

UNITY 4 KIDS
Parent Handbook



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MISSION

The Mission of the Unity 4Kids Preschool Program is to provide children with the skills necessary to succeed in school. The Center accomplishes this through a high quality, dual-language program with an emphasis on self-discovery, literacy skills and parent involvement as well as, family support services

PHILOSOPHY

At Unity 4Kids Preschool, we believe children should have the opportunity to learn in a nurturing, safe and culturally sensitive environment. We respect and support the individual differences of children and realize children learn best in an environment where they feel understood and accepted.

Children learn best when they are involved in meaningful hands-on activities. At Unity4Kids we provide each child with developmentally appropriate activities that foster active learning. As children are encouraged to experiment with materials, make choices and ask questions, children gain self-confidence and achieve the skills necessary for academic success.

OUR GOALS

The Unity 4Kids Preschool goals are listed as follows:

- ❖ Prepare children to be lifelong learner, ready to learn when they enter school.
- ❖ Provide children a safe facility with the opportunity to develop social and emotional skills through developmentally appropriate experience.
- ❖ Work as a team with the parents in order to enhance your child's early childhood experience and ensure continuous communication.
- ❖ Offer support and referrals to appropriate community agencies for those in need of services.

HOURS OF OPERATION AND HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

The center is open Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
The center is license to operate until 6:00pm. If a child stays after 6:00pm, a late fee will be charge. . If the child stays after 6:00pm and the preschool staff cannot reach the parents, then the staff will call the police to pick up the child.

Unity 4Kids requires that VPK students arrive no later than 9:00 a.m.

We are closed for the following holidays:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas' Eve, Christmas' Day and New Year's Eve.

Any closures will be posted two weeks in advance; however, we reserve the right to close programs in the case of an emergency.

Weekly tuition is due in full every week regardless of school closures.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Crisis and Disaster Program

Natural disasters (tornado, hurricane, flood, earthquake or wildfire) and **Major Accidents**, robbery, assault, terrorism/intruder and other types of crisis can affect the well-being of the children/teachers/HUF staff and operations at this facility.

As required by OSHA under Regulatory Standards 29 CFR 1910.36, 1910.38, 1910.157 and 1910,165 as well as Best Practice Guidance: OSHA, EPA, DOH, Homeland Security, the agency will maintain this safety program to help mitigate the effects of such occurrences. This safety program is intended to address comprehensively the issues of

evaluating and identifying potential threats to our employees and clients, developing response procedures, emergency safety programs, written procedures, and communicating information concerning these hazards to employees.

The agency's management will:

1. Maintain a disaster/crisis programs which outline the types of situations and contingency programs for action should a crisis or disaster occur. These include evacuation programs, and activities that must occur before during and after the occurrence of a crisis or disaster.
2. Assure all personnel are aware of their responsibilities and actions to take during a crisis or disaster.
3. Arrange with community resources, as part of our crisis plan to provide assistance for employees/clients who require it.
4. Establish and communicate a chain of command for incidents and events.

The agency's management and supervisors:

1. Assure all Hispanic Unity employees including Unity 4Kids staff and children are accounted for and safe during a crisis or disaster.
2. Train employees and staff in their responsibilities and actions to take during a crisis or disaster (i.e. evacuation wardens).
3. Follow established procedures during a crisis or disaster.
4. Perform evacuation drills annually or as needed to assure that employees and staff understand and can follow their established procedures.

The agency's employees will:

1. Attend training.
2. Follow established procedures during a crisis or disaster.

The agency's Safety Officer (as needed or required) will assist in the development and implementation of this program.

Hurricane Preparedness

The Center may close in the case of a hurricane watch or warning. It is up to the discretion of Hispanic Unity's administration to officially close the organization and the Center. If the organization is not closed, the Center's staff is expected to report to work as scheduled. If a hurricane watch or warning is issued for Broward County then please await notification by one of HUF's Directors for closing.

If HUF is closed during the day, the Center staff must remain until the last student is picked up. It is appropriate for staff members to leave to pick up their own children, however they must check with the Center Director to ensure appropriate Center coverage.

If a hurricane is approaching within the next 36 hours, then staff must take the necessary actions to protect the classroom and workspace. Notification will be sent from the Facilities Manager informing staff of the proper way to ensure that all materials and equipment are preserved during a weather event.

If notification is not received as described above, then staff must contact the Director for full instructions.

Incident Reporting

- **Minor Incidents** - defined as an injury that occurs at school that do not warrant emergency services but require first aid i.e. cuts, scrapes, minor bruises or minor reaction to bug bites during normal activities.

In case of a child’s injury, the teacher or teacher’s assistant must:

1. Provide necessary support and attention to injured child.
2. Contact Parent regarding incident.
3. Fill out an Incident Report (must be filled out by the staff member who witnessed the event)
4. Submit Incident Report to Center Director by end of day.
5. Center Director will file original in child’s folder and submit a copy to the Facilities Manager.

- **Emergency Incidents** – defined as serious injuries that require immediate medical attention i.e. head injury, broken bone or profuse bleeding.

In case of a serious injury, the teacher or teacher’s assistant must:

1. Call 9-1-1 emergency medical assistance and explain condition of child.
2. Stay with child until emergency services arrives at Center.
3. The other staff member in the classroom must contact Center Director and parents to advise them of situation. At this time the Center Director will inform Facilities Manager.
4. Accompany child in ambulance if parent is not present (child’s medical card should be with staff

member for important information needed by hospital).

5. Fill out an incident report documenting incident and submit to Facilities Manager with all proper witness statements, signatures and signature of parents.
6. Copy of incident to be placed in child's file.

Lock Down

Unity 4Kids Preschool Program policy is to ensure that all children, staff, parents and visitors remain in a safe and secure location in the event of a possible personal/school threat or critical incident and that exposure to danger and possible risk of harm are minimized.

Example of critical incidents could include:

- Death of a person on school or HUF property during school hours
- Children or staff taken hostage
- A natural disaster in the local community
- Aggressive or malicious trespass of people on facility grounds or around the area
- Any other behavior that could indicate a potential Lock Down situation.

Notification

In the event of a critical incident requiring "Lock Down", the person witnessing the incident from the Center staff or HUF Staff must notify Center Director or HUF Directors. In addition, Center will follow all Lock Down situations as implemented by the School Board of Broward County.

Lock Down Alarm Procedure

1. An announcement will be made over the public announcement system to the Center and the entire Hispanic Unity facility. This will indicate that the school and HUF facility should engage in lock down procedures.
2. The Facilities Manager or HUF Director will make the announcement to confirm the status as follows:

"This is a LOCK DOWN"

"This is not a fire drill"

“Everyone is to stay in the classroom or workstation, remain seated and keep calm and quiet”

Student and Staff Movement

Children and staff of the Center will remain in their classroom and ensure that occupants are safe by closing and locking the doors that could permit access to the room. Staff is responsible for keeping the children calm.

If a Lock Down is necessary while the children are out on the playground or outside of the classroom area, they are to be immediately returned to the classroom.

Responsibilities

Center Director, Facilities Manager or HUF Director will call authorities and follow instructions as directed and communicate relevant instructions to Center staff.

Center Director (or Facilities Manager in absence of Director) will ensure that all staff and children are informed and in a safe area.

Center Assistant to answer possible telephone calls from parents and inform Broward County ESOL staff of situation as some of the parents may attend English classes at the HUF facility across the street.

Teacher/Teacher Assistants are to remain with their class and take the attendance roll immediately. Teachers are to close and lock the classroom door and instruct children to sit in a designated area of the room and stay low.

All Staff/Children/Visitors are to remain in the locker room until the “All Clear” is given.

All Clear Signal

The “All Clear” announcement will be communicated over the public announcement system by the Facilities Manager or HUF Director. The outcome of the incident will be reported to all staff. The “All Clear” announcement will state the following:

“The LOCK DOWN has now ended”

“Everyone may move around the facility freely”

OUR "OPEN-DOOR" POLICY

Unity 4Kids has an "open door" policy. We encourage the parents to visit the school any time. We believe that the interaction between you and our staff will benefit your child. Please feel free to call anytime to check on your child. There will always be someone to answer your questions.

OUR STAFF

Unity 4Kids staff consists of trained, experienced and State Certified teachers who are licensed in their fields.

TUITION AGREEMENT

Weekly tuitions are due one week in advance (by Wednesday of each week).

Make payments to the office staff (preschool director or office assistant). ONLY Cash and Credit Card payments will be accepted.

Late Payments

Tuition is due one week in advance (by Wednesday of each week). The program provides a 2-day grace period without applying a late fee. Payments made after 12:00 p.m. on Friday will be subject to a \$15 late fee.

Unpaid tuition may result in the child losing his/her placement in the program.

Late Pick-up Fees

Children must be picked up by the center's close time. No later than 6:00 p.m.

Children picked up after center's close time will be charged a late fee of \$5 for the first ten minutes; \$1 per minute thereafter.

Absences

Absences due to illness or family reasons will not affect tuition. Tuition is due weekly until the child has been officially withdrawn from the program.

Withdrawal Procedures

A 72-hour (3 days) Notice is required to process a refund of any prepaid tuition.

Submit a "Notification of Withdrawal" Form to the Preschool Director in order to officially withdraw a child from the program. The notification form must be signed and dated by the parent and Preschool Director.

CHILD ASSESSMENTS , OBSERVATIONS AND REFERRAL PROCESS

Children will be assessed and observe in the following areas: Social Skills, Social Skills, Math Skills, Reading/Writing Skills, Fine Motor Skills, and Gross Motor Skills. The children are assessed three times during the school year on September- January and April. This allows us to identify starting points of each child more accurately, giving each child a chance to start from a positive point of reference, and feel success as they continue to grow and develop. Children will be referred according to their need. Organizations such as FIDLERS, Kids in Distress and Family Central provide Counseling Services, therapies, etc. U4K follow up every referral and continue to work with each child.

PARENTS-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher Conferences will be scheduled twice during the school year, after the application of the assessments in September and in March before school year ends. This meeting will provide a formal opportunity to exchange information regarding your child's achievement, discuss any concerns and develop a plan of working together for your child.

We encourage you to maintain an open communication with your child's teacher. You may request a conference with your child's teacher and/or the center's director if you have any concerns.

SECURITY, ARRIVALS, DEPARTURES AND PICK- UPS

Signing In and Out

Parents are required to sign in each child upon arrival, to leave the child in the care of staff member upon departure.

Every child must be signed out.

Only authorized persons are allow to pick up the child.

Please notify the Director of any changes immediately.

In case of Divorce parents, it is important that the registering parent indicate on the enrollment application who has legal custody and who may pick up the child up.

The parent who has legal custody of the child is required to provide the school with a copy of the divorce decree. This confidential document will placed in the child's file.

Cell phones are not allowed in the classroom.

Late Pick-ups

Children must be picked up by the center's close time. No later than 6:00 p.m.

Children picked up after center's close time will be charged a late fee of \$5 for the first ten minutes; \$1 per minute thereafter.

. If the child stays after 6:00pm and the preschool staff cannot reach the parents, then the staff will call the police to pick up the child.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR OF AN ADULT

Should a parent become disruptive or violent, use abusive language, carry a weapon or threaten any staff member, the service of this client's services will be terminated.

ILLNESSES AND SAFETY CONCERNS

Unity 4Kids is very concerned for your child's safety and the well-being. Please check your child at home before coming to school, and examine your child before taking him/her home at the end of the day. If you have any questions, or concerns, please do not take your child outside of the school until you have spoken with the person in charge. Please assist us by sending your child to school in closed shoes. Open sandals may cause accidents with your child's feet.

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to us. For the protection of your child and other children at the center, when a child is ill, he or she will not be permitted to attend the center that day. If your child becomes ill while at the center, you will be requested to pick your child up immediately. In such an event, your child will be isolated from other children until you arrive.

It is important to you know that your child must have the physical examination every two years. The immunizations must be renewed by the date indicated on your child's individual shot record.

The following is the guideline that promotes a safe and healthy environment:

If your child has any of these symptoms, please keep him/her home:

- ❖ First 3 days of a cold, especially if the child is uncomfortable and has a runny nose or a persistent cough.
- ❖ Fever within the last 24 hours (temperature of 100° F or 38° C or greater) Child should remain home until 24 hours after he/she no longer has a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- ❖ Vomiting within the last 24 hours
- ❖ Diarrhea (2 or more) within the last 24 hours.
- ❖ Excessive wheezing or coughing
- ❖ Significant tiredness, irritability, crying
- ❖ Rash (not heat or allergy related)
- ❖ Eye discharge
- ❖ Requires a level of attention and care that would jeopardize the health and safety of other children

The following are a list of common communicable disease with information regarding when the child is no longer contagious and can return to school:

- ❖ Influenza and Swine Flu - Child should remain home until 24 hours after he/she no longer has a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- ❖ Chicken pox - Child is no longer contagious once all the sores have dried and crusted over.
- ❖ Conjunctivitis (pinkeye) and yellow discharge from the eye - It's no longer contagious after 24 hours of antibiotics.
- ❖ Head lice - Child can return to school after he's been thoroughly treated.
- ❖ Impetigo - Children with this skin disease are no longer contagious after 24 hours of antibiotics.
- ❖ Ringworm - After a child has started taking the oral medication and washed his/her hair once with antifungal shampoo, the child is no longer contagious. Child should return to the healthcare provider in 6 weeks to be certain the ringworm has been cured. If the ringworm is not yet cured, the child will need to take a different medicine.
- ❖ Scabies - Once treated with a topical medication, it is no longer contagious. However, all fabrics that the child may have come in contact with should be washed.
- ❖ Strep throat - It's usually not contagious after 24 hours of antibiotics.

MEDICATION

If your child requires prescription or non-prescription medication during school hours, please follow these procedures:

1. Bring the medication to an office staff and sign an “Authorization for Medication” form.
2. Medication must be in the original container. Prescription medication must have a prescription labels with child’s name, doctor’s name, dosage and directions for administration.
3. If necessary, pick up the medication from the classroom teacher at the end of the day. The next morning, please give the medication to the office staff not the classroom teacher.

DRESS CODE - WHAT TO WEAR

Your child’s day will be filled with fun, discovery and exploration. Your child has to wear comfortable day clothing, socks and closed shoes (Sandals and tank top are not allowed).

Also, your child should always have an extra change of clothes labeled with your child’s name inside of the classroom.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

The goal of discipline at the center is to assist children in gaining self-respect, a respect for others and problem solving abilities. Our goal is to

The goal of discipline at the center is to assist children in gaining self-respect, a respect for others and problem solving abilities. Our goal is to encourage children to become creative, independent, and responsible and socially mature human being. This involves learning to make responsible choices and accepting the consequences of such choices. Guidance takes several forms:

- ❖ Environment: A place designed for children, the furniture is child sized, and there are lots of hands on experiences.
- ❖ Curriculum: Developmentally appropriate activities based on the children's interest and level of readiness.
- ❖ Positive Behavior: We reinforce the behaviors we encourage. Catch them being good!
- ❖ Redirection: Often interesting a child a child in another activity can eliminate a potential difficulty. We might ask a child to help us or send them to a different area to play.
- ❖ Parent-Teacher Conference

Children shall not be subjected to:

- ❖ Discipline with severe, humiliating or frightening
- ❖ Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest or toileting
- ❖ Spanking or any other form of physical punishment
- ❖ Scare tactics or verbal threats.

MEALS

Unity 4 Kids provides nutritional meals. Nutrition is a very important part of learning. The food service at Unity 4 Kids is funded by the State Department of Education, Food and Nutrition Service, School Food Program in Tallahassee, Florida

A full Breakfast is served between 8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

A Nutritious Lunch is served between 12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Early Snack is provided by Staff between 2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Snack is provided between 4:15 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.

(All food and allergy restrictions will only be allowed with a doctor's note)

FAMILY EVENTS & PARENTING CLASSES

Unity 4Kids provides a quarterly night event for each family in the center. This event allows parents and children to share in hands-on activities to enrich and enhance their inner-family relationships. Also, parents will have the opportunity to receive Annual Parenting Classes.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

The center welcomes you to share your child's birthday with us. You can bring in a store bought cake, pizza, cupcakes. Balloons and goodie bags are not allowed. Please schedule the celebration with your child's teacher in advance in the following hours: 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN (VPK)

VPK is a constitutional amendment passed by Florida's voters in November 2002 that made available a voluntary prekindergarten program for all 4 years old by fall 2005. VPK is designed to prepare 4 years old for kindergarten and build the foundation of their educational success; given them the opportunity to perform better in school and throughout life.

Unity 4Kids offers a complete program each day in addition to the hours included in the VPK hours (9:00am-12:00am). Daily attendance is required by VPK program. Please see VPK Attendance Policy.

LENDING LIBRARY

Our lending Library is a collection of 72 popular children books and 20 books in Spanish. These books are available to every family in the preschool at no cost. Each Book comes in a clear bag with an activity card. The activity card contains a list of tips and ideas for book related activities you can do with your child. Please check out a book in the preschool office and returned back to the preschool office every week. We keep the track of the amount of books that the kids are reading every week.

We encourage you to read with your child daily because it will help to stimulate your child's imagination. Also develop your child interest in reading, improve your child's listening skills, build vocabulary and create a bond between you and your child.

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

The Unity 4 Kids Preschool Program is open to all children between 3years and 5 years old. We are an equal opportunity provider. Applications for enrollment are considered without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATIONS

Parental Custody/Restraining Orders

Teachers and staff are responsible for adhering to legal documents regarding parental custody and restraining orders pertaining to children attending the Center.

Photographs and Video Recording

All parents/legal guardians of children attending the Unity 4Kids Preschool Program will be asked to sign a consent form allowing their children – as well as themselves - to be photographed and/or videotaped. This signed slip must be contained in each child's participant as well as, parent's file. Copies will also be kept in a master file kept inside the classroom.

TERMINATION OF CARE BY THE PROGRAM

If the program staff does not feel that it is meeting the child's needs, we reserve the right to terminate the care agreement on a timeline that is in the child's best interest. Other reasons that may result in the termination of a specific care agreement are as follows:

1. Non-payment for childcare services and/or lack of adherence to our tuition payment policies.
2. Lack of parental cooperation with the program's efforts to resolve differences and/or to meet the child's needs through parent/staff meetings or conferences.
3. Abusive behaviors and/or verbal threats by parents toward the program staff or other parents (immediate termination).
4. Child exhibits special needs or needs related to serious illnesses that the program cannot meet. In this case, the program staff will make every effort to involve the parents, and possibly other persons (as appropriate), in order to decide on the best course of action for this child, prior to any termination.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Hispanic Unity of Florida recognizes that any information obtained is of a confidential nature. Hispanic Unity of Florida and its employees agree to fully comply with the preserving confidentiality and agree not to divulge or discuss confidential information for any purpose or in any matter not in conformity with the State of Florida or Federal Law, except for the purpose of administering this program.