



Parent Reference Guide

Please retain for future reference

Updated January 2016

SOUTH HILLS *Child Development Center Inc.*

3808 Caughey Rd. Erie, PA 16506

814-838-7114 | www.shills.info



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WELCOME:

WELCOME TO SOUTH HILLS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER INC.! Now that your child will be participating in our program, this booklet will familiarize you with our policies and other information you will need to know to make your child's experience with us a positive one. If you have any questions or concerns, the director, Connie Kerr Vogt, ("Ms Connie") is available to discuss them with you. Connie has been the administrator and owner of South Hills since it's founding in 1975.

South Hills is licensed as a private Preschool and Kindergarten through the Pennsylvania Department of Education and a child care center through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services during the after-school hours. In addition, we are proud to have been awarded national accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Please check our website, www.shills.info, at least monthly and follow us on Twitter [@SouthHillsInc](https://twitter.com/SouthHillsInc) for quick notices from the school. After creating your Dropbox account (separate directions included in your registration packet), please allow push notifications on your mobile device, which will provide notices each time we send correspondence, photos, assessments, or emergency information for your viewing!

South Hills is a happy and peaceful environment, and we welcome your family into our family!

ABOUT OUR STAFF:

All of the staff members at South Hills have a Bachelors degree and teaching certification in Early Childhood and/or Elementary Education. In compliance with our license as a private school and child care center through the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Department of Human Services/OCDEL (formerly DHS), all staff members have all required clearances as well as FBI fingerprinting security. All teachers are trained in pediatric first aid and CPR and attend annual fire safety and medication administration training. Every five years teachers are trained in Mandatory responsibilities of reporting of child abuse. During orientation, all teachers are trained to comply with our Bloodborne Pathogen Plan and our Emergency Crisis Plan, which are reviewed annually. Our Emergency Crisis Plan is approved by Millcreek Township and Erie County via their Emergency Management Agencies, and is included in their database system. Teachers are also required to complete additional course work pertaining to Early Childhood Education and Special Education on an annual basis.

Expectations of the staff are very high, and they are frequently evaluated using professional positioning that includes goal setting and self-evaluation. Along with Connie, teachers evaluate themselves and set professional goals to meet within a specific time frame. The staff has exemplary collaboration skills and works as a team, and teachers are very supportive of each other. Staff members are also thoroughly trained in communicating frequently with parents; our communication is a priority here!

PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM:

Our curriculum is a child centered approach. The school implements emergent curriculum focusing on Project Approach and many of the components of Reggio Emilia. Teachers are observers; they document the topics that children discuss within the classroom, the materials they use, the questions they ask, and the areas in the classroom that are of interest to them. The teacher and students frequently meet to discuss their areas of interest and “brainstorm” regarding project work they would like to develop. This project work includes activities for each area of intelligence, based on Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences. The curriculum is developmentally appropriate according to NAEYC criteria and includes reading and math readiness, science, art, music, language, multiculturalism, history, large and fine motor work, technology, Spanish and Sign Language. All work at South Hills reflects true

child ownership. Children are free to create their own interpretations and choose from a variety of materials to work with, but teachers do provide photographs, models, or the “real experience” to guide their work and the learning process. Children create observational and representational art as the projects emerge. This process of children’s learning is valued as much as the final product. The children’s art work is displayed throughout the room and in the hallways, foyer, and even outdoors! The children are immersed in print as they listen and “read along” to stories and poems, as they see environmental print throughout the room and school environment, as their stories and descriptions of their art work are written by dictation or invented spelling and displayed alongside their photographs and projects, and as their dialogues with their friends are displayed. The teachers spend much time observing the children and documenting what they say and do, which will later be used for assessment and for new ideas for the direction the curriculum will take. Throughout the projects, documentation takes many forms. Teachers photograph various stages of each project; the children or teacher journal the development of a project and may add illustrations. The project can then be documented from beginning to end by the creation of a binder which is displayed in the classroom. This creates a sense of history, and an opportunity for children to “revisit” their projects over time.

The first five years of life are the most critical in terms of brain development. All activities at South Hills are play based and have a neurological purpose, with the intention that every child will experience success, build positive self-esteem, and will increase attention and observational skills while learning core academic skills that are developmentally appropriate for young learners.

Our outdoor play area is approximately one quarter acre and is designed to promote nature based play as well as support our Action Based Learning curriculum. ABL activities are introduced on a daily basis to connect cognitive, kinesthetic and neurological skills. Children balance, hop, skip, jump, and run while learning key concepts of reading, math, science, geography and other subjects. During inclement weather, the ABL grids that are painted throughout our playground on paved areas are duplicated on carpets used in the classrooms. Movement and exercise is a daily focus, and connects with our learning environment.

Nature based play allows the children the freedom to explore and observe insects, birds, plants, gardening, herbs, small animals and other aspects of the natural world. The boardwalks in this outdoor area are a way for the children to

roam and freely explore the natural world and enjoy times of creative play within nature.

More details regarding this aspect of our curriculum can be found on our website home page (www.shills.info) under "About Us".

Connie is a certified KAY yoga teacher (www.kiddingaroundyoga.com); yoga, breathing exercises and mindfulness are incorporated into the program so that children can calm and self-regulate themselves when feeling anxious, sad, over-stimulated or active! They promote good health through safe exercising. These asanas (postures) also promote increased attention and focusing skills, which are critical for effective learning!

State and national standards are currently the basis for education in our country. We are pleased to report that the Pennsylvania Department of Education has finally recognized that Early Childhood educators serve an important role in implementing these standards. All elementary students are first tested in third grade on the standards. However, the PA Department of Education has developed the Early Learning Core Curriculum Standards for children beginning at birth.

The teachers of South Hills implement the standards throughout their daily/ weekly lesson plans, and your child's quarterly assessment is directly linked to these standards as well. Because of the great length of the standards, we are unable to furnish a copy to each family, so have placed one in a wall rack in each wing of the school. Please look for them near the back outside doors and use them often! These standards can also be accessed through our website. Simply click on our home page, and click again on the PA Department of Education, which is highlighted on that page. Then please scroll down the page to the **Infant/Toddler, Pre-Kindergarten, and Kindergarten standards**, near the bottom of the page.

Parents may be interested in viewing the standards to see what types of skills might further enhance a child's educational experience on the home level.

In addition, South Hills provides home activities for parents to enjoy with their children that will also strengthen their skills. Please access this page through our website and then click on "Home Work". Then select the area of development you would like to focus upon, such as Literacy, Math, Fine Motor, etc.

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT:

South Hills implements portfolio assessment to document and provide evidence of your child's growth, efforts, progress, achievements and goals during his/her time with us. This developmental assessment is an important tool for us in our work with your child, and we know you will come to value it as well. The results of the documentation in the portfolio are used to align the curriculum to your child's unique developmental stages.

For most parents, portfolio assessment is a new term. Please do not feel intimidated by it! South Hills' staff strives for a positive partnership with parents in our joint efforts to create the best educational program for your child, and any staff members will be happy to answer any questions you might have regarding this process. Portfolio assessment is an on-going process; the portfolios are updated continually through your child's time at South Hills.

Portfolios are confidential and only the staff and parents can view portfolios without written permission from parents. We can only release portfolio assessments to parents unless written permission is provided by the parent, and an email address is provided. Assessments are sent to parents through a secure Dropbox account. Instructions for setting up this Dropbox account are included in the parent registration packet, and your email address is required for us to have you accept an invitation to your child's assessment folder. There is a day set aside each quarter for parents to receive their child's assessment via Dropbox, although photos may be sent throughout the year. During this time each quarter, your child's monthly Writing Journal and Self Portrait Journal will be available for viewing in the classroom. A "Parent Response Record" is also included in each portfolio for you to record your thoughts/concerns; we are required to have you complete this form each time you view the portfolio. Your responses are addressed by the teacher within one week if there are any concerns or questions, and **conferences can be arranged at any time.**

A verification form is also required by the state and will be included in each take home folder during Portfolio Assessment viewings. Parent's signatures on this form verifies to the state that South Hills does offer the parents the opportunity to view their child's progress via assessment (Ours is the Portfolio Assessment Approach, which is much more detailed, but we believe more thorough), and that you were given activities to implement at home to further support your child. Those activities are on our website home page and can be accessed by clicking on "Home Work".

South Hills' staff will not compare your child with others in the classroom, since in a multi-age classroom we view each child working at their own stage of development and at their own pace. However, parents will be able to view their child's goals within the classroom, and can also track their child's progress via the Early Learning Standards as they compare to the child's assessment. (The standards can be accessed through our website by clicking on the PA Department of Education highlight on the home page) Our goal is that the children of South Hills attending for at least two years will exceed the benchmarks of the state standards by the time they leave our program. You will be well informed if specific benchmarks are not being met and what plan will be implemented to support your child's success.

The paper components of the original portfolio are sent home when a child withdraws, in June (half day students and Kindergartners) or August (full day students). Copies are made for our records, and to pass along to elementary schools upon parental request. We encourage parents to retain the assessment in the Dropbox folder for future reference.

Here is a summary of portfolio assessment for your reference:

PURPOSE: A collection of documentation samples over time, which positively exhibit/document a child's efforts, progress, and achievements in several specific areas. This assessment is used by the staff to design the most appropriate educational program for your child.

TYPE: The Student's Showcase or Display Portfolio. This body of work is available at all times to the child's parent/guardian and is an ongoing work, added to and edited by the teacher and child throughout the school year.

CONTENTS: Writing samples (child's name/numbers), responses to books being read (book reviews), photographs of projects/activities, math problem samples, art samples, graphs/charts, lists of favorite books, self portraits, reflections by the child on selections or general progress, log of computer/lpad work, music assessment, Spanish/Sign Language assessment, and a thorough skill assessment checklist based on observations. This assessment is sent to parents via Dropbox and is secure.

OWNERSHIP: Items collaboratively selected or documented by the teacher and/or child. The portfolio and all of its contents belong to the child and his/her family/legal guardian, and paper components will be sent home annually, dependent upon the child's enrollment date.

VIEWING: Portfolio Viewing Days are regularly scheduled for November, February, May, and August (See School Calendar). **Portfolios are kept confidential and no part of the portfolios can be released without written permission by the parent.** Elementary schools do request these valuable assessments upon Kindergarten/First Grade enrollment; parents must request copies in writing at least one week in advance and sign a release form. Copies will securely be sent to schools electronically as a pdf file.

CONFERENCES:

Parents are welcome to schedule conferences at any time with the teachers and/or Connie. We encourage all parents to schedule a conference at least annually. Please see Connie for scheduling any conferences and she will arrange for classroom coverage during conference time. Half day preschool parents are scheduled for conferences during the month of November and at year's end in late May/early June. Full day students will have parent conferences scheduled every June.

EARLY INTERVENTION:

Early intervention is a major part of our work and commitment as Early Childhood educators. The staff is trained to note signs of learning, speech, communication, visual, auditory, motor, neurological, psychological, and behavior problems, and act to document, then make referrals as quickly as possible. If we do note any areas of concern regarding your child, our procedure is for the staff to first meet and determine if referral is required (Our team teaching approach is essential for this—all staff members become familiar with all the children and therefore can serve as a part of a support team for fellow teachers as well as families). We then make an appointment to meet with the family, detail our experiences and concerns, share our documentation, then help the family make an appropriate decision regarding course of action. We work closely with the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit and Erie School District Early Intervention Departments and frequently have therapists and educational consultants working in our classrooms. We do implement IEPs (Individual Education Programs) designed by the consultants as part of a child's

individualized program and meet frequently with parents and support staff for the child's benefit. Many children are referred to South Hills by the Tri-County Unit and other agencies because of the structure of the program, curriculum, qualifications of the staff, and our small class size. We take great pride in our success with our children with special needs.

If your child enrolls with an IEP already in place, your child's teacher will meet with you early in enrollment, if not prior to, in order to review the IEP and discuss our approach to meeting the requirements. Services will be arranged to be transferred to South Hills.

If at any time you have a concern regarding your child's development, please feel free to consult with us.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING EARLY INTERVENTION:

We do not discriminate among children or families. However, there are some developmental concerns that South Hills simply does not have the resources to address. Behavioral issues are one. We have high expectations for the children regarding their behavior, since the main focus here is educational. Children who are continually aggressive or disruptive to the learning of the other students cannot remain at South Hills. It does typically take two or three weeks for children to comply with our structured educational routine, and we have many positive means to assist children in this transition. If a child displays mild behavioral difficulties, a plan can be developed linking home and school to positively result in the desired behavioral outcome. A behavioral modification plan will be designed by Connie and implemented. Early Intervention will be requested if the behavioral plan does not result in a positive outcome, indicating more complex concerns. However, if a child's behavior is continually aggressive or disruptive and a teacher's energy, with support, is too centered upon one child and his/her behavioral issues, it would not be appropriate for that child to continue attending South Hills. Many other supportive schools with staff trained specifically in behavioral issues would be much more appropriate and will be suggested.

There are also certain medical conditions in which the staff would not be sufficiently trained, or the proper support would not be available to guarantee the health and safety of a child. Again, we would strive to assist in obtaining a more appropriate placement.

We would do a serious disservice to children who cannot fully participate in the South Hills curriculum due to developmental, behavioral, neurological, or other delays or conditions. South Hills is strongly committed to all children, and certainly Early Intervention is a major part of our work, but there are times when parents and staff must recognize that South Hills is simply not the best placement, especially because we typically do not have special education teachers or classroom aides on staff.

Connie will assist any parent in finding the best placement for their child. If you have a concern regarding your child's development or behavior, please discuss it with Connie so that an appropriate evaluation can be scheduled, if needed.

Before committing to enrollment at South Hills, please seriously consider these criteria to ensure your child's success in our program.

A NOTE REGARDING TOILET TRAINING:

Students are required to be fully toilet trained and independent in order to attend South Hills. We are not a day care center, and are not licensed as an infant/toddler center, so we do not have sanitizing equipment that is required for children who are not trained. Toilet training is not part of our curriculum here at South Hills.

Children cannot attend South Hills in pull-ups or diapers. Children must be able to use the bathroom independently, manage their clothing, sit on a toilet without a training seat, clean themselves, flush, pull their clothing up again and then wash their hands on their own. Teachers cannot leave their lessons/ children to go into the bathroom with a child, and it is often difficult to locate a teacher to assist.

If a child does have an 'accident' in this regard, an office staff teacher will be called into the classroom to assist in the changing of the child's clothing. All staff are trained in the required routine to minimize contamination that will adversely affect other students or staff. **State guidelines do not permit us to rinse soiled clothing**, so clothing will be placed in a ziploc bag and sent home with the required documentation regarding the child's incident.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:

South Hills has a positive reinforcement program implemented into our curriculum. The staff is trained to ignore negative or inappropriate behavior and continually reward positive and appropriate behavior. We all respond to praise and encouragement! Each child earns stickers throughout the day, and can earn prizes, bookmarks, large stickers, awards, etc. Each teacher reinforces good manners, appropriate behavior, and we give much verbal and physical attention (hugs!) to each child. For aggression or repeated inappropriate behavior that disrupts the educational climate of the classroom, the child is gently removed from the classroom and brought to the Activity room/office until s/he is calm and able to rejoin the group. Children will **NEVER** be physically punished, humiliated, or embarrassed!! Respect of each individual child is most important! Parents will be notified when their child has been removed from the classroom; on occasion we may request a conference with the parents to assist in dealing with inappropriate behavior through the means of a behavior modification plan. This plan is for minor/mild behavioral disorders and is a plan to link home and school as we work together toward a child's success. Several children each year are typically on behavioral plans. We cannot discuss these plans with anyone other than the parent of the child who is the focus of the plan. Confidentiality is critical for our program. If you are concerned about the behavior of another child, or our response to it (we often must ignore behaviors that are not aggressive), please do share your concerns, but understand that we cannot discuss the behavior of other children. Trust that we have positive, effective plans in place, and that our first responsibility is for the safety and health of our children. Therefore, children are never placed in compromising situations. Behaviors that negatively affect the classroom are positively resolved with a myriad of strategies.

Continued aggression or behavior that disrupts the educational environment of the classroom cannot be tolerated. A child who does not respond to positive behavior modification plans or who requires Early Intervention related to behavioral issues beyond the scope of our program will not be able to remain at South Hills. To neglect referring a child to other appropriate schools would do a great disservice to children who require a more intense personal plan managed by behavioral specialists to deal with these types of behavioral issues.

The children at South Hills are well behaved, and we do have high expectations regarding behavior and manners. Children are required to be respectful of

their peers and teachers, but to stand up for their rights or express their opinions respectfully. They are encouraged to 'use your words' when they are upset, angry, frustrated, etc., and to talk about their problems and conflicts. There are specific rules for indoor and outdoor conduct that are designed for the health and safety of all of the children. Children are given meaningful activities in which to participate; the structure of the day gives them a focus of expectations, and they learn through our work with them what is expected in terms of behavior. Each teacher has the responsibility of creating a strong sense of community in the classroom, where children are part of a special group who cares for one another. Children support each other, understand that their peers are all learning different skills according to their development, and cheer each other along as they reach their goals! This sense of community assists the children in their efforts to model each other positively and contribute to their class.

WE HUG HERE!

The vast majority of our students spend 45-50 hours each week with us. In an age when most schools are making rules and regulations regarding a "hands off" policy towards students, our philosophy is that young children need the physical attention and tactile reinforcement of hugs and cuddling. Psychologically, children need to know they are special to their teachers, and that we care about them. All of the teachers show great respect and affection toward their students; we do hug and hold our students, cuddle with them and allow them to sit in our laps. If parents are uncomfortable with this, we would encourage them to consider other schools.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD:

The South Hills staff spends 30-50 hours each week with the majority of our students here. Often we notice drastic changes in behavior, and attempt various strategies to deal positively with each child. We do not pry into your personal family life, but if there has been a recent death, separation, illness, move, etc in your family, this information is very helpful for us in dealing with your child. Even an ill pet creates enormous anxiety for children! Supporting your child through stressful situations is a major part of our work! The staff is well trained to help children handle stress and maintain a secure consistent environment. The Caring Place provides us with workshops on grief support. Any family information revealed will be kept strictly confidential.

SENSITIVE SUBJECTS:

There are many subjects that are not appropriate for us to discuss in depth with your child, as we at South Hills strongly feel that parents should be the primary source when dealing with sensitive subjects. All families want to present their own personal beliefs and thoughts to their child, and we have no right to take on that role. We will not be discussing news events, existential questions, sexuality, adoption, etc. We will direct your child's questions/concerns regarding those sensitive topics. We will certainly acknowledge those questions and will inform you regarding them, giving you time to expect them! ("Thank you for sharing that with me—it shows me what a deep thinker you are! Families have their own special way of answering a question like that, and I think it is important that I let [your family] know you would like to discuss that with them. I know they will make time to answer that very important question.")

PAYMENTS AND INVOICING:

As of **June 1, 2016**, all monthly invoices, receipts, and annual statements will be emailed to the email address(es) you've provided for South Hills Dropbox access. Monthly invoices will provide details on the payment due for the given month, regardless of program. Invoices can be paid online (directions will be provided on your emailed invoice) or by check. For security reasons, we prefer to have no cash in the building. Checks can be written to "South Hills Child Development Center Inc.". Please drop your payment in the box located outside Ms Connie's office.

Regardless of program, **payments for each monthly invoice will be due on the first of the following month. Late charges are added to any payments not made after 5 days following the first of the month.** Please refer to your emailed invoices for your monthly tuition balance and due dates.

Please contact our Business Manager, Dylan J.K. Vogt, at dylanjkvogtshills@gmail.com with any questions regarding your payments.

FOR CHILD CARE CREDIT, SOUTH HILLS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER INC.'S FEDERAL TAX NUMBER IS: 20-8087978.

FEES:

Your child is considered a **HALF DAY PRESCHOOL** student if you pay on an annual or monthly basis for a nine month program. Half day preschool students attend only MWF or T/TH from 9:00-11:30 or daily from 12:30-3:10.

Your child is considered a **FULL DAY PRESCHOOL** student if you are billed weekly (within your monthly invoice) and your child attends the full day educational program year round. Please keep your child's status in mind when reading the monthly newsletter, as some things pertain only to full day preschool, others to half day preschool. If there is no specification, assume that the notice applies to both groups. If in doubt, don't hesitate to ask!

Fees for full day preschool and Kindergarten students:

A deposit is required at the time of enrollment. This deposit is equal to one week's fee and will be credited to the child's last week of enrollment, provided that all payments have been up to date and that two weeks advance notice has been given before withdrawal or any schedule changes. A non-refundable registration fee is also required, as included in the annual price list on the brochure. Kindergarten enrollment requires an additional non-refundable materials fee.

Parents are responsible for payment for all days registered on the contract agreement to be completed before enrollment. All days must be paid for regardless of attendance, as our annual budget is based on our enrollment, similar to all private schools. Parents are not responsible for tuition for days that the center is closed for holidays. Those days will be noted in the monthly newsletter. The center does remain open between Christmas and New Year's Day. **WE DO NOT FOLLOW THE MILLCREEK SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHEDULE!** Please check your monthly newsletter for any dates we close. Parents receive a copy of the annual calendar upon enrollment; the calendar is also available via our website's Google calendar.

All schedule changes and withdrawals require a two week notice. Payment is required until the withdrawal date. All payments must be paid in full by your child's last day in order to receive a refund of deposit and avoid late fees.

There is a fee for checks returned for any reason. The current rate is posted on the Parent Bulletin Board in the foyer.

Fees for half day preschool:

Preschool payments are based on the nine month school year. Discounted annual tuition may be made in full by July 1, or may be paid monthly over a period of nine months. The first payment for September is due by July 10. Tuition (monthly at minimum) not paid by this date means forfeiture of placement and all fees. No students will be accepted in the fall class without this first payment. A non-refundable registration fee is required when registering for the preschool classes, as noted on the price sheet in the annual brochure. Refunds for half day preschool fees are based on the unused portion of fees collected. Attending any part of a month requires a full month's payment. **All schedule changes and withdrawals require a two week written notice.**

There is a fee for checks returned for any reason. The current rate is posted on the Parent Bulletin Board in the foyer.

LATE CHARGES/ADDITIONAL CARE:

For Full Day Students:

The center closes at 5:30. Our staff members also have families who need their attention, and the staff is not paid beyond that time. Many of our staff members attend evening classes or work evening jobs. Others have children at other centers that must be picked up. **Parents picking up their children after 5:30 will be charged \$10 for every 15 minute increment after 5:30 to compensate for staff overtime payment.** The regulations require that two teachers must stay with a child whose parents have not arrived, and the teachers must document their time. South Hills Child Development Center Inc. reserves the right to deny enrollment to any family neglecting this closing time.

On occasion, additional care may be needed beyond the days already reserved. Please note that the **DAYS CANNOT BE TRADED!** As a state licensed school, South Hills must always be in compliance with ratio requirements. Extra days can be scheduled if an opening is available. If additional care is required, please see Connie or Beth for a request form. Please note that **once additional services have been scheduled, there are no cancellations and the time requested must be paid for.** Many times an opening is held for a child who cancels, after we have turned down others for the same opening.

For Half Day Students:

Parents whose child is enrolled in the half day preschool program should bring their children at 8:55 for the morning session, and 12:25 for the afternoon session. The half day preschool teachers have responsibilities for our school age program prior to the beginning of the preschool portion of their day, but will have the classroom doors open at those times.

However, parents whose children attend the a.m. class may need care for their children prior to those times, and can contact the school office in advance to make those arrangements. Reservations must be made in advance at current rates. Please contact Connie to make reservations. Children can arrive as early as 7:15.

Half day preschool students can attend lunch from 11:30-12:25 without a reservation on their preschool days. Current charges apply, and can be added to tuition or paid that day. Please just notify the classroom teacher that your child will be staying for lunch when you arrive and have your child bring his/her lunch to enjoy with friends! We will make arrangements to maintain the appropriate teacher arrangements for ratios at lunchtime. **The afternoon preschool session begins at 12:30 and all students from the a.m. session staying for lunch must be picked up by 12:25.**

If your child is not remaining for lunch, parents must arrive within five minutes of the class' ending time (11:30 or 3:10 depending on your child's class time) as we must always be in ratio according to DHS regulations. A late charge of \$5 will be billed to parents who are late, (11:35-11:45; 3:15-3:30) and an additional \$5 will be: charged for each additional 15 minutes of late time (for example, 11:45-12:00/3:30-3:45) This fee has been agreed to in your enrollment contract. At the end of the morning session, the teachers must move full day students into the classroom for lunch and our Pre-Kindergarten Enrichment program, as well as prepare for the afternoon class. At the end of the afternoon sessions, the teacher must be at the bus stop to meet our children for our school age program. If you are late to pick up your child from the morning/afternoon class, s/he may be moved to another classroom or to the office to wait for you. Please respect our attempts to always comply with state regulations by arriving on time to pick up your child.

WITHDRAWAL/SCHEDULE CHANGES

Two weeks written notice is required for withdrawal or any schedule changes. Please see Connie to obtain the proper form for these changes. **Deposits are not refundable unless two weeks notice is given and all payments are current.**

VACATION/SICK DAYS:

Vacations and sick days cannot be granted. South Hills is a private school and a business; we base our budget on the students we have enrolled. Most private schools do not refund tuition for vacations or illness, and we are also not able to do this. However, unlike other area schools, you do not pay for services on the days we close (holidays, for example). If taking a vacation, the options are to pay for the time missed or withdraw from the program. Your child's name is to be placed on the waiting list and when an opening is available, you will be notified.

Placement for students withdrawing for the summer cannot be reserved for the fall. Parents are responsible for payment for at least one half of their child's regular weekly enrollment fee in the summer to guarantee fall placement. Exceptions: Half day preschool student and Elementary students in grades 1-5 will not be scheduled in the summer unless placement is desired and openings are available.

ILLNESS AND MEDICATION:

If you are called because your child is ill and needs your attention, **you must make arrangements to have your child picked up within one hour of our call.** Please do not wait until your child is sick to make arrangements for someone to pick him/her up for you. It is important that you have someone available in the event you cannot leave work to care for your child. This is for the protection of all the children. We pride ourselves on keeping illness to a minimum at South Hills, and it can only be done with the cooperation of all parents. Until you arrive for your child, s/he will be isolated, with the supervision of a staff member.

We are permitted to administer medication that parents send in ONLY when a medical form has been completed and signed by the parent. Please see any staff member for one of these forms. The staff has been trained in the

administration of medication. The parent is responsible for bringing the medication for the child; we do not provide any medication here at the school. Prescription medication must clearly state physician's name, date, dosage, name of medication, times to be administered, expiration date, and your child's name. We cannot give prescription medication that has another person's name on it. Our staff can also not exceed the dosage written on the bottle, even with parental permission. State regulations do not permit us to administer even cough drops, vitamins, chapstick, or fluoride tablets without a complete medication form so PLEASE do not send them in your child's book bag or lunch box. **They must be locked in our cabinet and a medication permission form must be completed.** Two staff members are required by regulation to log the administration of any medication, so parents can always determine when medication was administered.

If your child has an allergy to foods such as peanuts, or a chronic illness such as Celiac, Diabetes, Asthma--you will be asked to have a Medical Plan on file, created with your doctor, so the staff has very specific instructions regarding your child's care. Please make Connie aware immediately if your child has a medical requirement.

Hand sanitizers are not permitted in PA preschools.

Parents will be given a sunscreen permission form each May to complete when bringing your child's specific brand with the expiration date clearly marked. Spray sunscreen is not permitted.

Nonprescription medication **must** state weight or age of child and dosage on the container, as well as the expiration date. If this is not noted, your pediatrician can call or fax the school to give permission for nonprescription medication. If your child has asthma, there is a separate Asthma Procedure form that must be completed so we have a specific plan designed for your child. All staff members are trained to use nebulizers, but we request individual training with the parents as the nebulizers often differ.

Illnesses in the school are always posted on the front door as you exit for parents' information. Please note that **children must be diarrhea, vomiting, and fever free for twenty four hours and children who have been given a prescription antibiotic need to take it for twenty four hours before returning to school.** Other rules for ill children returning to school are posted that are specific to each illness.

In order to prevent infestations of head lice in the school, we request that all students use lice preventive shampoos. Organic shampoos such as Fairy Tales are available at area drug stores and salons. See someone in the office for specifics. This rosemary infused shampoo will repel lice, so prevent infestations. We feel a proactive approach to deterring head lice is much more productive than risking children in group settings (as well as their parents!) to the stress of dealing with lice in school and home.

Grandview Elementary Students: If your child is too sick to attend school, we are not permitted to provide care. It is against the state law for any PA private school to care for school-age children during school hours if school is in session.

SNOW DAYS:

We make every attempt to keep the school open during the winter, as we realize we have many working parents depending on our services. If the school must be closed due to inclement weather, it is announced on WJET, WSEE, WICU, WQLN TV and all the major radio stations. Do not assume that we are closed if Millcreek schools are closed; we make our own decisions regarding the weather. We RARELY close for snow or ice.

GRIEVANCES/NEGOTIATION:

Parents who have complaints/grievances or suggestions regarding classroom concerns, should contact the teacher first. As we encourage conflict resolution with our students, and "using your words" to resolve problems, we also encourage this in our parents, as well as in our own professional conduct. After a conference with the teacher regarding personal grievances, parents may ask for the director's or assistant director's mediation if they feel their grievances are not addressed/resolved. At this time, a conference will be held with the parent, teacher, director, and/or the assistant director. If the grievance is a serious one, written documentation by the parents is requested prior to the conference so the school attorney and representatives from the Department of Human Services and Pennsylvania Department of Education can be present.

From Connie: I cannot resolve a problem if I don't know there is one! I depend on parents to communicate with me if they have any concern. Please: I always want to solve any concern or problem you may have. Please do not complain

to others about South Hills if you haven't spoken with me first! I'm the only one who can begin to solve your problem. And, believe me; I do want to address any concerns you may have!

DISMISSAL:

If it is determined that the program at South Hills does not fit your child's needs, you may be asked to withdraw with one week's notice (Please also refer to the section on Early Intervention). Similarly, if parents violate the policies outlined in the parent handbook and/or as stipulated by the Department of Human Services and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, students will be asked to immediately withdraw.

COMMUNICATION:

Communication is key to our program. We are committed to relaying any information to parents in SIX or more different ways, so there are many opportunities for you to receive information. These means of communication include but are not limited to: your Dropbox-South Hills account on your electronic device, our monthly newsletter online, our classroom monthly newsletter, Twitter, the parent bulletin board, notices in your child's folder, posting outside or inside the classroom, the foyer dry erase board, and verbally. Please understand that communication is a two way process. We work very diligently to communicate in multiple ways, but parents must commit to reading and following through on our communication.

It is a parent's responsibility to read our communication via Dropbox, and our newsletters online, which are published monthly on our website at www.shills.info to keep parents informed of our activities. Please read these newsletters carefully, mark any important dates on your calendar, and keep it for reference throughout the month. The monthly updates include a general newsletter, monthly calendar of events, classroom newsletters, Music/Sign Language/Spanish lesson plans, and a photo gallery of the children's artwork that can be forwarded to loved ones out of town! These newsletters are very important in communicating our activities for your child during the month and our success depends on them in many ways. Please also check the parent bulletin board for any information that occurs during the month that may have missed publication in the newsletter.

Please also follow us on Twitter [@SouthHillsInc](#). This has proven to be a very effective means to communicate quickly with parents. We do not overuse this, but it is extremely helpful during tornado warnings (you will know that we have heard the warnings and have taken appropriate action), and reminders of important events (like hearing screenings requiring permission forms that may have been forgotten). Last minute reminders regarding such events as Sprinkler Day during the summer assist parents as a reminder to send a change of clothes!

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN:

PLEASE NOTE: Our entire Emergency Operations Plan is located on the Parent Bulletin Board, located across from Ms Connie's office.

Our Emergency Operations Plan provides for response to all types of emergencies. EMTA for Millcreek Township and Erie County have approved our plan and we are included in their database for any emergencies.

Depending on the circumstances of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- *Immediate evacuation:* Students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of South Hills in the event of a fire, etc.
- *Sheltering in-place:* Sudden emergency occurrences (ie terrorist attack), severe weather patterns, or hazardous material spills may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- *Evacuation:* Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to the Relocation Facility at McDowell High School.
- *Modified Operation:* May include cancellation/ postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems that make it unsafe for students (such as utility disruptions), but may be necessary in a variety of situations (Note: We do not follow Millcreek's school closings for winter storms).

Our most effective method of contacting parents regarding any emergency or to inform you that the emergency has ended and how to be reunited with your children is the local media. Please listen to any major local TV station or radio for announcements relating any of the emergency actions listed above.

We ask that you not call the school during the emergency. This will keep the main line telephone free to make emergency calls and relay information. We will also let you know via radio or television when we've resolved the situation and it's safe for you to pick up your child.

Your child will be released to you or anyone on your Emergency Contact form that you listed under "Person(s) to Whom Child May be Released." We specifically urge you **not** to attempt to make different arrangements during an emergency. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties.

ROUTINE FOR ENTERING THE SCHOOL:

You will enter the school by the front doors. There is a bench in the foyer in the winter to remove your child's boots. Please do not walk beyond the office area with wet footwear! The building has been designed for much floor play, and wet floors create major problems! In the winter there are blue boot covers inside the security door; please remove your child's boots and put the boot covers over your own boots to keep our school dry. Boots and coats should then be taken to your child's classroom. Coats can be placed in his/her assigned cubby; boots can be placed in special bins provided outside the classroom.

Parents and children will enter the school from the front foyer by entering a number code into the inner door's security system, or by ringing the bell. You will be given the code prior to your child's first day. You will be notified in writing two weeks in advance when the code is changed, and will be verbally told what the new code will be. This is for the protection of your children, but also to give parents immediate access to the building at any time during the day. Your child's teacher may not be in the room when you drop off your child as the teacher's shifts are staggered, but the other teacher of the pod will be there to greet you and your child, and make note of anything we need to know (medication, for example). The children develop close relationships with all the staff members, not only their individual teacher.

When picking up your child, go to your child's assigned classroom. Depending on what activities may be taking place, s/he may be in another room (nap time, large motor, etc). A staff member can direct you to your child. Half day preschool parents are requested to wait in the hall until classes are finished;

teachers will then open their doors and call the children over when they see you so we can more closely control the children's departure.

Full day students: When you drop off/pick up your child, you are required to "sign in" at the bulletin board located across from the office. Please sign your child's name, time you enter the building, then your initials and the time your child was picked up upon leaving. This is required by the state.

After dropping off your child in his/her classroom, feel free to stop by our kitchen for your morning/afternoon coffee or tea! Bring your favorite mug or use one of ours!

NO SMOKING ON THE PREMISES—INCLUDING OUR PARKING LOT!

Small children are fascinated with tiny objects, and it creates an extremely unhealthy situation when children pick up discarded cigarettes! **Please assist us in this area by disposing of lit cigarettes before you get out of your car.** This is obviously for the health and safety of all the children in the center.

Gum is not permitted on the premises. Please do not dispose of gum on our parking lot.

RELEASING CHILDREN:

We are permitted to release your child **ONLY** to his/her parents. In the event that someone else will be picking up your child, you **MUST** complete a written form giving us the details, unless that person is already on the emergency consent form and you have notified us that day. We must be able to validate the identification of any person picking up a child, so a photo ID will be requested. A child will **NOT** be released without validation, so please let anyone picking up your child know this! **IN AN EMERGENCY**, verbal designation is permitted (a phone call). We have a form that must be completed while the parent is on the line, and we must call back to confirm that we spoke with the parent. We prefer **NOT** to do verbal designations; so if you know in the morning that someone else will be picking up your child, please take the time to complete the required form or to notify us. And, please remember, although parents often complain about this procedure, **IT IS FOR YOUR CHILD'S PROTECTION!**

In the event of separation or divorce of parents, the state law now states that we must release the child to either parent. If you do not want us to release your

child to his/her mother/father, we cannot comply with your wishes, unless a court order of restriction against a parent has been granted, and that court order MUST be in our files. If this may create a problem for you, or an unsafe situation for your child, please speak to Connie so that we might be aware of any unusual or complicated situations.

"The first and primary concern of the owner and staff of South Hills Child Development Center Inc. is the child's safety. Under no circumstances will a child be permitted to voluntarily leave South Hills with a parent, custodian, or other parent in loco parentis when said person is obviously intoxicated or otherwise incapable of transporting the child home safely.

In the event that someone does appear at South Hills Child Development Center Inc. to pick up a child while s/he is visibly intoxicated, or otherwise incapable of transporting a child home safely, the Millcreek police will be immediately contacted and it will be requested that the police come immediately to the school. It will be the decision of the police as to whether the child will be handed over to the individual for transportation purposes."

LUNCHES/SNACKS:

Every 3-6 weeks, each **full day** parent will be asked to contribute snack to their child's group. In the morning, the children enjoy fruit, grain, and water. In the afternoon, a fresh vegetable, grain and water is offered. Hummus, yogurt, cheeses are often added as well. An acceptable snack list is included in each registration packet, along with the state regulations for snacks. (no grapes, carrots, popcorn for example) and we ask that you select one of the listed items for your child's scheduled snack day. Your child's snack day will be posted on the wall next to your child's classroom; a reminder notice will be sent home approximately one month before snack is due. **Please provide napkins, cups, spoons, bowls, and plates if required for your snack.** PLEASE NOTE: BY STATE REGULATION, CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL ARE NOT PERMITTED TO USE ANY CUPS, PLATES, OR BOWLS MADE FROM STYROFOAM! If your child has major food allergies or sensitivities, we request that you provide snack for your child; you will not be placed on the class snack calendar.

If your child eats lunch at the school, please pack your child's lunch at home and sort those items containing milk, cheese, fresh/raw fruit and vegetables, meat and fish (yogurt, meat sandwiches, etc) and place them in a separate

labeled gallon Ziploc bag, to be returned to you daily. DHS requires that those items be refrigerated. Each pod has a small refrigerator. When you arrive with your child, please remove those items to be refrigerated and place them in the classroom refrigerator; we will be sure your child has those items at lunch time. **Please label all containers, utensils in your child's lunchbox. Please send all utensils required, as well as two napkins—one for a placemat and one for face/hands.** Lunchboxes are not permitted on tables due to the excessive germs transmitted from them; they are placed on the children's chairs for opening, and then placed under the child's chair during lunch.

We do not have a microwave available for the children's lunchtime use.

Our lunch "rule" is that dessert should be eaten last, and all food not eaten should be repacked for home. In this way, you can see what your child has eaten during the day. If something in your child's lunch box does not come back home, assume it was eaten. We do encourage children to eat, but never coerce. Mealtimes are pleasant times of socializing and eating together, reinforcing manners and social skills.

The children say a Christian prayer and Jewish blessing before all snacks and meals. It is not required that the children say the prayer. The prayer is said in unison after everyone is served and before eating together.

"God is Great; God is Good; Let us thank Him for our food. Amen."
"Blessed are You, oh Lord our God, Ruler of the World, who brings forth bread out of the Earth. Amen."

In sign language, the children then thank their parents for providing a beautiful meal...

CELEBRATIONS:

We enjoy parties for all the major holidays. Our parents have always been extremely generous during our celebrations and contribute the special snack items and decorative napkins/tablecloths on these occasions. We can use volunteers for these days, and invite all our parents to attend if you can! Please check your newsletter for dates of parties and look for sign-up sheets outside your child's classroom to volunteer your services or contribute items for the festivities. **PLEASE NOTE:** We are unable to distribute 'treat bags' or gifts to the children from parents. Although we appreciate the generous spirit of all of our parents, special treats, gifts bags, and other items cannot be accepted and will be sent home if parents do bring them. We have permitted this in the past, but due to children's allergies and multiple parental concerns, we have had to eliminate this practice. We would appreciate your support of this policy. **The focus of the school parties is community—sharing special times together with friends and family, rather than gifts and sweets. We welcome all of our families to our parties! The rooms may be crowded, but we have some memorable celebrations together!** South Hills formally celebrates the Harvest, Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Valentines Day, Independence Day, and any other holidays that are important to our students and their families!

Yes; parking is a concern during parties. You will receive specific directions prior to celebrations.

WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL NEED:

Each child should have the following at school:

- a complete changes of clothes (underclothes, socks, shirt, pants) in a labeled gallon Ziploc bag
- a tote bag/back pack to carry treasures, creations, notes, etc between school and home.
- a slumber bag, if your child will nap.
- a lunch box, (**full day preschoolers only, although half day preschoolers do have the option of staying for lunch from 11:35-12:25**).
- a box of 100- 5 ounce cups (**half day preschoolers only**)
- a family photo (please send in prior to your child's first day).
- a bike helmet, clearly labeled
- a family sized box of LOTION FREE tissues (**twice a year**).
- **sneakers are required daily** since our curriculum includes daily action based learning.
- bandaids of various sizes (**on a rotating classroom basis**)

Once sunny weather arrives, your child will need **sunscreen**. The state requires a minimum of 15 protection, and the **expiration date must be visible and current**. Please apply prior to bringing your child to school; we will reapply in the afternoon for full day students. Children attending in the summer will also need a **change of clothes and a towel** for Sprinkler Play Days, and **water shoes that have closed toes and heels**.

The children learn cognitive skills (sight words, beginning sounds, etc.) via kinesthetic activities on the playground or on carpet grids indoors. **Sneakers are required as part of our dress code. Children without sneakers cannot participate in our daily large motor activities or outdoor activities.**

ALL ITEMS MUST BE CLEARLY MARKED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME!!

We have MANY similar items and it is often impossible for us to determine which belongs to whom! Marking every item that belongs to your child, including coats, boots, helmets, and food containers/lids, makes a teacher's job much easier!

BRINGING ITEMS FROM HOME:

The children should not bring money to school. This is a continuing problem when children have coins in their possession that end up misplaced or lost. Please, there is no reason for your child to have money at school.

NO TOY GUNS, "WEAPONS" OR ACTION FIGURES ARE PERMITTED! These toys have no place in our program. Children are discouraged from bringing any toys to school--they are easily lost or broken. Our program offers the use of many play materials; toys from home are unnecessary. We cannot be responsible for any broken or lost toys/items belonging to students.

TRANSITIONS:

Teachers are required to give two weeks notice before leaving their positions here at South Hills. The vast majority give at least one month notice, although circumstances are always unpredictable and it is always possible that teachers will leave abruptly. When a teacher resigns, a new teacher is hired as soon as possible. Ideally, the two teachers work together for at least two weeks before the teacher leaves, so that the transition is a smooth one. Parents are informed by letter when transitions will be made, and any questions or concerns can be addressed to your child's teacher or to Connie.

South Hills has a low teacher turnover compared to most preschools--our average teacher stays two years, and several of our current staff have been here over eight years. South Hills has been fortunate to attract many outstanding teachers. Most teachers have a goal to teach in the public schools, however, and their experience at South Hills helps them to achieve their goal.

The children are assigned to a classroom with one head teacher, but work with many teachers throughout the day. In creating a sense of community, the children also develop strong relationships with the Sign Language/Spanish teacher, the Technology teacher, the other teacher in the pod, and the entire staff of South Hills. These close adult relationships are helpful during teacher absences, and teacher breaks throughout the day as well as teacher planning time and meetings. We want the children to be comfortable and secure with all of the staff.

We can only accept 12 children into our Kindergarten program; students are selected from our waiting list, so please ask to be placed on that list if you are interested in our Kindergarten program. When children transfer from the classroom to our Kindergarten class, there is an orientation program for the children to attend prior to the move. The staff is especially sensitive to the difficulties that may arise when children transition from our program to elementary schools. We spend time talking with the children as a group about these transitions and use literature to support their concerns, fears. The teachers will give additional appropriate support to any individual child who seems to be experiencing anxiety or stress due to this anticipated transition, and parents are certainly included in this process. In addition, parents are encouraged to create social stories to assist with transitions. The guidelines for creating social stories are located on our website under "Home Work".

Children who are four before September 1 and attend our full day preschool are also transitioned to a same age classroom through our PreKindergarten Enrichment program. This program is offered approximately one afternoon per week and includes enrichment literacy, math and creative arts activities in the areas of Art and Artists, Music and Musicians, Literature and Authors. This program especially focuses on increasing observation and attention skills. Parents will be contacted in August regarding their child's enrollment in this special program, which has had a positive impact on a child's transition to Kindergarten.

Children transitioning to elementary schools will have the support of the staff as well. Please let us know what school your child will be attending when it is time to leave South Hills. We will have your child's records copied for you to have available for enrollment, and will assist with the transition for your child by providing programs, discussions, role playing, literature, etc. to help ease the transition for your child. School districts will meet with our teachers for any children with special needs and IEPs who will be transitioning so that they might be offered additional support as they make this important move from our program to elementary school. Parents will be contacted to also attend these meetings.

South Hills has cooperative relationships with all area preschools and elementary schools. If your child is transitioning from our school to another, we will be happy to forward records and most recent portfolio assessments. **Please contact us at least a week in advance to sign release forms and arrange for the transfer of records.**

SUMMER PROGRAM:

Our summer program differs in some ways from our fall and spring terms. The program is a year round program for most of the children attending here, so there is little change in their day to day schedule except that they participate in more outdoor activities. Because we have so many educators whose children attend here, schedules for many students are reduced (parents are required to reserve half of their schedule in the summer to reserve placement for the fall). We also have "Sprinkler Day" for the children to enjoy throughout the summer (details in the summer newsletters). A change of clothes, towel and closed toe/heel water shoes are required for these days, which are announced in advance. Full day students remain with the same group throughout their time here at South Hills until they enter Kindergarten.

Many South Hills alumni return to us in the summer for a school-age summer educational camp. Those students, grades one through five, enjoy many activities that enhance the learning that takes place during their elementary school time, typically with strong emphasis on math, reading, science and social studies as well as gross motor skills. They also interact with the younger children by reading with them and presenting special programs (chorus, drama, puppet shows, etc).

Nature based activities are a major focus here; in the summer, the children enjoy gardening, bird watching, butterfly watching, composting and vermicomposting activities. We have a vegetable garden, a sensory garden filled with fragrant edible herbs, and a variety of flower pots and gardens. **South Hills' playground is certified through the National Wildlife Federation as a Natural Wildlife Habitat.**

PARENT PARTICIPATION:

Parents are not required to participate in our daily program. However, our door is always open for those who would like to see their child in a classroom setting. Each classroom has one way observation windows; we encourage parents to stop whenever possible throughout the day to watch their child's participation in the day's activities.

If you have an interesting talent or profession, please consider sharing it with our children! Our multicultural program relies heavily on parental input. We do encourage parents to participate as much as possible; feel free to spend lunch with us if your schedule permits! Our program has been greatly enriched by the generosity and talents of our parents!

We encourage parents to volunteer for all celebrations, and to be a Guest Reader periodically throughout the school year. Please contact your child's teacher to volunteer.

Each classroom also has **Parent Coordinators** who schedule 'field trips' for families during evenings and weekends to link the units of study in the classroom with authentic experiences. This also provides an opportunity for families to get to know and support each other and share in the work of the classroom. Parent Coordinators also arrange for guests within our community to visit the classroom and share their knowledge and experiences with us. In the past, we have welcomed jazz musicians, yoga teachers, airline pilots, zookeepers, dancers, Sudanese refugees, physicians, dentists, origami artists, a descendant of Pocahontas, a Chinese calligrapher and many more guests who enrich us all! Parents interested in volunteering as a Parent Coordinator are encouraged to speak with their child's teacher.

Parents are asked to participate annually in the decision making process regarding the school through a survey. Responses to the survey are seriously considered when the school's annual plan is created. Parental feedback is extremely important to us.

HOME CUSTOMS AND LANGUAGE:

In the enrollment packet, parents are asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their child so that we might have some background knowledge before they begin with us. Our purpose is to include any important holidays/celebrations in our work here at South Hills, and to be aware of a child's home language. Services to support us in our work with children whose home language is not English are available through the International Institute.

This questionnaire is also helpful in assisting children as they transition into our school, especially if they need comforting.

ADDITIONAL PA DEPT. OF EDUCATION/DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES/OCDEL REGULATIONS:

* All registration forms, including Child Health Report, and Emergency and Parental Consent form must be COMPLETELY filled out—no student can be admitted without this form or with information missing from this form. All teachers will have a copy of this information in the event of an emergency.

* Financial agreements, emergency consent forms, asthma and food allergy plans MUST be updated every six months.

* A copy of the regulations governing preschools by DHS are posted on the school bulletin board for your reference. By state regulation, no child can be admitted without current immunizations. If your child has not received all his/her immunizations, you are required to have them administered immediately, unless there are medical or religious reasons for not doing so. In that case, a signed and dated letter from you (for religious reasons) or your doctor (for medical reasons) must be on file with us. Health assessments are current for one year after "Date of Exam" and a well child physical exam must be scheduled with your doctor to complete a new health assessment each year.

* If your child has an injury here, no matter how minor, we complete an accident report. This will inform you of the accident, how and when it occurred, and what treatment was administered. All staff members are trained every 2 years in pediatric CPR and first aid. A copy of accident reports is placed in your child's file, and another is placed in a separate annual accident file.

If your child is injured here and we need to contact you, we do have to document any emergency room treatment and contact DHS in Pittsburgh within 24 hours with an oral and written report. If your child does require emergency room treatment, please contact us as soon as possible after treatment. We are required to obtain specific details about treatment, diagnosis, etc, for our report.

Any head injuries, however minor they appear, are immediately reported to parents.

* A daily schedule and daily lesson plans are posted in each classroom.

* **NO PETS/ANIMALS ARE PERMITTED IN THE FACILITY!** Even walking into the building to pick up your child with a pet in your arms is not permissible. We have many children who are asthmatic and/or allergic to animals. The state also has strict requirements for pets/animals in the building.

* We keep parents notified of any communicable diseases. Please check the main exit door for any notices.

* Fire drills are conducted every 60 days. All staff members receive annual training in fire safety by the area fire department in the maintenance of smoke detectors, routine during fire drills, and use of fire extinguishers. Carbon monoxide detectors are located in every room and tested monthly. Fire extinguishers are checked monthly and maintained twice/year and as needed.

* Tornado and severe weather drills are conducted throughout the year. Parents will be notified of all drills via the foyer bulletin board.

*The state requires all meat, dairy, egg, fresh fruit and vegetables in lunch boxes be placed in the refrigerator. (Yes; the state requires bananas be refrigerated!) An ice pack is not considered acceptable by the state to keep these foods consistently at 40 degrees or cooler.

A FINAL THOUGHT FROM CONNIE:

South Hills does not exist exclusively for children. My staff and I want to support you as a parent in any way that we can. We recognize how difficult it can be to leave your child in the care of others! Here your child will have the support of staff members, develop important friendships, and share many special times, while learning in an engaging educational atmosphere. Your child comes first here, and you as a parent come next. Our partnership with parents is essential to the success of our work with your child. Since 1975, it has been my goal to provide outstanding service to you and your family, to make the transition between home and school as positive as possible, to provide a high quality developmentally appropriate educational experience, and to allow you to feel confident that your child is receiving loving, positive care. There is a real sense of community here between child, parents, and teachers that I personally love. My goal is that your child leaves South Hills for elementary school with confidence and a passion to learn! This is the beginning of a life-long educational experience for your child! It is an honor to be among your child's first teachers. I look forward to having you and your child join us as part of the South Hills' family and experience!