

Kid Connection

Where kids come first

living, learning and *giving* back to our
communities

Parent Handbook



Kid Connection

Putting kids first, for generations

March 2022

ABOUT

Community Schools started the first school age care program in Catawba County April 1978 and, as a pioneer in school age programming, has served as a model of care for other counties and school districts across North Carolina. Since that time, the summer day camp program has expanded to meet the needs of the entire Catawba County Community.

Today, Community Schools offers quality school-age care services at 9 elementary schools in Hickory City and Newton-Conover School Systems. Kid Connection programming encompasses early childhood education, exceptional student and school age youth development programs.

Kid Connection programs are licensed with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Child Development and Early Education. Sites reach 5 star quality, most meet the highest achievable licensing level of five stars.

We strive to support children to solve problems, cooperate with others, and contribute to their community. Our goal is to support the development of responsible children who will become capable, productive adults.

MISSION STATEMENT

Putting Kids First as they live, learn and give back to our communities.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Unless otherwise posted, Kid Connection sites operate from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday - Friday.

Before school care opens at 6:00 am until start of school. **After school** staff are available approximately 30 minutes prior to school dismissal and care for children until parent pick up at 6:00 pm.

Workday Care/Inclement Weather Days Several locations provide services for teacher training days and teacher workdays. Several locations provide care for children on weather related cancellations (snow days). Tentative snow day operating schedules are from 9am to 6pm if road conditions permit travel. Please visit our website or the Kid Connection Facebook page for updates on these operating hours. Any school-age child can attend our snow day camps, regardless of school or school system in which they are enrolled.

Holiday Break and Spring Break Camp are available at select sites and will provide care on scheduled days over Christmas Break. Kid Connection programs are closed for most days marked as Holidays on the school calendar. Check your Kid-Connection calendar for dates of operation/closures for the year.

STAFF

Each Kid Connection site includes the Program Coordinator to administrate the site. Additional staff is required to assist in providing quality, individual care for the children. They are employees of the Newton-Conover Board of Education and are employed specifically for Kid Connection.

Staff receive Basic School Age Care, training in CPR and First Aid, and additional training in child health and safety orientation topics. Additionally all staff receive annual and ongoing training in childcare needs and trends.

BUILDING SAFETY AND SANITATION

The Kid Connection Program is fortunate to work in collaboration with the school district and partner on building maintenance, safety and sanitation. Public Health performs regular inspections to ensure compliance with sanitation and cleanliness.

The facility is cleaned and sanitized daily, restrooms, table tops, and floors. Toys and equipment are kept clean from visible dirt and washed with soapy water as needed. Additionally, toys are sprayed with sanitizing solution and permitted to air dry weekly. Storage baskets are sprayed with sanitizer weekly to ensure cleanliness.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Care at Conover School is available for children with special needs and preschool children ages 3 to 21.

SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM

Kid Connection school age programming offers children a wide range of hands-on activities including; homework assistance, tutoring, special events, guest speakers, and field trips. Kid Connection locations care for children attending kindergarten through age 14.

Parents may contact Hickory Public schools or Newton-Conover City Schools and request a bus to transport their child to a Kid Connection program from their middle schools.

SUMMER DAY CAMP – SummerKids

Kid Connection operates its SummerKids program at a school near you. Each summer it is available to all children currently attending Kindergarten through age 14. Camp offers recreational activities such as swimming, bowling, skating and lots of other summer fun.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Outdoor activities are offered daily at our programs after school for a 30 minute minimum and during a workday for a minimum of 2 hours of the day. Kid Connection monitors the heat index and air quality for time spent outdoors, as well as levels of active precipitation.

Sunscreen is applied to attending children with Parent authorization before and during aquatics activities.

HOMEWORK TIME

Kid Connection is committed to supporting your child's academic success and highest student achievement. Homework assistance is offered for a minimum of 30 minutes daily at each location. A homework contract is available for parents and students to commit to excellence with Homework Completion.

Parents are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and completion of their child's homework. Individual tutoring in some academic subjects may be available for your child and is provided in some locations. Please see your Program Coordinator for details.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are part of Kid Connection program and will be noted on the site calendar. Parents/guardians must give permission for their child to attend each field trip. Field trip permission is signed with enrollment on the enrollment card. Sites post the schedule and location of the field trip prior to trip.

When sites travel for special trips and events, Kid Connection utilizes activity buses contracted through the school districts.

AQUATICS

Kid Connection - SummerKids travels to pools and creeks. Permission for aquatics field trips is obtained at enrollment on the enrollment card. Schedules and locations of aquatics activities are posted at the site prior to the scheduled trip. All children are supervised in accordance with the State of North Carolina rules and regulations governing licensed childcare. Parents provide additional information and permissions on a specific sign in sheet the day of the aquatics trip for their child regarding their level of

swim ability, use of slides and diving boards, use of the deep end, and use of personal floatation devices and pool toys.

SummerKids, utilizes pools that meet the “Rules Governing Public Swimming Pools” and staffed with appropriate lifeguards meeting the requirements of 1 for every 25 children swimming. Pools require swim tests for children to move about the pool freely, and Kid Connection help monitor children who have swim tested.

Creek play occurs when Kid-Connection travels to a park that has a natural water feature. These trips are planned, the water is of wading depth, and children look for water animals, sleuth for rocks/mineral, and splash themselves. Staff are positioned in and at the water, with assigned boundaries to maintain children in an appropriate space for adequate supervision and minimize aquatic hazards.

When participating in boating activities, all children will be required to wear an appropriately sized personal floatation device.

Children exit the water when Kid Connection or Pool lifeguard staff announce the need due to schedule or emergency. Children who fail to follow the pool rules, or the Kid Connection aquatic trip rules are asked to leave the water and provided with land-based activities until their peers have finished in the water. Reoccurring safety concerns or discipline issues during swimming activities could result in a child not being permitted to participate in aquatics activities.

Whenever possible, children arrive at the swimming area in their bathing suits to minimize changing at the aquatics location. Children return to their Kid Connection location after swimming and change into their street clothes if they wish in the school site restroom.

At times of necessary public restroom use for changing, Kid Connection staff are assigned to restroom locations, clear them from public use when possible for the temporary use of all Kid Connection children under assigned staff supervision. When children are utilizing public restrooms, staff are assigned to monitor the restroom for coming and going of both Kid Connection children and the public.

FEE POLICIES

Kid Connection offers the opportunity for you to choose the amount of care your child needs.

Registration - An annual non-refundable registration fee is charged to all participants for school year enrollment. A non-refundable **Activity Fee** is charged upon registration for summer camp.

Weekly

Before ***or*** after school care

Before ***and*** after school care

PrePaid-This option is for families needing to customize their care for before and/or after school.

Workdays - Full day care from 6:00am - 6:00pm

*Full day programming for holiday camp/spring break is available at the summer fee rate.

Tuition and Payment

Kid Connection has developed fee and enrollment policies to ensure your child receives the highest quality programming and staff. If you have any questions about the care contract, ask the Program Coordinator for clarification:

- All participants are charged a non-refundable registration fee during fall registration. Families are charged a non-refundable activity fee upon registration for summer.
- Enrollment requires payment of the registration/activity fee plus the first week's fee.
- Payment is due no later than the first day of each week to avoid a \$5.00 late fee.
- Families are billed weekly regardless of attendance.

- A late fee of \$1.00 a minute is assessed for each minute for pick up after 6:00 pm.
- Children may not transfer or be re-enrolled with a balance due.
- Subsidy clients are responsible for the Registration Fee and Summer Activity Fee and full cost of care in the event that the funding source denies any reimbursement.

While these fee and enrollment policies are subject to change, parents will be notified in advance of any changes. Please refer to a copy of your childcare contract.

Refund and Credit Policy

Refunds need to be approved by our Central Office as Kid Connection is a childcare provider with payment for enrollment and services. Refunds can be considered when a family pays in advance for the service, and does not need the service due to an unforeseen event; such as relocating, loss of income, or family emergency.

School year Workdays may be refunded or exchanged, when paid for in advance with Workday registration/Sign Up, and the reservation cancelled a minimum of 24 hours prior to start of the Workday.

Refunds are not issued for the following:

- School Year Registration or Summer Activity Fees
- Families contracted on Pre-Payment Calendar for Before/After school and SummerKids days.
- Workday paid in advance if the child does not attend without 24 hours advance cancellation.

If your return is approved, we will initiate a refund to your credit/debit card (or you may request a check by providing your DL or social security number and mailing address)

You will receive the credit within a certain amount of days, depending on your card issuer's policies. Whenever possible, we prefer to credit your account for the refundable amount for future use in Kid Connection Program.

Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF)

Community Schools of Catawba County accepts checks; however, if your check is returned, Community Schools will use a 3rd party collector to process checks that have been returned for insufficient funds.

Community Schools charges an administrative processing fee of \$10.00 for each returned check.

Families with outstanding NSF checks will be required to make payment in cash or money order until the NSF check has been paid in full.

Unpaid Balances

Our program is dependent on tuition payments for continued success. Community Schools utilizes a 3rd party collector to process unpaid balances when families have stopped paying tuition.

When a family becomes two (2) weeks behind in tuition, services are discontinued until the family can pay tuition timely. Understanding that events and emergencies occur, Kid Connection has a written payment plan contract for those families who have fallen behind in payment but are working to bring their balance current.

Tax Information

Community Schools of Catawba County will issue end of year payment statements if requested. Please keep all payment receipts. Community Schools **Tax ID # 56-6001086.**

ENROLLMENT POLICY

Registration forms are available for interested parents from each Program Coordinator or from the

school office. The completed forms must be signed and returned to the Kid Connection Program Coordinator with the registration and first week's fee prior to the actual enrollment and attendance.

Families with child care assistance/subsidy must provide the appropriate documentation at the time of enrollment. Sites must charge full fee to clients who fail to provide the appropriate subsidy documentation or maintain their subsidy eligibility.

To complete the registration form you will need:

- School Fee contract
- Enrollment card
- Custody Orders (if applicable)
- Immunizations (if applicable)
- Medical/Physical Care Action Plan (if applicable)

Families are welcome to visit the program prior to enrollment. Staff are able to answer questions and parents/guardians and children can experience the program without the commitment of enrollment.

ATTENDANCE and ABSENTEEISM

Your child's attendance is important if he/she is to benefit fully from the program. Knowing if your child will attend also helps us plan for adequate staffing at our sites. Kid Connection requires that you contact the site any time your child will be absent from the program. This includes early pickup of school age children from school for doctor /dentist appointments or other occasions. Our staff is required to follow up on each unexcused absence. Repeat occurrences of failure to communicate your child's whereabouts to the site may result in termination of service. Please help us; your phone call or note is greatly appreciated. Many subsidy programs have strict attendance guidelines. Please be sure that your child meets these requirements.

ILLNESS

Your child's health and comfort are a primary concern. If your child becomes ill, please keep him/her home. Do not send your child to the program with a fever as he/she may be contagious.

If your child is suspected of having a communicable disease such as a skin rash, pink eye, diarrhea, lice, skin infection, etc., he/she will be placed in an isolation area. You will be contacted to pick your child up as soon as possible from the program.

Parents/Guardians will be notified immediately of any illness or injury to the child needing specific instruction or care. If you cannot be reached, the emergency contacts designated on your child's enrollment forms will be contacted to pick up the child. Please make sure this information is current in your child's records.

UPDATING YOUR RECORDS

Please notify your Program Coordinator immediately of any change in your home or work address, home or work phone numbers, emergency contact phone numbers, email, emergency contact names or custody arrangements. This information is vital for the safety of your child.

Families enrolled in subsidy programs must also notify Kid Connection of any changes in marital status, family size or household income. Failure to report these changes may result in the loss of your subsidy or care. We appreciate your immediate communication regarding this very important information.

CUSTODY ISSUES

Any family circumstance that involves a court ruling on parent/guardian custody or legal visitation must be documented by a legal court order that is kept on site in the child's file. Kid Connection staff will not

be drawn into parental disputes and will uphold the instructions of the court order that is on file. In the absence of a legal court order, natural parents are recognized as guardians.

It is the parents/guardian's responsibility to continually update Kid Connection about custody issues/changes which will affect their child. Those issues may include:

- Custody arrangements such as visitation and pick up
- Preferred order of parental contact
- Sharing program information with both parties
- Responsibility for payments
- Names of other significant adults in the child's life and their role/relationship

CHECK IN/CHECK OUT

Safe arrival of children is very important. Children must be escorted into the program by their parent/guardian. The parent or guardian must sign their child's time in and out daily on the attendance log provided by Community Schools.

Safe arrival for After School requires authorized school personnel to accompany the child to the program in the afternoon. Any child that attends another after school club or tutoring must be accompanied by the responsible person from that activity and be signed in. Parents or authorized adults (on application form) must sign children out. Valid photo identification is required to pick up of any child. Children will not be allowed to leave with anyone under 16 years of age. For the safety of your child, you must sign them out before picking them up from the playground area.

If there is no contact between Kid Connection staff and parent or authorized adult on the registration form by 6:30pm, Child Protective Services and Law Enforcement will be notified.

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

The basis of the Kid Connection discipline policy is to encourage appropriate behaviors, provide positive opportunities for children to contribute, and to develop a sense of belonging in all children. Our staff strives to understand the developmental functioning of the child, the underlying goals of misbehavior, involve the child in problem solving, allow for individual choice, and permit the logical consequences of those choices.

Kid Connection believes in positive guidance and behavior management. Our role in guidance is to work with the parent/guardians to teach children how to make good choices and help them develop self-discipline. We encourage individuality and independence, but each child must be able to interact within the group's limits.

Kid Connection does not subscribe to spanking or other forms of physical punishment, the withholding of food, rest, toileting, abusive or profane language, or any form of public or private humiliation with the intent to embarrass.

The basic discipline policy includes the following steps:

- Talking to the child about the problem
- Removing the child from the group or area
- Limiting privileges
- Consulting with parent

Children are expected to comply with all regular school rules and regulations. Discipline will be addressed by the Program Coordinator or by the Assistant Program Coordinator.

A student will be suspended from the program if, after he/she has been counseled and the parent has been involved, and his/her behavior continues to be unacceptable. This shall be determined by the Director. Fees for the remainder of the period of suspension will not be refunded. Suspension and/or dismissal can occur without warning to parents if the Program Coordinator and Community Schools Administration feel that a situation warrants it.

Suspension from Kid Connection can occur for the following reasons:

- Unresolved discipline problems
- Failure to pay fees promptly
- Failure to properly register your child, and/or
- Repeated failure of parent/guardian to pick up student promptly at or before 6:00pm.

The Kid Connection Behavioral Guidelines can be found on the website. If internet is not available please request a printed copy. Parents Signature on the Enrollment form indicates acknowledgement of availability and receipt of the Behavioral Guidelines.

Parents and students enrolling in the Kid Connection program commit to the Code of Student conduct by reviewing and signing the document. This document is kept in the students file on site.

Kid Connection adheres to the North Carolina State Childcare Requirements for Discipline Policy 10A NCAC 09 .1801 as developed by the Division of Childcare Development and Early Education.

SPECIAL NEEDS/INCLUSION

Please advise your Program Coordinator of any allergies, physical or mental challenges, fears, strong dislikes or any other condition which may affect your child's health, happiness or ability to function in a group setting. Concerns or restrictions will be addressed with parents on an individual basis.

Care of students with exceptional needs should be discussed individually with the Program Coordinator to determine our ability to meet those needs. It is the intent of Community Schools to serve all children and families with sensitivity to differences, physical/mental abilities and/or other identified exceptionalities.

Kid Connection strives to make all reasonable accommodations which meet the needs of individual clients. Parents need to complete the **Physical/Medical Care Action Plan** to assist in meeting needs of the child and staff information.

Children with special needs must be able to be cared for in the group environment of Kid Connection. Kid Connection does not provide one-on-one care. Kid Connection is available at Conover School for children needing additional care and supervision than can be provided at one of the other locations.

MEDICATION

No prescription, over-the-counter medication or topical, non-medical ointment, repellent, lotion, cream or powder shall be administered to any child until the parent/guardian provides a **Permission to Administer Medication form**, signed by the prescribing physician's office, requesting the Program Coordinator or designee administer medication.

North Carolina licensing regulations require medications to be locked and only accessible to adults. When needed, please deliver medication, lotions, creams, sunscreen, inhalers, etc. directly to Kid Connection staff. Please do not send these items with your child.

Prescribed medications shall be stored in the original containers in which they were dispensed with the pharmacy labels specifying:

- The child's name
- The name of the medication or the prescription number
- The amount and frequency of dosage
- The name of the prescribing physician or other health professional
- The date the prescription was filled

*A new permission to administer medication form must be filled out every six months for prescription medications, Benadryl, acetaminophen, and ibuprofen.

*Parents must sign in and out their children's medication on the Permission to Administer Medication form. Expired medications will be returned to the parent/guardian. Kid Connection staff will dispose of expired medication if not picked up by the parent 3 days beyond the expiration date.

Over-the-counter medications, such as cough syrup, decongestant, topical antibiotic cream for abrasions, or medication for intestinal disorders shall be stored in the manufacturer's original packaging on which the child's name is written or labeled and shall be accompanied by written instructions and authorization.

- The child's name
- The name of the medication
- The amount and frequency of dosage
- The signature of the parent, physician or other health professional

*Over the counter medication permissions can be valid for up to 30 days at a time or prescribed duration.

ACCIDENTS

Minor injuries will be communicated to the person picking up at the end of the day. Parents will be contacted immediately in the event of a serious injury. Staff trained in first aid and CPR are present at all times.

NUTRITION

Community Schools serves nutritionally balanced snacks and breakfast foods that meet USDA's nutrition standards mandated by the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Foods Service Program. Children are served breakfast, lunch and a healthy snack on full-days of care and throughout SummerKids. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

During SummerKids, there are times when parents are responsible for providing lunch for special travel or events. The site staff will notify family in advance of these days. Kid Connection partners with Hickory Public Schools and Newton-Conover City schools for the Summer Feeding Program at all Kid Connection sites.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

Children should wear comfortable, clean, and appropriate clothing. Rubber soled shoes that fit securely are required. Our daily schedule includes outdoor and physical activities. Please ensure that your child dresses appropriately for the weather.

We recommend that you label clothing with your child's name. We will try to help you reclaim missing articles but Kid Connection cannot guarantee that missing articles will be located.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Personal belongings such as cell phones, electronics, toys, candy and money are to be left at home unless specifically approved for the daily special event. Parents are responsible for approving any item that is brought in by their child. Toys may not include anything that could be considered as a weapon. Kid Connection will not be responsible for lost, misplaced or damaged items.

Students arriving to Kid Connection from school are responsible for bringing a homework item needed for homework completion. The program can always assist by providing what is available on site to complete homework.

At some sites, parents are requested to provide diapers and wipes for their children.

CLIENTS RIGHT TO KNOW

Your child's files may be reviewed periodically by representatives of the Division of Child Development and Early Education or other regulatory agency. Kid Connection considers everything in the child's file to be confidential. This information will not be shared or distributed to others without prior written approval or an appropriate court order/subpoena.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

Kid Connection is committed to working with families and recognizes that cooperation between home and program is essential for children to be successful. Parents are invited to share in Kid Connection through active and regular involvement. Parents are encouraged to visit the sites and observe activities and staff interactions with the children as long as it doesn't cause a major disruption to the program. Drop-in visits by parents/guardians are always welcome. You may schedule an appointment with the Program Coordinator to discuss your child's development, accomplishments or behavior. Program Coordinators can answer questions about how parents can volunteer, donate and participate in programming.

Please don't hesitate to schedule a time to discuss your child. Program Coordinators are available beyond operating hours to meet the needs of conferences.

Kid Connection communicates with parents through the site based Parent notification board or posted notifications in a designated area for parents to read. Email communication is available as well as the Kid Connection Facebook page and website at www.yourcommunityschools.com. Sites also complete newsletters for parent information.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONCERNS

When you have concerns regarding your child's care, please resolve the issue with your Program Coordinator. Each complaint or problem will be addressed appropriately to maintain positive relationships. If additional assistance is needed, please do not hesitate to call the Community Schools Administration office at (828) 464-9355. Your satisfaction regarding your child's care is a priority for Kid Connection and Community Schools.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INPUT

Please take a minute to complete the parent survey when it is distributed. Satisfaction surveys are distributed, summarized and analyzed for program enhancement opportunities.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Each Kid Connection program has access to a list of community resources available through the Program Coordinator. You may contact the Program Coordinator with any questions or concerns regarding the individual needs of your family.

ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORTING

North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child abuse or neglect to report the case to the county department of social services. In addition, any person can call the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-662-4499 or 1-800-859-0829 and make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect in a child care operation. Reports can be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith. The operator of the program must notify parents of children currently enrolled in writing of the substantiation of any abuse/neglect complaint or the issuance of any administrative action against the child care facility.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The safety of the children entrusted to the care of Kid Connection shall always be primary. Reasonable precautions shall be taken to ensure child safety at all times. Kid Connection reserves the right to make operating decisions regarding disasters on a case by case basis. In cases of severe weather or other emergency conditions which result in the closing of the local public schools, Kid Connection programs will also be closed. Parents are asked to pick up within one hour of the announced closing. If you are unsure about a closing, please call our Administrative office at (828) 464-9355. Information regarding closings and delays will be announced on the following:

- Television: WBTV-3, WSOC-9 and WCNC-36
- Radio: WNNC-1230 AM and WIRC-630 AM Hickory
- Web: Newton-Conover City Schools, Hickory Public Schools and www.yourcommunityschools.com
- Kid Connection Facebook Page, and communicated through Remind texting

Kid Connection is committed to the timely improvement of any potential health and safety issues.

Observation, identification, and resolution of risk factors are the responsibility of all of us. Please report any potential danger or concerns immediately to your Program Coordinator.

TERMINATION OF SERVICE

Kid Connection reserves the right to terminate service when it is deemed that the client is abusing the service or has proven to be a danger to themselves or others.

Services may be terminated for a number of appropriate reasons, which may include:

- Failure to make payments
- Abuse of service
- Involving Kid Connection staff in custody issues without providing proper paperwork
- Failure to provide updated contact information
- Display of unacceptable behavior that is considered threatening or places the client or others at risk by the child or parent

Community Schools of Catawba County

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