciation activities, helps the Board with its fundraising activities and conducts its own fundraising, and plans social events. Notices of meetings go out via email and are posted on classroom doors about a week ahead of time. All parents, volunteers, and staff are welcome to attend. The PAC is comprised of the Chair, at least one room parent for each classroom, and all interested parent volunteers. Board members, the Diplotots Director and Assistant Director, and the State Department Liaison often attend meetings and provide information of general interest to parents.

General Schedule

Calendar/Holiday Schedule

DCDC is open 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, including an all-day Summer Camp Program for school-age children. The Center will be closed on the following days in accordance with the federal government schedule, in addition to up to two professional days. There will be no refund or credit against the tuition fee for these days or for days we close due to circumstances beyond our control (i.e., electrical problem, flood, etc.):

New Year's Day	Independence Day	Thanksgiving Day
MLK Jr. Birthday	Labor Day	Friday after Thanksgiving
Presidents Day	Columbus Day	Christmas Eve & Day
Memorial Day	Veterans Day	

Inclement Weather Closings

When there are disruptions of the Federal Government operations, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will make announcements to the media as to whether Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are "open" or "closed to the public," or operating under an "unscheduled leave," "unscheduled telework," "delayed arrival," or "early dismissal" policy. During these situations, Diplotots will operate as follows:

Announcement	What Announcement Means	DCDC Hours of Operation
1. "Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN; employees are expected to report for work on time."	DOS Employees are expected to report for work on time.	Diplotots will open on time.
2. "Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN with option for UNSCHEDULED LEAVE or UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK."	DOS Employees who cannot report for work may request unscheduled leave for their entire scheduled workday. DOS Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.	Diplotots will open on time.
3. "Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN under a DELAYED ARRIVAL with option for UNSCHEDULED	DOS Employees should plan their commutes so that they arrive for work no more than xx hours later than they would normally arrive.	Diplotots MAY open up to xx hours later than they would normally open.

LEAVE or UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK. Employees should plan to arrive for work no more than xx hours later than they would normally arrive."	DOS Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.	
4. "Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN under a DELAYED ARRIVAL/UNSCHEDULED LEAVE or UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK. Employees should plan to arrive for work no more than xx hours later than they would normally arrive, and employees who cannot report for work may take unscheduled leave."	DOS Employees should plan their commutes so that they arrive for work no more than xx hours later than they would normally arrive. DOS Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.	Diplotots MAY open up to xx hours later than they would normally open.
5. "Federal offices are CLOSED to the PUBLIC."	Federal agencies are closed.	Diplotots will be closed.

The Office of Personnel Management will provide the following announcement to the media when a disruption occurs after the workday begins.

Announcement	What Announcement Means	DCDC Hours of Operation
"Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN. Employees should depart XX HOURS earlier than their normal departure time from work.	DOS Employees should be dismissed by their agencies relative to their normal departure times from work. For example, if a 3-hour "early dismissal" policy is announced, workers who normally leave their offices at 4:00 p.m. should leave at 1:00 p.m.	Diplotots will close xx hours earlier than our normal closing time. Parents may be notified by the center..
"Federal Agencies in the Washington, D.C. area are dismissed at a Specific Time."	DOS Employees should be dismissed according to instructions of the DOS Director.	Diplotots will close one hour after the specific dismissal time announced by the DOS Director.

These procedures are based on the principle that the business of the Federal Government is vital to serving the public everywhere, and we must do so without compromising the safety of our employees.

Early Drop-off / Late Pick-Up Policies

We will not be responsible for children left unsupervised before our official opening time at 7:00 a.m.

If your child is picked up after 6:00 p.m., you will owe a late fee of \$5.00 for each five-minute period, or portion thereof, after the scheduled time. This late pick-up fee is due to the teacher immediately at the time of pick-up. If your child is picked up over thirty minutes late, he/she may not be admitted to the Center the following day.

Enrollment

Eligibility/Equal Opportunity

ECDC is open to all children, ages 6 weeks to 10 years. Children are admitted to programs without regard to race, creed, sex, disability, or socioeconomic class. No discrimination is practiced in the treatment of children in the programs or in program administration or operation.

Priority Enrollment

Children enrolled in DCDC's federally-funded space will be selected from the DOS Child Care Waiting List in the priority given to DCDC by the Diplotots Board of Directors. Priority will be given in the following order:

1. Siblings of dependents of Department of State employees (when an existing sibling is enrolled in the Center from the same family)
2. Siblings of dependents of employees of other Federal agencies (when an existing sibling is enrolled in the Center from the same family)
3. Siblings of dependents of Department of State contractors (when an existing sibling is enrolled in the Center from the same family)

4. Other siblings of children enrolled in the Center from the same family.
5. Dependents of Department of State employees
6. Dependents of employees of other Federal agencies
7. Dependents of Department of State contractors
8. Dependents of those who are neither Federal government employees nor Department of State contractors

Annual Registration

Children in the preschool and older programs must be registered annually for the following school year. The registration period occurs in January and/or February.

Custody/Guardianship

If your family is experiencing custody concerns, please inform the Director/Assistant Director immediately and furnish the appropriate documentation. Legal documentation of guardianship may be required.

<h3><i>General Information</i></h3>
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Absences

Please notify the Center if your child will be absent on a specific day. You are responsible for paying the full biweekly tuition when your child is enrolled in the Center, even if your child is absent due to illness or vacation.

Addresses/Telephone Numbers

The Center must be notified if there is a change in your address and/or home or office telephone numbers. The names, addresses and phone numbers of persons to contact in an emergency (if you are not available) must be provided. The names and telephone numbers

of those persons authorized to pick up your child must also be on file. Please review and initial all registration record information at least annually.

Clothing

All outer clothing and change of clothing items should be labeled. An extra set of clothing should be available at the Center.

Children should be dressed warmly during cold winter months, including boots, mittens, and snow pants on snow days and days following snow, so that children can play outdoors.

We encourage children to wear casual clothing.

Toys

Toys may be brought to the Center if they are suitable for sharing with other classmates. The Center does not assume responsibility for the loss or breakage of these toys. Toy weapons are not allowed.

Birthdays

The Center encourages the parents/guardians of children having birthdays to participate and to provide nutritious birthday foods for a party. Please do not send candy, gum, or other junk food. Please let the teacher know when you are planning a birthday celebration.

Latex balloons pose a choking hazard, however mylar balloons are permitted at the Center.

Please be conscientious of the children in your child's classroom when planning a birthday party outside of the center. If you are inviting all the children in your child's class, DCDC is happy to put the invitations in the classroom's mailboxes. If you are not inviting everyone, please mail the invitations to the children's homes. Many families share their information in

the annual student directory. If a family is not in the directory, the administration will be happy to assist without sharing the addresses.

Extra-Curricular Activities

DCDC has several on-site extra-curricular programs that are in addition to the activities included in the curriculum. Payments for these programs are by contract between the activity's provider and the parent/guardian. DCDC will have an ECDC employee present at all activities except for private lessons.

Community Resources

The ECDC administration would be happy to help you with attaining resources throughout the community for many needs your child or family may have. Please feel free to stop by and speak with an administrator at any time. Additionally, DCDC posts community information in the front lobby and classrooms.

Translation Services

If at any time you need translation of documents or to communicate with a staff member with the assistance of a translator, please notify a member of the administration.

Grievance Procedure

Grievance complaints are best handled informally and expediently between the involved parties. ECDC staff are interested in providing the best service to your family, so feel free to communicate your concerns, no matter how small. The Director and Assistant Director are available to discuss any concerns.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Children who are capable of walking will be trained how to exit the building in an orderly manner during emergencies and monthly drills. These procedures will include establishing a “buddy” system, line drills, holding onto a rope, etc.

Non-walking children will be placed in evacuation devices such as evacuation cribs on sturdy wheels and will be rolled out of the Center to our assembly point.

Our child care staff will maintain an up-to-date roster of the children present. The supervisor will be responsible for verifying the safe evacuation of all children listed on the roster. Parents/guardians will not be allowed to remove a child from the Center’s custody until we have accounted for all children. Upon evacuation of the facility, no one will be allowed to reenter the facility until an official “all-clear” signal is given.

At least two times a year, DCDC will practice “Shelter-in-Place” drills where children will not exit the building. During the drill, all access to the building will be limited.

DOS Security will be responsible for physically checking all areas within the Center. Facilities Management will be notified of the evacuation and its progress.

If the telephone is not answered at the center, call back in approximately ten minutes since we may be practicing our emergency procedures. You may also leave a voicemail message and someone will return your call as soon as possible.

All child care staff and support personnel will be trained in emergency/evacuation procedures.

Safety Rules

Our Center has been designed to provide children with a safe and healthy environment. The following is a list of safety rules for all programs at the Center. Please be aware of them. Discuss them with your children.

- DRIVE SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY IN THE FIRE LANE.
- Do not leave children in a car without supervision.
- Supervise your children carefully while walking into the center.
- If you have made arrangements to have your child picked up by someone not listed on your child's registration record, please notify us with the person's name and relationship to the family. The person may be required to show photo identification.

Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act

All parents and visitors to the center must comply with the HHS/NIH tobacco-free policy.

41 C.F.R.

All parents and visitors to the center must comply with the provisions of 41 C.F.R. Subpart 101-20.3, "Conduct on Federal Property."

Nutrition

DCDC offers breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Due to increasing numbers of severe nut allergies, ECDC is requiring that nuts are not served at the center. This includes nut butter and candies with nuts. Soy products are acceptable.

For further details regarding health and safety issues, please refer to ECDC's Health and Safety Manual.

Medical Policies

Medical Requirements

Please refer to ECDC's Health and Safety Manual regarding ECDC's exclusion and readmission policies, which follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Please call the Center if your child will not be in school due to illness, and specify the illness. Diagnosed illnesses will be posted on classroom doors anonymously.

As your child receives immunizations, please provide DCDC with documentation.

Consent Forms

In an effort to maintain the most appropriate practices for each child and provide staff members with a visual reminder of such necessities, DCDC may post children's specific allergies, medical information, and/or dietary information in food preparation areas and within the classrooms with the permission of a parent/guardian.

Administration of Medication

The administration of prescription and non-prescription medication is permitted with prior written permission from the child's physician and parent/guardian.

Parent information:

- A separate medication order form is to be filled out for each prescription and non-prescription medication by the parent and physician.
- Prescription medication must be in a child-proof container labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the licensed

health care provider, the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and the strength of the medication and instructions on how to administer and store it. The first dose must be given by the parent.

- When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellents containing DEET are used, and these are applied only on children over 2 months of age. Staff apply insect repellent no more than once a day and only with written consent from the parent/guardian.
- Parents are to notify staff of any medications given before arrival at the Center.

Financial Policies

Budget

ECDC is committed to affordable, quality child care for all families needing services. Parent/guardian tuition provides the greatest source of operating income. Additionally, ECDC participates in various subsidy programs, including Federal Employee Education & Assistance Fund, a tuition assistance through the Diplotots Board of Directors and any other programs that you may qualify for. Other sources of funds are derived from fundraising efforts.

Tuition

Although the initial deposit may be made by check or money order, future payments must be made by electronic ACH debit to a bank account. Debits will be made every other Friday. If any debit is returned unpaid, you will owe a service charge of \$29 in addition to other amounts due. Unpaid late fees will be deducted from the tuition deposit when the child leaves the center. An ACH debit calendar is distributed annually, with additional copies readily available from the administration.

Receipts are available on a four-week or end-of-year basis when requested. If you would like receipts, please send a written request to ECDC. Flexible spending account forms and similar requests require 48 hours.

ECDC will provide no less than 90 days written notice to parents/guardians of all tuition and fee increases.

Tuition payments must be made if a child is absent for vacation or illness. There will be no refund or credit against tuition for any closures or late openings due to circumstances beyond ECDC's control.

A two-week deposit is required and will be applied to the tuition for the last two weeks the child is in the program. Written notice must be given at least thirty days before the child leaves the program.

Late Payment

If the Center has not received any tuition payment by the sixth day after payment is due, the Center may refuse to admit your child until you pay the amount. If the Center has not received your payment by the thirteenth day after payment is due, your child's enrollment in the Center may be terminated and his/her space will be offered to another child. You will not be entitled to a refund of your deposit.

Additional Fees

Fees may apply to field trips and special events held for your child's class. During summer camp, an activity fee will be added to the biweekly tuition for children in the two's through kindergarten programs. This activity fee includes all field trips, swimming, and special events.

Damage Charges

You may be held financially responsible for any property damage due to destructive behavior of your child.