



# **DROP IN CENTER PARENT HANDBOOK**

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## **WELCOME LETTER**

Dear Parent/Guardian/Student:

Welcome to the Drop In Center!

The mission of The Excel Center is to provide adults the opportunity and support to earn a high school diploma and begin post-secondary education while developing career paths in sectors of the local economy that offers better-than-average employment and growth opportunities. The school will “meet students where they are” in their education by providing a flexible, structured, and supportive relationships to help them manage work, life, and family concerns as they achieve their educational goals. The Drop In Center is to support Excel Center students in achieving his/her educational goals.

In the Drop In Center we provide a safe, fun, developmentally appropriate environment full of tender love and care for the children we serve. We do our due diligence to provide comfort and peace to parents while their children are in our care. We meet each child at their level to help them gain new heights alongside their parents by facilitating new experiences and teaching strategies.

The Drop In Center uses guided academic curriculum that will include developmentally appropriate activities. The activities and daily schedule are posted and will be distributed to parents and guardians regularly.

We look forward to working with you to set our excellent children up for a successful future. Thank you for entrusting us with your children.

Sincerely,  
The Drop In Center Staff

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## Introduction

This handbook is intended to clearly communicate expectations for parents who choose to use The Excel Center Drop In Center. The policies and procedures in this handbook may be changed at any time.

### Program

This program will provide developmentally appropriate activities for your child(ren). The weekly lesson plans are written and posted for parent's review. Children are provided time to choose their own activities and work independently in learning centers. Attendants serve as facilitators to enhance the children's choices.

### Business

The Excel Center Drop In Center is not a licensed facility. It is temporary services provided for the Excel Center students as they attend classes. As Excel Center students' progress towards graduation, guidance will be provided in finding their sources(s) of childcare for their child(ren).

## Statement of Non-Discrimination

The Drop In Center admits children of all racial, national, religious, ethnic origin, or ability level from all backgrounds, belief systems, family dynamics, and orientations.

## Admissions and Enrollment

### Ages of Children

The Drop In Center was designed to provide services for children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age.

### Enrollment Procedures

The Drop In Center is excited about being a part of the growth of your child(ren). The enrollment process is below:

- The students will come to an orientation (iExcel).
- Students are to arrive thirty minutes early from the assigned start time of the iExcel to fill out the enrollment packets for their child(ren) and ask any questions that they may have.
- This packet of paperwork, and a **copy of the child's up to date shot records and birth certificate, must be returned before the child(ren) may start.**
- An Drop In Center staff member will review the paperwork and make a determination of the eligibility of when they can start. This will be based on the enrollment paperwork that is returned and filled out correctly.
- The Parent Handbook will also be provided and reviewed with the group as a whole. Please read it and return the acknowledgement and understanding page at the end of this handbook.

### Waiting List

We do not have a waiting list at this time, but have the option to start one in the future, if needed.

### Discharge

There are three ways that a child may be discharged from this program. The first way is if the student who enrolled them breaks any of the rules covered in the Excel Student Handbook which includes:

Attendance; Code of Conduct; Expulsion; and Bodily Harm. The second way is if the parent continues to abuse the daily four-hour time frame. The third way is the child's behavior is very disruptive and the steps have been followed through the Discipline Policy located in the operations section below. You will receive a copy of this policy with your enrollment packet that must be signed and returned with the additional paperwork.

## Enrollment Forms Checklist

The paperwork listed below is what is needed for you to start utilizing the Drop In Center. All paperwork must be correctly completed and turned in to a staff member of the Drop In Center before you may leave your child(ren). Please complete each area or put N/A for the items that do not pertain to you or your child(ren).

_____ Registration Form	_____ Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement
_____ Release of Rights	_____ Immunization Records (Up to date on all children that will be in attendance)
_____ Photo/Video Authorization	_____ Parent Handbook Acknowledgement
_____ Discipline Policy	_____ Birth Certificate (Copy)
_____ Guidance Policy	_____ Holiday Inquiry
_____ All About Me Information Sheets	

## The Drop In Center Guidelines

The following rules will apply:

1. The Drop In Center will be open Monday through Friday, hours of operation are as follows: 8:50 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. and 12:45 p.m. – 4:10 p.m. **As a reminder children of Excel Center student's may utilize the Drop In Center during class or while using resources in the building (tutoring, making up assessments, etc.) Parents are not to leave the property at any time if child(ren) is/are in the Drop In Center!**
2. Parents/Guardians must sign child(ren) in and out daily.
3. Parents are responsible for supplying snacks, bottles, sippy cups, baby food, and formula.
4. Parents are responsible for supplying snacks, diapers, pull-ups, baby wipes, and extra clothing.
5. A light snack may be served throughout the daily operations which consist of crackers, cookies, milk, juice, etc.
6. Since we only provide snacks, we encourage parents to feed children a healthy meal before coming to the Drop In Center.
7. Nap time varies, however, if child(ren) display any signs of sleepiness, the child may be encouraged to lay down for a nap.
8. Please do not bring toys from home. Outside toys are not allowed in the Drop In Center. The Drop In Center is well equipped with plenty for activities and toys for the children.
9. All Drop In Centers will close for lunchtime and staff will break for lunchtime. Please be prompt when picking up your child(ren). The Drop In Center will open at least ten minutes before classes begin after lunch.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact a staff member of The Drop In Center. You may contact staff by calling The Excel Center that you attend. (Telephone number is located in the front of this packet.)

Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring that The Drop In Center is efficient and conducive to the success of the staff and children by complying with the rules.

## **Operations**

### Chain of Command

For any questions and issues concerning the Drop In Center staff, the site Manager should be contacted. In case you may need further assistance for any issue, please contact the school director at the location.

### Weekly/Daily Schedule

The Excel Learning Center hours of operation is consistent with the location of The Excel Center. Due to Friday's being a time set aside and planned according to student needs, we ask that Drop In Center staff be notified before prior to utilizing the drop-in center. Please follow the procedures of the Excel Center accordingly.

The following is a framework of daily activities and may be subject to change:

- The Drop In Center opens.
- Group Time – activities may consist of singing songs, finger puppet plays, monthly calendar, shapes, colors, numbers, ABC's, and more.
- Free choice
- Curriculum Time – activities may consist of arts and crafts, writing, phonics, story time.
- Gross Motor/Music
- Prepare for snack – activities consist of checking and changing diapers/restroom break.
- Snack time
- Sensory Time – activities may consist of playing in sand, paste, water, etc.
- The Drop In Center closes.

### Holidays, Vacations, and Closings

The Drop In Center will follow the same calendar as The Excel Center. Please make sure you obtain a yearly calendar. The holidays that The Excel/Learning Center will be closed are as follows:

Independence Day – July 4<sup>th</sup>

Summer Break

Labor Day

Fall Break

Thanksgiving Break

Winter Break (Christmas and New Year's)

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

President's Day

Spring Break

Memorial Day

Professional Development Days (these days will be listed on the yearly calendar)

### Disciplinary Policy

The goal of The Drop In Center is to increase a child's self-respect and develop personal responsibility for his/her actions. It is important that we encourage children in The Drop In Center to exhibit self-control and to respect the rights of others while learning in a safe and caring environment. The staff will guide the children in a firm but loving manner toward self-control development with love, respect, and consistency. Discipline is NOT punishment, but means to encourage self-control and responsibility. Our intention is that discipline in The Drop In Center is nurturing and educational.

We allow children to express all their feelings both positive and negative. The staff will listen to children and help them deal with their feelings. Positive behavior will always be promoted first through routines, effective commands and reinforcement of good behaviors. Appropriate behaviors will be rewarded; we understand how important positive reinforcement is to children.

Discipline Policy Effective immediately

The rules for guiding behavior are:

- Protect the rights of the child and others with clear-cut, consistent guidelines and rules for appropriate behavior.
- Address the children in a calm yet firm voice. Tell the children what to do rather than what not to do.
- Voices may be raised slightly to alert the children that you are disapproving of their behavior or to alert the children of impending danger.

Response to inappropriate behavior:

- Gain the child's attention verbally or physically going to the child.
- Intervene and stop the unwanted behavior or action.
- Speak to the child/children regarding their action(s).
- Remind the children of the rules.
- Redirect the child(ren) to an appropriate activity or give choice of an activity.

Examples of gross or major inappropriate behaviors that are unacceptable for the child care environment include:

- Inflicting, or attempting to inflict, bodily harm to another child or staff member.
- Foul language.
- Rude gestures.
- Chronic disruptive behaviors.
- Chronic disrespect for the property of others, including equipment and supplies.

Attendants will observe and address behavior that is inappropriate, while considering the age of the child. The attendant(s) and/or the parent(s)/guardian(s) may seek input from The Drop In Center Manager on what may constitute inappropriate behavior for children of a particular age.

In an attempt to correct the child's behavior, the following will be used as a guide:

- Level 1: The Drop In Center Manager/staff member will meet with the parent/guardian to provide a description of the inappropriate behavior and how it was handled by the Manager/staff member. (This should not be a passing conversation at the end of the day.) The staff will make themselves available in the event that the parent/guardian may seek their advice on how to address the inappropriate behavior if repeated in the future.
- Level 2: The staff will provide a written record of the inappropriate behavior and the parent/guardian will be asked to initial and date the written record as an acknowledgement. The parent/guardian and the staff member(s) should identify specific mechanisms for collaboratively addressing the inappropriate behavior.
- Level 3: The child's parent/guardian will meet with The Drop In Center Manager /staff members to discuss the misbehavior and develop a plan of action in an attempt to resolve the misbehavior. The Drop In Center Manager will write a record of the meeting and The Drop In Center Manager, staff member(s), parent/guardian will be asked to sign and date the record.
- Level 4: The child's parent/guardian will receive a letter of probation from The Drop In Center Manager describing the inappropriate behavior and the possibility of their child's termination from The Drop In Center if the inappropriate behavior persists.

The above progression will be incremental, (for example: for a Level 3 to be taken, both Level 1 and Level 2 would have already been taken.) All levels must be approved by The Drop In Center Manager. The time interval associated with the progression from one level to the next is not fixed; the progression interval will depend on the severity of the problem, the frequency of the inappropriate behavior, and the level of effort put forward by the parent/guardian in addressing the problem. Although the parent(s)/guardian(s) is encouraged to work mainly with the staff member(s) in deciding how to resolve inappropriate behavior, the parent(s)/guardian(s) can schedule an appointment to discuss the issue with The Drop In Center Manager at any time. (i.e., The Drop In Center Manager involvement can start before Level 3.) The Drop In Center Manager, for example, may have information on outside/alternate sources for obtaining help and insight. Finally, the need for clear and constructive communications between the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the staff's cannot be over emphasized; a collective effort will yield the best outcome for all involved.

#### Enrollment Termination

Given that the steps above occurred and a consistent pattern of inappropriate behavior continues and cannot be resolved, the parent/guardian may receive a letter from The Drop In Center Manager informing them that their child's enrollment will be terminated.

The Director reserves the right to terminate any child that engages in illegal activity or grossly endangers the welfare of other children, parents, and/or staff.

#### **Incident and Injury Reporting Policy**

If there is an incident or injury with a child, a form will be completed describing the situation; then the parent/guardian, staff member, and Manager must sign. A copy of the paperwork will be given to the parent/guardian; and the original will be kept and stored in the child's files. Please be aware that all child care providers are obligated by Arkansas state law to report anything that they see or suspect as child abuse or neglect.



## Health Policy and Procedures

All Excel Learning Center staff are certified in First Aid and Universal Precautions.

Parents/guardians please make other arrangements for children who may exhibit symptoms such as running a fever, constant coughing, having trouble talking or breathing, or has diarrhea. For the child to return to The Drop In Center after symptoms are observed, a doctor's statement must be provided.

Parents/Guardians your child(ren) may be sent home for the following:

- If your child is running a temperature above 100 degrees. If the child continues to run a temperature above 100 degrees for two consecutive days, a doctor's statement is required upon return and the child must be fever free without medication for 24 hours prior to returning to The Drop In Center.
- If lice is found in the hair of the child(ren). The Drop In Center has a No Live Bug Policy. We ask that the child(ren) be treated immediately, upon observance. Nits must be  $\frac{1}{4}$  from the scalp and evidence of treatment must be observed before the child(ren) may return.
- If your child expels bodily fluids forcefully. (Throws up, diarrhea, urinates.)

## Medications

Medications can only be administered by parents. No staff member is allowed to administer any type of medication to a child. If the medication is administered in The Drop In Center, the parent/guardian must document the medication information in the Medication Binder each time the medication is given. Please ask a staff member to direct you to the Medication Binder.

## Health Notice

If there is an illness that is spreading in The Drop In Center, defined as more than two staff members or children are affected by the same illness at the same time, a health notice will be distributed to all parents/guardians. The notice will include the name of the illness and symptoms. If the symptoms are observed in your child, **please make other arrangements and do not bring the child to The Drop In Center until the symptoms are no longer occurring.**

## Emergency Procedures

### Emergency Contact and Pick-Up

At least one emergency contact must be in each child's file. Only persons that are on the list in the child's file are capable of picking up the child(ren). If it is someone that is not in the child's file, the parent must provide a written document including the full name and description of the person coming. If someone comes to pick up a child that is not listed in their file or written permission has not been provided, the child will not be released to the person without contacting the parent/guardian. An emergency pick-up person will need to show proper identification when picking up the child(ren). Also, anyone other than the enrolled parent must have the child's family pick up code for the child(ren) to be released.

### Emergency Evacuation of the Building

Please see the insert of the Emergency Evacuation of your location in the back of the handbook. Also please be encouraged to note the emergency exit plan posted in The Drop In Center, located at the parent communication area.

All other emergency information, the students will follow the direction of The Excel Center Director, such as fire drills, tornado drills, etc.

#### Visitor Policy

Any visitor that is coming in The Drop In Center for more than a few minutes must sign-in and out of the visitor's log; this includes interns, trainees, volunteers, practicum students, and community visitors.

#### Sign-In/Sign-Out

Parents/Guardians, for the protection of each child, please sign your child(ren) in and out upon drop-off and pick-up.

#### Appropriate Dress

Parents/Guardians, we may do activities that get your child's clothes a little dirty. We ask that parents are considerate to the playing environment and dress child accordingly.

#### Extra Clothes

An extra change of clothes is encouraged due to accidents, incidents, and bathroom challenges.

#### Snacks

The Drop In Center follows Arkansas state rules for all amounts and measurements of servings for each child according to age. The following foods and drinks will be served as snacks

- Milk – Vitamin D, 2% and chocolate
- 100% fruit juice
- Graham, cheese, animal, or saltine crackers
- Nutri-grain, granola, and fruit bars

Please notify The Drop In Center staff concerning food allergies of your child(ren).

Parents/Guardians feel free to bring snacks as well. We encourage you to feed your child(ren) a full healthy meal before attending.

#### Daily Notification

We encourage communication between staff and parents/guardians. We will provide methods to inform you of upcoming events, curriculum for the month, updates on progress of child(ren), as well as daily activity. We encourage parents/guardians to speak with the staff concerning the progress of their child(ren).

**Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form**

Please detach and return the completed form to The Drop In Center staff.

As the Parent/Guardian of (list names of all children enrolled):

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand all policies that are written in The Drop In Center Parent Handbook. I agree to abide by these policies at all times and will work with The Drop In Center staff as a team to make sure my child is successful in their learning experience.

Please sign below:

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Manager Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_