



KIDS SMALL WORLD

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Learning Center

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# Parent handbook

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## Vision Statement

Kids Small World is dedicated to offering fun, age appropriate classes where all children can learn not only through play and exploration, but also by having an academic program that matches their learning capability. Our curriculum is design to instill confidence and help each child grow academically, physically, socially, and cognitively in a safe, stimulating environment. Our experienced, certified staff wants children to feel comfortable and safe while they learn, explore, experiment, create, and question. We strive to create an environment where they feel safe to learn and where they are respected, empowered, trusted and listened to.

## Mission Statement

We believe young children learn by doing, through active engagement and physical experimentation finding out how things work. By observing the strengths and interests of each child, our teachers create activities that allow children to explore the world, make discoveries, and develop their cognitive, physical, spiritual, emotional and social capabilities. A well designed environment, along with caring, attentive, professional teachers, offers the child the opportunity to freely interact with materials and people.

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## PHILOSOPHY

### The KSW Programs; Guiding Principles

#### **for our program...**

- To be viewed as an integral part of our community
- To be seen as a valued community resource and an important enhancement to the community
- To be a process of serving others
- To be reflective and inclusive of the diversity of the communities
- To be an organization that reflects and celebrates diversity and accepts people where they are at in their lives

#### **for our children...**

- To foster an environment which encourages creative problem solving, individuality, and responsibility
- To nurture the whole child – socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively
- To provide for children's individual needs and interests
- To guide children in the decision making process
- To enrich the lives of children by providing educational opportunities to promote lifelong success

#### **for our families.....**

- To empower families because they are their child's first teacher
- To provide support and encouragement as they work towards self-sufficiency
- To partner with families in establishing and attaining their individual goals

#### **for our communities.....**

- To value community pride, involvement, and provide a service
- To ensure the community has an understanding of our program and is aware of the program's positive impact on the overall community
- To work effectively with other community resources

#### **for our staff.....**

- To be valued by our peers in the community
- To promote an environment of team work
- To develop and foster pride in our program and our agency
- To continue to provide a variety of opportunities for planned and individualized professional development
- To expect the highest ethical, moral, and professional standards at every level.

## BILINGUAL PHILOSOPHY

The role of Kids Small World Learning Center is to promote the development and strengthening of competencies that each child possesses and to prepare them for a successful school experience.

We are convinced that the advantages of educating a child to be bilingual are innumerable, but it is important to keep in mind that success depends on the way in which the second language is introduced.

We stand by additive bilingualism. In other words, we try to add a second language to the native language, but never in a manner in which the child's native language is replaced by the new language.

In our bilingual philosophy, the two languages are both equally important and that spirit is reflected in all areas of the school -- in the bulletin boards, notices, etc., all items are presented in English as well as Spanish. Our goal is to teach the children to be proficient at both languages.

Our approach to teaching in two languages takes "the borders of each language" as a clear reference.

A Spanish speaking teacher will teach the children part of the day in Spanish and an English speaking teacher will teach the other part of the day in English.

In this manner we establish the linguistic borders, and the children associate each person with a specific language, as happens in real life. The teachers will not speak to the children in a language other than the one that they teach, reinforcing their class work.

In the toddlers class (age 2), it is very important to begin with a 90% Spanish and 10% English program because English speaking children speak their native language at home and in society. On the other hand, Spanish speaking children need to compensate and reinforce the minority language (Spanish), which does not have the same societal reinforcement as English.

Later, in the 3 and 4 year old groups, language usage is gradually balanced until a double immersion program is reached (50% English and 50% Spanish).

## Child Development Philosophy

**The KSW Program** recognizes the uniqueness of each child's growth and development. Based upon a developmental understanding of how children grow and learn, the program strives to offer children a learning environment based on appropriate activities geared to an individual's unique abilities and learning style. The role of play and learning by doing through concrete experiences are basic to the developing child.

The KSW Program sees parents as the primary educator of their children. The classroom encourages an interest in language and literacy through having many printed materials such as song charts, books and labels and also through the way teachers encourage conversations with the children.

Children are encouraged to use words to express their feelings and are given opportunities to develop self-confidence and independence. Parents are encouraged to participate in the classroom, attend training sessions on early childhood education, health, curriculum planning meetings, Parent/Teacher Conferences, Parent/Volunteer Training, Child Development /Disabilities/ Transition Committee/Health Advisory Committee Family/Community Partnerships Policy Council and Center Meetings.

## Confidentiality Policy

The department of children & families guidelines requires to keep records on children enrolled in the program. These guidelines also mandate that parents are aware of all records that are kept. They are kept confidential, yet accessible to parents upon request. Confidential information will only be shared with appropriate Head Start Staff.

The KSW Program has parents sign a permission form to share information with our program consultants from, the Health Services Supervisor, and our Funding Sources.

The KSW Program will request a specific permission form to be signed when information needs to be shared with other providers outside of the program.

The only time the Department of Children and Families (DCF) can access information without a signed permission form is during an investigation or inspection.

## Discipline Policy

KSW Discipline Policy is to ensure the safety of the children and the group and to do this by helping children build self-control. Building self-control is a normal part of a child's social and emotional development. Therefore, discipline is seen as a way to help maximize a child's growth and development and is not viewed as, or used as, punishment. Since each child is unique, you may see teachers use different techniques.

1. Among the techniques used:

- Redirecting the child to an alternative activity.
  - Encouraging children to talk about their feelings.
  - Providing an example for children by speaking and interacting with children in a positive manner
2. We guide behavior of children for their protection and growth, and to help each child develop self-control and assume responsibility for his or her actions through clear and consistent rules and limits appropriate to the age and development of each child.

KSW Program abides by the following:

- Corporal punishment will not be used, including spanking.
- No child will be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation, or verbal abuse.
- No child will be denied food as a form of punishment or force fed.
- No child will be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.

## CURRICULUM

Creative Curriculum will be used with all age groups, depending on the school site. These developmentally appropriate approaches provide active learning experiences, with flexible schedules, routines and supportive adult-child interactions.

These programs are highly effective in fostering learning, initiative and a sense of self in young children and address each child's needs at their developmental level, focusing on enhancing independence and creative problem solving.

Children learn best through direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, events, and ideas.

During this active learning process, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are encouraged to discover the world around them by exploring and playing.

Learning and development are anchored by long-term, trusting relationships with caregivers, who are close at hand to support the children as they play. Adults scaffold further learning as they interact with children throughout the day.

Ongoing professional development and technical assistance will be provided by the Office of Early Childhood Programs

## CLASSROOM INFORMATION

### Attendance

Attendance is an important part of your child's educational experience. Being in school regularly is very important for your child. The center is open Monday to Friday from 6:30 a.m. – 7 p.m. When children miss too many days or their attendance is sporadic, it causes confusion for them and they have difficulty learning routines and building friendships.

## Signing In/Out Policy

All KSW Staff were directed to discuss the importance of making sure that center staff knows at all times where the children are and who they are with.

Each staff member was to be given a copy of the Child Supervision Policy and Attendance Procedures for their reference and to clarify the expectation of accurate attendance records at all times.

All KSW Staff were asked to develop a site specific action plan that takes into account the uniqueness of the specific program, and submit it to their Program Manager within 10 days. Action plans must ensure that at the end of each day, a visual check of the center is completed and that attendance records are reviewed to confirm that all children are properly marked out.

***Signing in/out is mandatory for every child that arrives and leaves the school.***

## Field Trips

Children participate in field trips several times during the school year. Field trips are usually local trips in the Miami-Dade communities. These trips are to help children gain a better understanding of the public services and businesses in the community.

All parents must sign a permission slip in order for their child to attend. Parents are encouraged and welcome to attend.

## Jewelry

Children should not wear jewelry to school as it may not be safe. It is easy for jewelry to get broken.

## Backpacks

If your child is bringing a backpack to school it is your responsibility to ensure they are not bringing anything unsafe into the classrooms.

## Late Policy

Children should always be picked up on time at the end of the day.

If children are not picked up on time the parent will be required to meet with the director after the second time.

If children are picked up late for a third time, the parent will be required to meet with the Supervisor before the child can return to the classroom.

## Nap-Time

Children enrolled in our Child Care classroom take naps every day. Children are required to rest for at least 45 minutes each day. Blankets will be washed once a week and parents are asked to take them home on Friday and return them on Monday.

## Termination Policy

The KSW Program would only terminate a child if the program was an inappropriate placement or after every effort is made for a family to participate and the child is still not attending regularly.

## Suspension Policy

The KSW Program does not suspend children from the program.

## Discrimination Policy

No person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be discriminated against under this program, including employment, because of race, religion, sex, national origin, cultural heritage, age, disability, sexual orientation, or marital status.

## Dual Language Learners

Kids Small World believes that:  
Parents must be acknowledged and valued as the first teachers of language and culture for their children.

To succeed in reading, children need a strong foundation in oral language.  
That culture should be represented through listening, speaking, writing, and reading experiences.

## Screen Based Media Policy

When we refer to media or screen based media in this policy we include televisions, DVD and Video. Staff provides a high quality program for children based on individual needs and interests; therefore we feel that there is no requirement for the regular use of television. The use of the Television at the center will be limited to cases of extreme weather conditions, linking to the program and special occasions. Activities will be provided for children who are no longer interested in watching

KSW makes responsible choices about the media offered to children and works in partnership with families.

***All of our classrooms have an Open Door Policy. Parents are welcome to come to observe and volunteer in the classrooms.***

## INCLUSION POLICY

Kids Small World embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential.

Kids Small World Learning Center believes that a childcare center should be a place where all children have the opportunity to succeed. It is a place where children have new and exciting experiences, make friends, learn to be part of groups maintaining their individuality. Each child has individual needs and it is our policy not to discriminate against anyone.

When a child is having difficulties in the classroom, parents, teachers, and school come together to determine why it is happening and together achieve the stability of the child. Sometimes it is necessary that parents bring the child to a specialist. Other steps to be followed would be the following:

- Consultation with a specialist
- Observations by a professional specialist
- Classroom strategies implemented by the teacher
- Train teachers in order to help them understand the needs of a child with special needs.
- Consult with the child's pediatrician or therapist

## MENTAL HEALTH

Kids Small World will provide services from an independent consultant to all our classrooms. Parents are encouraged and welcome to talk to consultants when an issue arises or when staff deems necessary.

## DISABILITIES

At least 10% of KSW enrollment is made available to children with disabilities. The KSW Program is designed to bring children with various strengths and needs together, to foster an understanding of individual differences for all children. The child is the focus, not the difference in ability. Every child should have the opportunity to grow and develop in the best possible inclusive environment.

KSW staff follows the progress of each child through observations and assessment. Meetings and conferences are scheduled with the parents for the purpose of planning activities for home and school to meet the child's individual needs.

**Services:** KSW provides numerous supportive services for children and their families. Such services include:

- Helping parents understand their child's growth and development.
- Ensuring that children receive evaluations and services if needed.
- Helping parents to understand the referral process, including rights and appeal procedures.
- Teaching parents ways to advocate for proper services and placement for their child.

## FAMILY PARTNERING

### Cultural Traditions

Cultural and family traditions are a part of a child's life and learning experiences. Therefore, many cultural events are incorporated into the curriculum. Families are invited to share cultural traditions enjoyed at home and family celebrations. However, if you prefer that your child be excused from any particular activity or celebration, please notify the Center Director.

### Family Partnerships

Family Partnerships are designed to assist families in assessing their strengths and family needs. Family Advocates then provide those services that will build upon the individual strengths of the family to meet those needs. Family Advocates are available to assist parents, make referrals when necessary to appropriate providers and follow-up on those referrals to ensure that services have been received.

Family Advocates are always available to assist with any problems or concerns that parents may have. Family Advocates make at least two home visits during the program year to each family. Additional home visits are done as deemed necessary.

Family Advocates work closely with parents to encourage them to become involved in all aspects of the program.

### Parents are Partners

Parents are encouraged to become partners with the School Program. Since KSW recognizes that parents are the child's primary educator, it is imperative for us to work together.

Working together will make your families experience more valuable to both you and your child.

## Referral Policy

We provide free child care referrals to parents for their specific needs in language and speech therapy, behavioral assessments, we offer this service on site free of charge.

Services are provided to everyone who requests them, regardless of income or other eligibility factors. We carefully maintain parent and provider confidentiality.

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

### Family Literacy

Literacy is an important part of the program. Family Literacy opportunities and activities are made available for children and their families.

### Parent Trainings

The KSW Program offers a variety of training opportunities to parents throughout the program year.

Parents are encouraged to participate in workshops, trainings sessions and parenting groups, to take full advantage of the program. KSW is not just a pre-school program for children; it is also a program for the whole family.

The program offers training to parent and community volunteers. These trainings are designed to give parents the opportunity to learn more about Child Growth and Development and to become paid substitutes within the program. For information please contact the Head Start coordinator. The program provides parents with training and information for children in need of services with disabilities. For information contact the Head Start coordinator.

### Parent Involvement

Parent engagement is an important content area of the KSW Program. Parents have the most influence on a child's development. Our goal is to have parents involved in their child's education, as well as involved in program planning. KSW offers various ways to participate. For more information contact the Director.

## Policy Council

**Decision Making:** Parents and staff join together in making decisions about the content and operation of the program and how they and their child will participate in it. There is also a formal decision making process which involves the policy making, and the operation of the program itself.

The Policy Council is a governing body which is made up of at least 50% of parents of children currently enrolled in the program. The remaining members are past parents, community people, and representatives from local community agencies and the KSW Directors.

The Policy Council is involved in community issues, development of budgets, work with other community agencies, input and involvement in the hiring and firing of staff, and assisting in the assessment and evaluation of the Program.

All parents are encouraged and welcome to attend Policy Council meetings.

Parents are an important part of the Program. All staff encourages all parents to get involved in some aspect of the program.

## Parent/Volunteer Trainings:

Training sessions and workshops to become paid substitutes are offered to all parents.

Volunteering in classrooms is an important part of our program. It gives parents the opportunity to gain a better understanding of what KSW offers their child, and what their child is doing at school. Parents are encouraged to participate on field trips, as well.

Being involved in your child's new learning experiences will make those experiences more valuable to your child.

## Parent Activities

Parents are encouraged to get involved in activities which give them opportunities to learn, share and grow in areas of interest to them, such as: health issues education, community concerns, etc.

## Involving Parents in Home Activities with their Children

Through home visits by teachers and suggestions for activities, which parents and children can do together. KSW guides and assists parents in encouraging their children's development. This kind of participation reinforces and supports the child's total experience.

## Parent's Role

As a parent, you have the primary responsibility for your child. You are required to care for and supervise them. You have the right to accept or reject any services offered to your child and your family.

## Parent's Responsibility

KSW requires parents to do the following:

1. Your child needs a change of clothes (labeled) in the classroom, in case they get wet due to rain or water play.
3. **Labeling:** It is very important for you to label your child's clothes, as it is impossible for teachers to distinguish each child's things. **Please label everything!**
2. Your child should wear play clothes to school because they use finger paints, paste, sand, etc. and sometimes these paints do not wash off clothing.
3. Your child needs to wear closed shoes or sneakers to school.
4. Sandals, flip flops, thongs, etc. are not safe in classrooms or at the playground.
5. Your child needs to be appropriately dressed according to the weather.
6. Children go outside every day for 45 minutes, weather permitting.
7. When walking your child to school you need to bring them into the classroom and sign them in. Your child should never be left outside of the building or a classroom.
8. Your child should not be brought into school before their scheduled time as teachers are preparing for the day.

## Protection of Children

The KSW Program is committed to the well-being and safety of children. Parent education and support are important factors in keeping children healthy and safe. By providing education and support we hope to have a role in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

If abuse or neglect is suspected, the law requires a report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

*All staff are mandated reporters.*

They are required to document and report any concerns to the Director.

KSW staff, whenever possible, will talk with the parents before making a report.

KSW's goal is to work with the parents to help them access services which will improve their family lives.

## Intoxicated/Impaired Person picking up a Child from Center Care

**To ensure that no child is allowed to leave the care of the center in the custody of a person who is in a physical condition which may prevent him from assuring the child's welfare.**

1. Any parent or other person who is authorized to pick up a child enrolled in the center and comes to the center intoxicated or in an impaired physical condition which may prevent him from assuring the child's welfare will not be allowed to pick up a child.
2. In the event that a parent or other authorized person arrives at the center while intoxicated or in an impaired condition, staff will use their best judgment in determining if he is in a condition which may prevent him from assuring the child's welfare.
3. Should it be determined that the person is in a condition that prevents him from assuring the child's welfare, staff will:
  - a. Make alternative arrangements for child pick-up, including, attempting to contact another person on the Authorized Child Pick-up List.
  - b. Notify the following individual(s) in writing:
    - (1) The parent(s) of the child (if they are not the ones who are intoxicated or impaired)
    - (2) The intoxicated/impaired person and spouse;
    - (3) Parents of other children the person has been authorized to pick-up;
    - (4) Appropriate center staff.
4. For any parent or other authorized person who arrives at the center in an intoxicated or physically impaired condition to pick up an enrolled child, the following will occur:
  - a. One written warning;
  - b. Removal from the list of individuals authorized to pick up a child after the second occurrence.
5. The Center Director, or if he/she is not present, the person in charge, is authorized to carry out the directives of this policy.

## HEALTH

The KSW Program's Health Services recognizes that a child's health and well-being affects their ability to develop and learn. KSW works closely with parents to ensure your children have comprehensive and preventative health care. Parents are required to take their child for an annual physical and dental exam. Documentation must be promptly submitted to the Supervisor at the KSW office.

Children must have an annual lead test, hematocrit/hemoglobin test, hearing and vision, test and a T.B. risk assessment. KSW requires that all children be fully immunized.

Children's height and weight is measured twice during the program year. KSW meets all of the individual health and nutritional needs of children in the program.

### *Head Lice*

Head Lice are contagious and increasingly common in early childhood programs and schools. **Do not send your child to school if they have head lice.**

If your child is sent home with head lice, they must be treated and completely free of nits before returning to school. **When your child is nit free**, a parent or emergency contact person must accompany them to school to be checked and admitted in to the classroom by the teacher.

## Allergies

Things not allowed in classrooms as many children have allergies.

- Peanut butter/peanut products
- Shell fish
- Make-up, lipstick, nail polish, etc.
- Stuffed animals

## Sick Policy

Children should not come to school when they are sick. If your child has a fever, sore throat, cough, ear infection, runny nose, diarrhea or vomiting, they should be kept home until they are feeling better.

Children need rest for their bodies to fight off an infection.

**Children who arrive at school sick will be sent home. Parents will be called at home or work to come pick up their children.**

There are many contagious diseases that children may contract while in school. Parents must notify the school if your child has any of the following: Chicken Pox, Strep Throat, Scarlet Fever, Hepatitis, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Scabies, Pinworms, Ring-worm, Conjunctivitis, Impetigo, SWINE Flu and H1N1 Flu.

## Medication

All medications must be prescribed by a doctor and can only be dispensed with written authorization from the parent.

Parents are responsible for administering newly prescribed oral medications and monitoring their child's reaction for the first 24 hours.

The Lead Teacher shall administer the appropriate medication to the child in the classroom. The Teacher will assume this responsibility in the Lead Teacher's absence. All medication is kept in the original, labeled container with the child's name, the name of the medication, the directions for usage and the expiration date.

All medications will be stored in a locked metal box and refrigerated, if necessary.

## NUTRITION

Children receive a nutritious breakfast and lunch each day for all class-rooms, and also receive an afternoon snack. All meals are provided by the Diana Food Group, a private agency sponsored by the USDA. Meals provide two-thirds of the children's daily

nutritional needs. Parents receive a menu for each month that includes the required meal patterns and quantities and notes on nutrition.

KSW has a Nutrition Consultant that assists the KSW Supervisor in assessing children's health and determining their individual nutritional needs. The Nutrition Consultant is available for parent consultation and provides trainings and workshops for parents and staff.

KSW is committed to providing children with a variety of healthy and seasonal foods that reflect their ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Parents are welcome to contribute ideas for the programs meal and snack menus and are encouraged to participate in the Health /Nutrition Advisory Committee. For more information please contact the Family Advocate Supervisor.

### ***Candy/Sweets***

KSW encourages children to eat healthy. Birthday cakes, candy, gum, donuts and any sugar-based sweets **are only allowed in special occasions**, such as birthdays and celebrations.

### ***Tooth Brushing***

Tooth brushing is part of the daily curriculum in classrooms. Children brush their teeth twice a day after breakfast and lunch. Teachers supervise children as they brush their teeth and teach them the importance of good dental hygiene and how to brush properly by role modeling for them.

I acknowledged that I have received, read, and understand this manual.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_