



## Hillcrest Children's Center

INVOLVEMENT • ACCEPTANCE • QUALITY • DIVERSITY • FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

I am struck by the fact that the more slowly trees grow at first, the sounder they are at the core, and I think that the same is true of human beings. We do not wish to see children precocious, making great strides in their early years like sprouts, producing a soft and perishable timber, but better if they expand slowly at first, as if contending with difficulties, and so are solidified and perfected. Such trees continue to expand with nearly equal rapidity to extreme old age.

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## Hillcrest Children's Center

### **Mission Statement**

Hillcrest Children's Center provides a quality play-based early childhood education program.

### **Program Description**

As a parent-governed non-profit, Hillcrest supports the Anchorage workforce by partnering with working families to provide early childhood education programs. Since 1968 Hillcrest has welcomed and served children starting at 6-weeks up to 12 years through full-day, year-round play-based educational programs. Hillcrest focuses on social-emotional development, inclusive classrooms, being outside, and open-choice play. This setting provides a strong foundation so that children enter kindergarten ready to learn and with the skills to be a positive member of their community.

### **Program Philosophy**

Early childhood is a sacred time that creates the foundation of each human's experience on earth. Young children are innate learners, capable, willing, and resilient. One cannot distinguish between learning and not learning, as every experience influences the child's neural pathways and responses. As children are always learning, the adults and the environment are the curricula, requiring the adults to be a "model worthy of imitation" and create beautiful spaces and rhythms that support learning.

Hillcrest's program goal is to provide a foundational love of learning, a sense of responsibility for self and community, and develop the child's head, heart, and hands to create a positive self-identity. We draw from various approaches (such as Waldorf, Reggio, Nature-based, Project Approach) and are committed to Anti-Bias education work with children. This diverse approach to programming allows us to be flexible to the needs of the children, honoring their experience of early childhood and staying true to our values and operating principles.

We believe meaningful play in a caring, intentional, safe, quality environment designed by positive, responsive adults to offer various experiences geared to each child's developmental needs provides the best avenue for learning. We view children as innate explorers and scientists working out how the world works. The children's interests guide the curriculum of child-directed activities that facilitate the mastery of new skills and expand their horizons.

The teachers' role is to provide a daily rhythm and an engaging environment where the children explore their world through meaningful play with the active presence of teachers. This responsive caregiving environment supports children of all abilities to explore and expand their repertoire of cognitive, language, motor, problem-solving, creative thinking, social and emotional skills.

### **Values**

The guiding values of Hillcrest are family, inclusiveness, and quality.

### **Organization Structure**

In response to the community need for early childhood development and educational programs, parents came together to establish the non-profit Hillcrest Day Care Center, Incorporated. In May 1994, the Board changed the name to Hillcrest Children's Center. Hillcrest is a tax-exempt organization, as

defined in section 501(c)(3) of the tax code. Accordingly, all donations to Hillcrest are tax-deductible. The Board employs the Executive Director (Director). The Director has the authority to hire staff and handle the daily operation of the center. The Director oversees and performs those activities in the execution of the purposes and policies of the center. All staff report to the Director.

**Physical Facility**

Hillcrest owns the building in which the center operates. The physical facility complies with the building code of the Municipality of Anchorage. As required, the Board authorizes upgrades to the facility to maintain its quality and ensure the safety of our children.

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## Program Policies

### Behavior Guidance

Hillcrest's highest program goal is to guide children's social-emotional development to develop a foundation of self-regulation and empathy. These skills will encourage positive relationships with others and increase the child's ability to deal with everyday life. It is the "goal" of the program, not skills we expect any child to have. Having realistic expectations based on the age and abilities of children is essential and is considered when determining how the environment will be set up and what demands will be placed on a child. **It is essential to remember that behavior is a form of communication.** When a child behaves in an undesirable way, it is our job to figure out what needs the child is communicating with their behaviors. With this information we try to avoid another situation where the child behaves in a socially inappropriate way by changing the environment and teaching socially acceptable responses to meet that need.

To do this staff, need to react consistently to children's behavior. This means that there is a similarity in the way staff members respond to and handle situations. Hillcrest has five basic rules for positive behavior in a group, (listening ears, looking eyes, kind words, gentle hands, and walking feet). These rules are simple and stated positively so that they can be used by all staff for all children. When describing behavior, we use simple language of "helpful" or "hurtful".

Children are trying to figure their way through their emotions and need guidance to do so. Discipline that is too strict allows adults to manage the behavior of most children through fear. This works well in the short term, but at some point in the lives of most children, fear is no longer something that controls them. They learn that they can behave inappropriately when there is no one watching, or no one stronger around to control them. Discipline that is too lax does not help children learn that they are responsible for their actions. Adults who do not exert reasonable control fail to make clear to children what the rules and expectations for behavior are. Without proper guidance, children do not learn self-discipline (how to behave appropriately).

There is a middle ground between the extremes of strict and lax discipline that has been shown to work best in helping children develop the skills required for self-discipline. In this middle ground, rules are clear, expectations for behavior are age and developmentally appropriate, and guidance is non-punitive and educationally sound. Children need to learn about rules, limits, and being responsible.

### Prevention

The best discipline strategies are to prevent problems from even coming up or at least minimize problems that are likely in groups of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Staff in a classroom that is set up to avoid conflict and promote appropriate interaction understand what very young children can do well and what causes problems among them. They then arrange the children's environment to allow children to get along well with one another, and without unnecessary restrictions. Some discipline strategies that are preventative include:

- Maintaining a dependable routine
- Training staff and creating a supportive work environment
- Setting up spaces to meet children's differing needs (quiet vs active play, sensory experiences, etc)
- Keeping children busy, challenged, and interested
- Avoiding competition and crowding

## **Positive Methods of Discipline**

Positive methods of discipline are those that allow staff to control and guide children without harming them, emotionally or physically. These methods are more likely to pay off in the long term to help children learn self-discipline and to cause less anger and hurt. Positive methods of discipline do not include what is typically thought of as punishment. Isolating children using “time out” is interpreted by such young children as being a punishment. Thus, it is not considered a positive method and should never be used with children. Examples of positive methods of discipline include:

### **Positive Attention**

Children enjoy getting positive personal attention from adults. Giving children attention while they are behaving in a productive manner makes it more likely for them to repeat such activity or to continue it longer. Just showing enjoyment or interest is one of the most powerful tools adults can use in helping children learn about acceptable behavior. Verbal praise is often empty of meaning if given too often, making children devalue it or, on the other hand, perform only for the praise. For example, when a staff member shows interest in what children are doing, shows them affection or sympathy, listens to them express ideas, have fun, or help them a bond is created so that children trust, listen to, and want to please that adult.

### **Redirection**

Redirection is, by far, the most effective and positive means of guiding infants and toddlers, because their actions are not usually determined by the kinds of understanding that an older child or adult will have learned. They are much more reactive and self-centered in their actions, not understanding that what they do might be dangerous or influence others. So, the best method to use is one in which they learn what to do, not just what not to do. Redirection means that when a child acts inappropriately (doing something not wanted by others), staff help the child focus on something else to do that is appropriate to achieve their goal. For example, if a toddler grabs a doll from another child, the staff points out that there are plenty of the same dolls to use in the baby bed and help the child get one of those instead. Or if a child is throwing toys and staff members recognize that the child really wants to practice throwing, they encourage them to throw bean bags into a box. If a child is wandering aimlessly (and heading for trouble), staff help them to become involved in an activity they enjoy. If a child climbs on furniture, staff members redirect them to another acceptable activity, such as climbing on a safe piece of active physical play equipment. Giving alternatives to aggression that are peaceful, such as touching gently rather than pulling another child’s hair, is also an example of redirection.

### **Intervening and Working it Out**

Conflict is a natural part of being part of a group. Children will be supported in handling social interactions and/or conflicts in a respectful and kind manner. During conflicts, teachers will model and support respectful words and gentle touches. “Inside voices” will be modeled. We will introduce the concept of empathy and working together.

It’s important for young children to begin to experience how their choices affect others. Helping children understand the effects of their own actions on others means that in addition to intervening positively to solve a problem, the adult calls the child’s attention to his or her effect, explaining the response or feelings of the other person. Examples of staff helping children understand include:

- A mobile infant pull on a sleeping baby, and as the baby wakes and cries, a staff member intervenes, gently saying “look, Thomas. You woke up Roberto. They don’t want to be pulled on. See their face. Roberto wants to sleep. I’ll pat their back and you can see them go to sleep. Then we will go and play.”
- A child grabs the pacifier from another child’s mouth and a staff member responds, “Erica, Molly wants their pacifier back. See their sad face? Look here [calling Erica’s attention to Molly’s face]. We can wash this pacifier and give it back to Molly. Your pacifier is in your cubby. Do you want yours?”
- A child stretches out a hand to retrieve the marker taken by another child. When the other child does not respond, the staff member says, “Look at Emma, Charlie. They are asking you to give the marker back. See their hand? Can you give it back? They felt angry when you took it.”
- Noah tugs on Jesse’s shirt, trying to move past him to reach a toy. Jesse shoves Noah in the face to stop them. Noah falls over and cries. The staff member responds, “You did not like Noah pulling on your shirt, did you Jesse? But you can’t push them. You can say, ‘Stop.’ Put up your hand and say ‘Stop.’ That’s right, ‘Stop.’ And Noah, next time you need to walk around Jesse. See, you can go around them this way.”
- Cathy grabs a crayon from Thelma and hits them as Thelma reaches to take it back. The staff member responds, saying, “Thelma, are you OK? You did not want Cathy to take that crayon. You are still using it. Cathy, you wanted that red crayon. You need to ask Thelma if they will let you use it. Hold out your hand and say, ‘Crayon, please.’ Now wait to see if Thelma will give it to you. No, they are using it some more. Try again. Now they are giving it to you. Thank you Thelma. Thank you for sharing the red crayon with Cathy!”

Although infants and toddlers do not intend to hurt others, they do learn that hurting is an effective way of getting some things that they want. For example, a toddler who bites another child to get a toy soon learns that biting works (if they do not get caught). Such negative behaviors may continue if adults do not intervene appropriately to teach that other communication is more effective and in the long term a more satisfying means to an end. The biter does not realize that no one will like them if the biting continues and that there are other problems with hurting others. They can only focus on what they want, right at that moment.

Young children have little understanding that their own actions impact other people differently from the way that they affect objects. When an infant pulls another baby’s hair, they only know that they are reaching for something that is shiny and attractive. They are curious to see what it does when they grab it, just as they are curious to see what happens when they pull the string on a toy. They do not really connect the crying noise they hear with the pulling of the hair. A responsible adult need to ensure that they do not allow the infant to treat others as objects, while encouraging the learning that is needed to understand their own effect on others. Similarly, the toddler who yanks another child from the tricycle they want, only perceives the other child as an object that is in the place where they want to be. They do not think about the personal consequences of pulling the other child from the tricycle; they only focus on their goal. (For toddlers, the attractive goal is very often what another child is doing, because toddlers are great imitators in their learning.) When toddlers see another child doing something fun, often they will want to do that activity too, as they learn by imitation.



The characteristic of children being unable to understand the effects of actions on others often leads adults to misinterpret children's intentions. They see the troublesome behavior as being "bad," so they resort to punishment to stop it, which causes physical or emotional pain for the child and weakens the bond between child and adult. It takes effort and intelligence on the part of staff to teach children that using communication is a more effective strategy to use in getting along with others. The earlier this is started with children, the better the results as children get older. Certain practices are required in teaching children the skill of using communication rather than physical aggression to solve problems.

Staff must:

- Intervene in a timely fashion when there is a problem of aggression
- -For a child who cannot talk, encourage the gestures or sign language that help communicate the child's need, while providing the words to be used in place of aggression  
-For a child who can talk, help by encouraging the use of words and appropriate gestures
- Ensure that proper communication attempts made by children are effective in getting what the child wants. Otherwise, children will go back to using what works, even if it is not acceptable.

### **Using Solution Kits or Feelings Area**

A solution kits usually contain choices that children can make together to resolve problems, such as "Taking turns," "Finding something else to play with," "Sharing," etc. Tucker Turtle is another method a child can use to work together to find a solution. These solution strategies teach children that they can handle social situations independently and appropriately.

When children experience a conflict in Preschool, we refer them to skills learned in the toddler classrooms and practice new solutions such as "get a teacher", "ask nicely", "ignore", say "Please", "play together", say "please stop", "share", "trade", "wait and take turns", and "get a timer". In some cases, the solution may not be satisfying for a child, but it enforces an appropriate rule that protects others. An example where toddlers are fighting for the doll, the staff member might say, "Jasmine had the doll. They were not finished playing with it. You cannot take the doll from them. Here is another doll you can use." The other toddler might continue to want the doll held by Jasmine and not be satisfied with the solution. In this case, the way to continue with the positive method would be to reassure the child that the other doll will be available to play with again, accepting their feelings, and help them to find some other fun activity to do (redirection).

### **Out of Control, Dangerous Behavior**

Rarely, but at times, a child can become incredibly overwhelmed and begin behaving in a way that is unsafe to themselves or others, and/or gravely disrespectful to staff or peers. This behavior may include hitting, kicking, spitting, biting (intentional by a Preschooler), knocking over furniture, throwing materials, and other behaviors that may persist and will cause harm to others or themselves if not addressed. **Again, we must remember that the child is communicating to us with their behavior, and we need to respond in a respectful and safe way.**

In response to out-of-control, dangerous behaviors staff may **not** threaten, bribe, use ANY physical punishment, deprive the child of food or access to the bathroom, humiliate, isolate, or chemically or physically restrain them. These responses will likely lead to immediate termination of employment.

To give the child space to begin to re-regulate, other children may be directed away from the child to another part of the classroom, or the child may be offered a change of environment. This is not to “punish” the child but done in recognition that the child’s brain has been overloaded and is in the alarmed state of fight/flight/freeze. Use the words “our friend is having a hard time right now and is telling us that they need some space” in verbalizing what is happening for the other children. With an older child, offering them to step away from the other children into a neutral space is something the child may choose to do. A simple change of space, with less stimulation, may provide a better space for the child to calm. A staff will stay near the child, maybe calmly rubbing the child’s back or just calmly cleaning an area near the child so the child knows that someone is there when ready. It is important at these times to remember to limit verbal interaction with the child so that they can work on getting out of alarm into regulation.

Once the child has calmed down it is important to remember that once escalated, it is easy to re-escalate, especially if you talk about what just upset them. The young child’s brain is not developed enough to do much processing after the fact. If they were able to have chosen better, they would have. The goal is to have the child rejoin the classroom. If there is an ability to make amends if another was injured, help the child do so. This may look like “Mary was looked hurt and scared when you grabbed the book out of their hands and hit them with it. Would you like to ask them how you can make it up?” We do not require children to apologize because it has little to no meaning to them. Instead, we look for ways for the child to “make it right”. Again, remember the goal is returning to the classroom activities, so do not push the point.

For those who are concerned that the above response is permissive and does not teach the child to not behave that way again, first let us explain that when someone is in an escalated state they are NOT able to learn anything. The time to teach socially appropriate responses to conflict is in when the children are not in conflict through stories and role plays. It is Hillcrest policy to NEVER call a family to pick-up their child for poor behavior. This sends the message to the child that we cannot handle their behavior, which further causes them not to trust you.

Staff will document interventions used in LifeCubby using the Behavior Report, specifically who was involved; where was everyone located in the classroom/building; what happened before, during and after; and why they think the behavior occurred (often it was to get or avoid something). This is the process of being a “Behavior Detective” and will help the team support the child and you in the future.

The Director will notify the parent(s) and licensing if necessary. If a child was removed from the classroom for more than ten minutes for their or the other children’s safety, then both parties MUST be notified. The parents will be notified by a phone call and licensing through the correct form. Regardless, if it requires notification, the incident must be documented.

### **Prohibited Responses to Children**

Cruel, humiliating or otherwise damaging disciplinary techniques are strictly prohibited and grounds for immediate termination. Examples of such techniques are as follows;

- Discipline associated with food or rest
- Punishment for bedwetting or actions regarding toileting or toilet training
- Having one child discipline or punish another
- Subjecting a child to verbal abuse, derogatory remarks about the child or family members, or threats to expel the child from Hillcrest
- Placed in a locked room
- Active physical restraint.

## **Next Steps**

When a child displays intense behaviors repeatedly, we will schedule a meeting with the family to develop a plan together that focuses on how to support the child. This meeting is an opportunity to share what the family and staff experiences with the child, and what we believe the child may be responding to. The Director is trained on the principles of applied behavior analysis and classroom interventions, so we will present any interventions that we have tried and a draft plan of further interventions that we believe will help the child.

We will also be discussing any outside influences that can be impacting the classroom, such as medical conditions. It is important to have completed a current ASQ:3 and ASQ:SE3 within the past six-months. (See Developmental Screening section) We may recommend that the child seek further evaluation from outside agencies, such as early intervention services, so that the best plans are put into place for the child's success.

If the plan that we agreed upon and implemented does not give the desired outcomes, we may want to contact outside agencies for assistance. In some cases, it helps to get assistance from an outside expert when problems are persisting. Teachers sometimes need another point of view that is not found within the classroom or the center. Another professional is likely to look at the child and the environment more objectively. Another meeting will be scheduled to discuss the recommendations for referral and complete the necessary paperwork.

What we want every family to know, is that these situations are stressful for ALL adults involved, the staff, the family of the child displaying the behaviors, and the parents of the other children in the class. Hillcrest recognizes this, which is why we have in-depth training, policies and procedures throughout this process. Providing supports for children who are struggling requires a lot of energy and resources, therefore we require that family's follow-through on all recommendations for outside evaluation, services that the child qualifies for, and funding streams to support Hillcrest in providing our services. While Hillcrest will not remove a child from program due to their behavior; we will terminate services from a family who does not follow-through on our recommendations. (See the Concerns section"

## **Child Abuse Reporting**

Alaska State Statutes and Anchorage Child Care Center Regulations require that licensed childcare providers report all incidents of suspected or actual abuse and neglect of children regardless of whether they occur in or are related to the facility. This facility is therefore obligated by law to report such incidents within 24 hours to the Child Protection Office of Children's Services (Alaska Department of Health and Human Services), at 269-4000.

Centers are required to notify the Municipal Child and Adult Care Licensing Office of incidents that allege a child was abused or neglected when the center is responsible for the child. Municipal Child and Adult Care Licensing Office: 343-6536

## **Clothing and Personal Belongings**

Hillcrest is a play-based program that values spending time in nature. The children play outdoors each day for one-hour, unless it is below 0 degrees Fahrenheit, factoring wind chill, or especially icy weather.

Whether the weather be fine  
Or whether the weather be not,  
Whether the weather be cold  
Or whether the weather be hot,  
We'll weather the weather  
Whatever the weather,  
Whether we like it or not.

It is very important that children come dressed in comfortable clothing suitable for a variety of activities inside and outdoors. Children need to come to school in clothing used in a layering system, that helps regulate your child's body temperature, keeping them warm or cool when needed. This includes a base layer, clothing, and then outerwear. We want to avoid having a child in tears because they are cold and miserable while their friends are having a good time playing.

While a limited supply of extra clothing is available for an occasional forget, we will not limit a class from going outside due to lack of gear. Hillcrest will purchase appropriate gear to be left at the center and bill the cost of the gear to the families for those who are not able to provide gear or forget it more than once a month. Please see the packets regarding appropriate layers and gear for winter available in the entryway for more information

We require families to leave at the center:

- 2 changes of clothes, including socks (every piece needs to be labeled)
- Diapers (if needed)
- Any ointments that you prefer
- Blanket
- Full rain/snow gear (depending on the season, after 12m) to include
  - rain/snow boots
  - rain/snow suit
  - gloves/mittens (for snow in winter and mud play the rest of the year)
  - Hat
  - neck-warmer in winter
- Classroom Shoes that can be taken on and off without adult assistance; stays securely on foot during activities (recommended to have a soft upper part with flexible soles that allows toes to spread and grasp naturally so to promote natural, agile, confident movement and comfort while sitting on the floor)
- Water Bottle
- Preschool: Backpack
- Nap Items: fitted crib sheet with thin blanket or nap role, such as those from "Urban Infant"

### **Developmental Screening**

Because your child's first five years of life are so important, we want to help you provide the best start for your child. As part of our services, we provide the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-3) to help keep track of your child's development at different intervals. If a child could benefit from additional supports, research has continually shown that receiving them as early as possible makes the strongest impact. Additionally, research has shown that less than half of children who qualify for additional services will be identified from parental concerns and/or a normal pediatrician visit. When a developmental screening tools, such as the ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-3 are used, the percentage increases to over 85%.

ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-3 is a set of questionnaires about children's development. It has been used for more than 20 years to make sure children are developing well. It is called a screener because it looks at how children are doing in important areas, such as speech, physical ability, social skills, and problem solving. It will ask you some questions about some things your child can and cannot do. ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-3 can help identify your child's strengths as well as any areas where your child may need support.

While the leadership staff is trained in administering the questionnaires it is strongly encouraged for family caregivers to complete the screening. Most screenings only take 15 minutes to complete with your child. If a staff is to complete the screening in the classroom, no child will be forced to complete the activities at any time. We ask that families complete the screening tool for their children every six months. It is our hope that we will schedule a time with your family to compare results; at minimum we will give you a copy of our results. You can find the link to the screeners at our website or email the office to have the link sent to you.

If the questionnaires show that your child is developing without concerns, we will provide some developmental activities and the next questionnaire at the appropriate time. If the questionnaires show some possible concerns, we will offer referrals for outside resources to obtain a more involved assessment for your child. Information will only be shared with other agencies with your written consent.

Enrollment into Hillcrest implies consent for the ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-3 developmental screenings. To find more information about the ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-3 please see their website at <http://www.agesandstages.com> and speak with the Director.

### **Drop Off and Pick Up**

Children must be accompanied by their responsible adult into Hillcrest every morning and signed-in to their classroom upon arrival. This is for protection in case of a fire or other emergency. All children must be picked up and signed-out by an adult listed on the Emergency Child Record. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the office and make changes on the Emergency Child Record whenever necessary. At minimum this form must be updated twice a year. In cases of emergency, parents may call Hillcrest and give verbal approval of an alternative individual. However, this is strongly discouraged. Anyone not recognized by sight will be asked for a picture ID. Parents involved in a custody agreement must furnish Hillcrest with a legal copy of that agreement. Without the court document, Hillcrest cannot refuse the other parent access to the child.

Hillcrest reserves the right to not allow any individual onto Hillcrest property for drop-off or pick-up if they have previously created a problem.

### **Electronic Media Use**

Hillcrest does not rely on movies and/or television media to entertain or educate our children. However, this educational tool could have its place in the curriculum on a limited basis, no longer than 1 hour in a 24-hour period, not on a regular basis, and not for children younger than 3.

### **Emergency Procedures**

In any event our building is not safe to re-enter after evacuating due to an emergency, Hillcrest has designated the following, in order of designation, as our safe zone: Lighthouse Christian Fellowship (629 Hollywood Drive) and Calvary Baptist Church, (401 E. Manor). We follow the Municipality of Anchorage's (MOA) lead for emergency closures. If the MOA is sending all but essential personnel home, you are expected to pick-up your child immediately. If the MOA is continuing normal business

operations but we are unable to, attempts will be made to reach all parents as quickly as possible to notify them of the situation.

### **Fire**

When the fire alarm goes off, we evacuate the building as fast as possible. We are required to practice a fire drill at least once a month. We do not take time to dress children in the winter or rainy season as we are trying to model the correct reactions to fire alarms, which are to evacuate the building and go to the “safe” spot where they are to meet their families or classmates. If a parent is in the building during an evacuation, we require you to escort your child with their class to the evacuation destination.

### **Enrollment**

Hillcrest is licensed to care for 69 full-time children from the ages of 6 weeks thru 12 years.

### **Guaranteed Start Agreement**

In most situations, Hillcrest uses a Guaranteed Start when filling openings. This allows families to know for certain when they are able to start at Hillcrest. As soon as the decision that Hillcrest is the place for your child(ren), we will sit down with you and tell you the projected time the next opening will take place in the age/developmental level group of your child(ren). This opening will be made available for you to reserve at that time. Openings are reserved at the time the Guaranteed Start Agreement is filled out with the proper payments. Prospective clients who do not choose to reserve the opening cannot be guaranteed that opening will be available at a later date.

In some instances, the openings become available before we had originally anticipated. If this happens, you will be given the opportunity to move up your start date. If you choose to move your start date up, your official guaranteed start date will become the new date agreed upon and all the stipulations of this agreement will be effective on the new date.

The \$150 Registration fee and \$500 tuition deposit are due in order for you to be given a guaranteed start date (\$650 total). You will be responsible for full tuition effective the start date, whether or not your child is in attendance. Failure to pay the rest of the first month’s tuition by the first of that month will constitute a forfeiture of the Registration fee, any payment toward tuition, and your child’s spot in the center. Tuition deposits are refundable if Hillcrest is provided with a written notice more than one calendar month in advance of your guaranteed start date. Registration/Resource fee is non-refundable. Enrollment contracts supersede Waitlist Agreement forms.

### **Leave**

There are situations that occasionally arise due to family emergencies and/or vacations requiring children to be away from the center for more than one week. Hillcrest does not give refunds for days a child is away from the center and additionally does not hold spots open. However, a parent can decide with the Director to pay 50% of the monthly rate for up to two months leave to reserve a spot if the child will be gone for a full calendar month. If a parent chooses to pull their child for a month or two, they may:

- Fill out a Guaranteed Start date form and pay the fees associated to set up a return date, if one is known to be available.
- Take the risk of losing the spot by not paying. You can check with the Director frequently to see if a spot is still available.

## **Part-time Spaces**

Part-time spaces are limited to space availability. Three or less regularly scheduled days, per week, are considered part-time; otherwise, it is considered full-time enrollment. Families must commit to a set weekly schedule to enroll as part-time and are not allowed to switch days. If a family needs to occasionally add a day, they must email a request at least one day in advance. At the time approval is given we will bill the daily fee to your account. Multi-child discount does not apply towards Daily Enrollments.

## **Required Documents**

The following records must be on file before a child will be admitted to Hillcrest Children's Center. It is the sole responsibility of the parent to get these documents to the Director and to keep all information current. Failure to keep these records current may result in the child's dismissal from Hillcrest.

- Enrollment Contract
- Emergency Record Card (updated semi-annually)
- Child and Adult Food Program Enrollment Form and Confidential Income Statement (completed at enrollment and every October)
- Current Immunization Records (Provide updates each time immunizations are given) or a signed medical or religious exemption form approved by the State of Alaska.
- Annual Physical examination dated within the last 12 months. (Updated yearly)
- Current childcare assistance authorization, if applicable.
- Plan of Care, if applicable. While every child has special needs, some are more apparent than others. Hillcrest works with families and specialists to meet the individual needs of each child enrolled in our program. For a child who has been identified as not functioning according to age-appropriate expectations in the areas of cognitive, communicative, perceptual, motor, physical or social development, Hillcrest is committed to working with the families and specialists to help ensure that child's success. The Director will create a Plan of Care with the families to be implemented by the teachers so that the child may receive the required help, program adjustments, or related services on a regular basis in order to function in an adaptive manner.

## **Withdrawal**

Parents must give Hillcrest a minimum of **ONE FULL CALENDAR MONTH'S** notice prior to termination of enrollment. An example would be notice given on April 18th, the earliest date of withdrawal would be May 31st. Parents will be financially responsible for all tuition costs and other appropriate fees through the date of withdrawal. Hillcrest can mutually agree to an earlier withdrawal date if the spot can be filled. This does not negate Hillcrest's ability to terminate a family's enrollment as otherwise specified in the Parent Handbook.

## **Concerns**

It is Hillcrest's responsibility to provide a safe, nurturing group care experience for families that reflects our values of parent involvement, quality, acceptance, diversity and family environment. It is essential to have relationships based on mutual trust with families. If we feel that any of these are compromised, the Director has the responsibility to make decisions that ensure that improvements are made.

Hillcrest has a strong belief that parents need to act first and foremost to find a care situation that meets their family's needs, especially in having their child in a place where they trust in their child's ability to be safe and develop appropriately. When families have concerns or questions about Hillcrest, we ask they speak with the lead teacher, and/or Director to express their concern and seek resolution as soon

as the concern is realized. Teachers are balancing supervision of children and communication with families at drop-off and pick-up. To ensure that your concern gets the attention it deserves a meeting may need to be requested. When a concern is brought to the staff a parent concern form should be filled out and sent to the office for a resolution. A parent should receive a copy of this form within two days. Please follow-up with the office if one is not returned. When families do not agree with the policies, procedures, or practices of Hillcrest, it is their responsibility to find other care arrangements.

Hillcrest reserves the right to terminate services at any time if it is decided that placement at Hillcrest is not in the best interest of either the registering family and/or Hillcrest. Dismissal may occur if an adult is in non-compliance with policies, non-payment, breach of enrollment contract, acts in a way that creates safety concerns, shows un-warranted disrespect or mistrust of personnel, uses threatening communications, or conduct towards any participant, staff member or others associated with Hillcrest that creates an unsafe or hostile work environment. Registering parents/adults must follow the policies described in this handbook including attending parent conferences and payment of childcare fees/late charges.

### **Confidentiality**

Staff will not communicate information about a child to anyone not on the Emergency Child Record. While staff is always willing to discuss your child with you, we ask that families do not inquire about another child. Hillcrest strives to be a safe and accepting environments for all families. We ask that families refrain from holding conversations or making comments about others at Hillcrest that would not support a safe and accepting environment.

### **Field Trips**

Hillcrest may include trips for children who are three years and older. Where possible, these trips are related to the current enrichment themes. Participation in all field trips is subject to written parental permission and the approval of the Municipality of Anchorage Child/Adult Care Licensing Department. Prior to the trip parents will be provided with an opportunity to view the plans and decline consent for their child's participation. Alternate care and appropriate activities will be available at Hillcrest for children not participating in field trips, excluding school-age programs which are field trip based.

Volunteering to chaperone a field trip is a great way to strengthen the bond between Hillcrest and home. As those who work with, and thus influence, our young children in a variety of ways, family volunteers have certain critical obligations.

- **Confidentiality:** all information (written or observed) belongs primarily to the children and their parents. We ask that anything visitors or volunteers see, hear or are privy to during your visits not be shared in any way with anyone except the class teacher or Director.
- **Role-Model Behavior:** it is important that volunteers exhibit behavior worthy of imitation during outings. Please make your best efforts to model fairness, integrity, a clean and odor-free appearance, and an appropriate demeanor for the activity the group is participating in (reverent and composed).
- **Class Culture:** our children are coming together as a community with different levels of confidence, trust, and skills. At no time, should volunteers make judgements, assessments, or comparisons of students. We ask that all requests and comments are made from a strength-based approach, example "Use walking feet" vs "Stop running".

### **Firearms**

In accordance with Alaska state statute, Sec. 11.61.220, and Hillcrest's intent to provide a safe and healthy environment, firearms are not permitted in the building or on the grounds at any time, unless



secured in a parent's locked vehicle. Staff are instructed to call 911 immediately if a firearm is seen on the premises in violation of this policy.

### **Hours of Operation**

Hillcrest is open Monday through Friday from 7:00a.m. to 6:30p.m. It is essential that all families are out of the building by 6:30p.m., minus Board Meeting nights, to ensure compliance with labor laws.

The center closes in observation of the following scheduled holidays:

New Year's Day	Thanksgiving Day
President's Day	Friday following Thanksgiving
Memorial Day	Christmas Day
Independence Day	Labor Day

If a holiday falls on a weekend, either the Friday before or the Monday after, Hillcrest will be closed in observance of the holiday.

Hillcrest closes for In-Service days to conduct training for the staff. The Board of Directors approves closure of the center. Families who are on a part-time enrollment cannot attend another day of the week if we are closed on their regularly attending days without following the procedures outlined in the Enrollment section. You can find these dates on our website.

- Martin Luther King Day (January)
- Seward's Day (March)
- Friday's before Memorial Day (May)
- Friday before Labor Day (August/September)
- Alaska Day (October)
- Veterans Day (November)

Occasionally, the Board will close the center to accommodate special needs, such as facilities maintenance. When this occurs, parents will be notified in advance to make alternative care arrangements.

### **Insurance**

Hillcrest maintains property, liability, and Worker's Compensation. The method of transportation used for field trips is determined by the age and size of the group involved. When feasible, public transportation is used.

### **Licensing Agency**

Hillcrest Children's Center, Inc. is a licensed childcare facility and falls under the authority of the Municipality of Anchorage, Department of Health and Human Services, Child, and Adult Care. For contact information please see Appendix C: MOA Guide to Licensed Child Care Programs.

The licensing agency monitors and conducts extensive annual reviews for compliance with Anchorage Municipal Codes governing Hillcrest Children's Center. The agency is also responsible for investigating complaints and coordinating fire prevention. Municipal Child Care Codes may be found at <http://www.muni.org/health1/index.cfm>

Hillcrest's records with the Child/Adult Care Licensing Department are available for review by contacting the Department of Health and Human Services, Child/Adult Care Unit, P.O. Box 196650, Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650 or the Municipality of Anchorage's website: <http://hhs.muni.org/childcare/>.

## **Meals**

The USDA Child Nutrition Programs support access to healthy meals to all participants, including participants with disabilities who have special dietary needs. Under the law, a disability is an impairment which substantially limits a major life activity, which can include allergies and digestive conditions, but does not include personal diet preferences. Any child who is needing accommodations from the school menu due to medical disability, non-disabling medical condition, or parental preference will need to complete the required documentation within one week of requesting the change.

### **Medical Disability or Non-Disabling Medical Condition**

For children who cannot consume fluid milk due to medical disability, non-disability medical condition, or other special dietary needs non-dairy beverages may be served in place of fluid milk. Non-dairy beverages must be nutritionally equivalent to milk and meet the nutritional standards for fortification of calcium, protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, and other nutrients to levels found in cow's milk and must be unflavored due to the higher sugar content of flavored varieties.

For children who have a medical disability or non-disabling medical condition that requires accommodation to their diet, families must submit a completed CACFP Medical Statement or documentation from a medical professional authorized to write medical prescriptions [Medical Doctor (MD), Doctor of Osteopathy (DO), Physician's Assistant (PA) with prescriptive authority, Naturopathic Physician, Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP)] that entails the following

The medical statement shall identify:

- The participant's disability or medical condition with an explanation of why the disability restricts the participant's diet
- The major life activity affected by the disability or medical condition requiring accommodations.
- The specific diet or accommodation that has been prescribed by the medical authority. For example: "All foods must be in liquid or pureed form. Participant cannot consume any solid foods."
- The type of texture of food that is required
- The specific foods that must be omitted and suggested substitutions
- The specific equipment required to assist the participant with dining. Examples might include a sippy cup, a large, handled spoon, wheelchair accessible furniture, etc.

### **Parent Provided Meals**

Parents may choose to opt out of Hillcrest provided meals by submitting the necessary documentation to the office. Food brought from home must meet the CACFP meal requirements for necessary components and serving size for each meal. This needs to come to Hillcrest in a labeled, dated container that holds the days worth of meals. Hillcrest cannot provide any refrigeration or heating of food brought from home. Families need to purchase the required supplies to ensure correct food storage.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or

funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800)845-6136 (Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

Hillcrest Children's Center prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program or protected genetic information.

### **Notification of Program and Policy Changes**

The Director presents any significant program or policy changes to the parent board for review at the regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The results of these discussions and subsequent changes are posted in the entryway on the parent information boards, updated in e-mail news, sent home in flyers, and written in the newsletter.

### **Nursing**

Nursing parents are welcome to drop by anytime. It is recommended to introduce a bottle to the infant prior to enrollment at Hillcrest. If the baby is nursing, and the baby has not learned to drink from a bottle, the parent must plan to come to the center to nurse the baby as needed. If the parent cannot make it to the center to feed the baby, and the baby will not take milk from a bottle, caregivers are instructed to call to have the baby picked up from the center. If a nursing parent chooses to skip the bottle, it is mandatory that the infant has learned to receive milk from a cup, or at the very least has had some experience with it. It is expected that parents are continuing to work through this learning process at home, helping to keep feedings consistent between home and center. It is Hillcrest policy that infants are fed on demand whether bottle-fed or nursed. It is our goal to keep your baby happy. Please see our guide to breastfeeding that was put together by parents and infant teachers.

### **Outdoor Play**

Hillcrest values the importance of outdoor play. The play yards are equipped with a variety of equipment, as well as having large open spaces for free play. The children play outdoors each day, unless it is below 0 degrees Fahrenheit, factoring wind chill or especially icy.

Or whether the weather be not,  
Whether the weather be cold  
Or whether the weather be hot,  
We'll weather the weather  
Whatever the weather,  
Whether we like it or not.

It is very important that children come to the center with the appropriate outdoor clothing. Children need a full snowsuit, boots, mittens and hat or full rain gear depending on the season. While a limited

supply of extra clothing is available for an occasional forget, we will not limit a class from going outside due to lack of gear. Hillcrest will purchase appropriate gear to be left at the center and bill the cost of the gear to the families for those who are not able to provide gear or forget it more than once a month. Please see the packets regarding appropriate layers and gear for winter available in the entryway for more information.

### **Outside Employment of Staff**

Hillcrest Children's Center hires staff to work in a group care scenario and this employment should not be seen as a qualification for providing outside employment, including childcare services. Further, these arrangements and outside relationships can cause difficulties in group care settings. Therefore, Hillcrest strongly discourages staff members from engaging in private employment for currently enrolled families. Should a family and staff member decide to enter a private employment arrangement, paid or unpaid, Hillcrest Children's Center requires that both parties disclose this in advance by signing an indemnification agreement and provide such agreement to Hillcrest Children's Center prior to babysitting. Failure to provide the indemnification agreement will subject staff to disciplinary action and could result in termination of staff employment or family enrollment.

### **Parent's Night Out**

In addition to our regular program, Hillcrest offers a "Parent's Night Out" on the second Saturday of each month, except for December which is held on the first Saturday of the month. Parent's Night Out sign-up is sent out through Sign-Up Genius. A fee will be billed to your account for all families who signed-up, even if they were not able to attend. The late fee policy applies for children picked up after closing. The "Parent's Night Out" Program is run by Hillcrest staff and includes developmentally appropriate activities and meals.

### **Parent Participation**

Hillcrest was founded as a parent co-op and keeps the creation of community as a core value. One of the ways that is accomplished is through parent participation. There are a variety of ways to volunteer your time and talents to the center. The opportunities available at Hillcrest are only limited by what we know. There are long-term projects and one-time events. There are opportunities to lead a project or to perform a single task. There are work projects, bi-annual clean up, fundraising, special events planning, grant writing, etc. An ongoing list of opportunities is on the dry-erase board in the entryway. Please share your talents and interests with Hillcrest by completing the Parent Volunteer survey, attending the monthly Board Meetings, or speaking with the Director. If you are ever concerned about meeting your volunteer obligations, please speak with the Director.

To ensure fair treatment and to meet operational goals the Board moved in 2007 to require each family to donate a minimum of 20 hours per year at the Center. In 2010 the Board voted to allow for a buy-out option in lieu of volunteering. Volunteer hours are tracked from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>. At the end of June, a family who has not completed their volunteer hours will be billed \$20 per hour not completed. It is important to keep the Director informed of your volunteer hours by either writing it on the list in the entryway, or email. In addition, family volunteer participation is prorated on the time of year a family enrolls. If a family enrolls in April through June, we invite them to participate but will allow a three-month grace period to make the adjustment to Hillcrest.

Enroll July thru Sept	20 hours
Enroll Oct thru Dec	15 hours
Enroll Jan thru March	10 hours

### **Parking**

Hillcrest has a drop-off area at the front of the building. Due to the limit of the number of vehicles that

may be in this area, please park in one of the parking spaces if you anticipate being in the building longer than 5-10 minutes. All vehicles in the front of the building may not be left running and should be locked when you come into drop-off or pick-up your child(ren). Hillcrest is not responsible for items lost or stolen from vehicles, parking lot, or facility.

### **Pets**

From time-to-time, Hillcrest allows pets on site for learning and nurturing opportunities in the classroom. Over the years classrooms have had fish, hamsters, newts, and bunnies. Upon enrollment, an emergency card is on file and states any allergy a child has.

\*NOTE: It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the center immediately if your child develops an allergy to anything (food, pet, or otherwise).

### **Personal Belongings**

Please make sure your child's clothing and belongings are **visibly labeled** with first name and last initial. All staff members work diligently to keep track of each child's belongings; however, there are times items are misplaced.

All blankets and items will need to be taken home and washed every Friday. Please remember that our staff is here to focus their full attention on running program. We want to minimize the time spent tracking down clothing and toys from home, so label all your child's items.

Teachers make classroom material decisions with the intent to provide opportunities for discovery, variety, and creativity. We ask that children do not bring in toys from home as it distracts from the work that the classroom does, except for a naptime stuffed animal. Any item deemed by staff to be unsafe or unsuitable will be returned to the parents with instructions stating that it is not to be brought to the center again. Children are not allowed to bring toy weapons of any kind to the center.

### **Photographs**

Staff frequently take pictures or videos of program activities for programmatic purposes, news releases, brochures, reports, training exercises/examples, etc. Hillcrest also maintains a Facebook page where pictures and information about programs are posted frequently. Please let the office know in writing if you would like to not have your child's pictures used in any manner other than in the classroom.

### **Poisonous Plants**

Hillcrest minimizes the use of poisonous plants in the building and grounds. If a plant is necessary for a curriculum project, exposure to the plant is done under direct supervision. Poisonous plants in the play yard used for curriculum purposes, such as tomato plants, will have a barrier around them. To minimize the potential injury from permanent poisonous plants, such as Birch Trees, staff members are trained on their presence, first aid procedures if a part of the plant is ingested, and work with children on appropriate safe interaction with plants, i.e., do not eat them.

### **Smoking**

In accordance with Anchorage Municipality law and Hillcrest Children's Center's intent to provide a safe and healthy environment, smoking is not permitted on the grounds at any time.

### **Supervision of Children**

Children will be always supervised appropriately, even when they are sleeping. Staff/child ratios are always maintained including outside play and field trips.

Hillcrest maintains lower than required staff/child ratios as finances permit and employs more

caregivers than is required by the municipality. Refer to Appendix C: Municipality Parent's Guide to Licensed Child Care for details on ratio.

Hillcrest has six child-centered rooms, each addressing a different level of development. Although there are approximate age groupings, it is important to note that age alone does not determine a child's room assignment. Your child(ren) will be assigned to one of six different classrooms: infants, (Little Butterflies, Big Butterflies), Upstairs Toddler, Young Toddlers, Older Toddlers, and Preschool. Placement of a child is based on age *and* development. The Director considers input from parents, teachers, and space availability in making placement decisions.

Hillcrest is proud to have high staff loyalty, resulting in exceptionally low staff turnover. Hillcrest honors and respects higher education. All staff members are encouraged to continue their education in Early Childhood Development, and when monies are available, Hillcrest will help pay a percentage of cost for specific classes, and inasmuch as they meet standards for early childhood education. Because of the staffing pattern Hillcrest does not employ outside substitutes, emergency, or volunteer caregivers.

All staff, regardless of educational ambitions, are required to attend at least 24 hours of staff development training in early childhood education each year. We are proud to state that our staff average over 50 hours a year. Training topics include CPR/First Aid, early childhood development, guidance and discipline strategies and techniques, communication skills, & play as an essential educational tool. Other topics and concepts are addressed as needs arise during the year.

### **Transitions: Staffing and Classroom**

The relationship between teachers and the children/families is paramount to the program at Hillcrest. In the past few years, our staffing and transition plans have been influenced by the desire for more continuity in care between teachers and children within a larger building with multiple classrooms. We are fortunate to have a lower rate of turn-over than most childcare centers in Anchorage and use that to our advantage. We recognize that having your children move to new classrooms with some new teachers is a stressful situation and the decision to do so is not taken lightly, the same with classroom teacher changes. Below are some general questions and answers to what Hillcrest considers when making transitions and staffing changes.

When we give a tour, the rooms are introduced with approximate room ages/developmental levels, and it is made clear that our procedure is to adjust the classroom to meet the developmental needs of the children. What we consider in placement of children is the developmental level of the children that we are transitioning and those in the class they would be moving into. In the past, the Butterfly rooms have served children 6 weeks through 18 months. The Young Toddler rooms has children between 11 months and 24 months. Older Toddlers have been between 18 months and 40 months. Preschool is between 30 months and 4 years, and Prekindergarten would be is age 4 and 5 years.

Hillcrest has a transition procedure that is a working document as we continually implement suggestions from families and staff. As part of this transition procedure and our plan for continuity of care, often teachers will often make transitions with children to ease the process.

Larger transitions happen in Aug/Sept, Dec/Jan, and May/June. Because the budget at Hillcrest requires full enrollment, transitions can happen at any time.

When making staffing changes we strive to balance the skills and experiences of the staff, their availability and ability to maintain scheduled shifts and the relationship with the children/families. As there is a lot to consider when making these decisions, there is not one "perfect" solution for everyone.

## **Tuition**

The Board of Directors establishes Hillcrest's tuition rates. Parents are given a minimum of 30 days' notice of any tuition rate changes. Current rates are outlined in Appendix B. Based on the input from families and the reality of constant increases in costs, the Board wants families to be aware that tuition will be increased on an annual basis starting in 2012. The Board anticipates that future increases in tuition will coincide with the consumer price index for Anchorage and actual costs for Hillcrest.

### **Annual Resource Fee**

An annual registration fee of \$150.00 is due September 1 and prorated quarterly for the initial enrollment. This fee is prorated if date of enrollment occurs in:

Enroll July thru Sept	\$150
Enroll Oct thru Dec	\$125
Enroll Jan thru March	\$100
Enroll April thru June	\$50

### **Late Pick-Up Fee**

Parents are charged \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes, then \$1 per minute per child for any child remaining after 6:30 p.m. Parents are requested to contact Hillcrest as soon as possible if they know they will be late. It costs Hillcrest money in overtime when your child is picked up late, as we must pay for two staff to stay later than their assigned hours. Exception to this rule: If you are participating in a board meeting, you will not be charged the additional fee. We encourage every parent to attend board meetings!

### **Multi-child Discount**

A 10% discount is applied to the child with the lowest rate in a family of two or more children enrolled at the center.

### **Payment Terms and Fees**

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month. A courtesy statement is sent out before the first by email that will include all charges and payments made that calendar year. Hillcrest will accept cash, check, or credit card. Credit Card payments are accepted at any time and families can set-up a monthly-automated payment for a small fee.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> a late payment fee of \$25.00 will be applied to all accounts with payment due, unless otherwise agreed in writing between parent and the Director. One reminder letter will be issued if a parent neglects to pay their bill on time. If a family is late more than two times, they may be required to set up a credit card agreement for payments or have a full month tuition paid in advance. Children will not be able to attend Hillcrest after the last day of the month in which payment is due unless a payment plan has been submitted, approved, and signed by the Director. If there is no payment or failure to comply with the payment plan, care will be terminated, and past due accounts will be sent to collections or small claims court.

A \$30 fee will be added for checks returned/refused by your financial institution in addition to any late fees assessed. monthly-automated for a small fee

Hillcrest accepts children whose tuition is paid through childcare assistance contracts. However, parents are responsible for the difference between Hillcrest rates and what the State of Alaska will pay. Parents are also responsible for the co-pay listed clearly on the childcare assistance authorization form and to provide all the necessary paperwork in advance. Hillcrest will also notify childcare assistance of past due accounts which may limit access to further assistance.

## **Tax Information**

Hillcrest emails out monthly statements showing year-to-date charges and payments. At the first of January each family will receive an emailed statement showing the prior year's activity for tax purposes. Hillcrest's tax ID number is 92-0040360. It is the registering parent's/adult's responsibility to keep these emails. If you are not receiving these emails, please mark hillcrestak@gmail.com as a known email account and notify the office. There is a charge of \$20 for additional yearly tax information inquiries and requires all requests submitted in writing. Allow up to 72 hours for processing of request.

## **Visiting**

Hillcrest Children's Center has an open-door policy, which means that parents are free to visit their children's classroom at any time. Hillcrest invites and strongly encourages parents, as well as other family members, to visit the center and participate in activities. Please see volunteer expectations under the Field Trip section. Family activities are held several times a year to provide wonderful opportunities to get to know your child's teachers and socialize with other families.

If other family members are visiting without the accompaniment of parents, it is a requirement that they notify the office so that staff can account for everyone in the building. If parents have concerns, they are encouraged to call the center and check on their child throughout the day. If you, or any family member, wants to further involvement in the classroom or to participate more than 8 hours a month, please speak with the Director about meeting certain Municipality Licensing requirements.

## **Weather Closures**

In the event of severe weather or other emergency, Hillcrest will follow the Municipality of Anchorage's closures. If Hillcrest closes because of severe weather or other emergency, the center will be closed for the entire day. Every effort will be made to have notice of closures of the center available on the voicemail and on our Facebook page.

Please be aware that Hillcrest does *not* follow the Anchorage School District closings for weather. In the event of severe weather and closures of ASD, which may cause inadequate staffing, Hillcrest will accept children on a first come, first served basis as ratio allows. If you have a flexible work schedule, we ask that you minimize use of care to accommodate those families who do not.

## **Wellness Policy**

The wellness of all children and staff at Hillcrest is a priority. Teachers maintain sanitary practices throughout the day to minimize the spread of illness, yet illness is a part of childhood. If a child becomes ill while at Hillcrest parents are notified and expected to pick up their child within the hour. In the event the parent cannot be reached, numbers on the emergency card will be called to locate a responsible adult to pick up the child. It is in the best interest of all the children in the center that sick children be kept at home as to not infect others. It is the responsibility of parents to notify Hillcrest whenever a child will not be in attendance.

## **Excludable Illnesses**

Hillcrest Children's Center does not admit children, parent(s), or employees showing signs of a serious illness or excludable symptoms, nor allow them to remain in attendance unless a medical provider approves their attendance. Medical approval shall indicate the safety and well-being of everyone at Hillcrest. All parents and DHHS will be notified if children are exposed to any one of the following illnesses: Diphtheria, German measles (Rubella), Homophiles Influenza, Measles (Rubella), Bacterial Meningitis, Mumps, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Tuberculosis,



Meningococcal Infection, Giardia, Hepatitis A, Salmonellosis, Shigellosis.

### **Excludable Symptoms**

To provide children with a safe and healthy environment, Hillcrest determines if children shall be removed from and/or not be allowed admittance to program through utilization of the guidelines outlined in the most current edition of *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide*. A general rule of excludable symptoms is a high fever; behavior uncharacteristic for that child observed by: child not playing; child acting confused; persistent or inconsolable crying; open, oozing blisters; and/or loss of appetite characterized by refusing all solids or liquids.

In determining if your child is well enough to attend, please consider the following. First, consult your Dr. regarding concerns for your child's health. Second, consider the planned daily routine of your child's class and determine that your child can fully participate in those without compromising the needs of your child and those of their classmates. If your child is not able to participate in the planned daily activities, such as going outside, your child will be excluded from care that day.

### **Medication**

Hillcrest staff may dispense medication to a child only if a Medication Authorization is completed daily or Topical Products Permission is on file and the following requirements are met:

#### **Prescription Medication**

Prescription medication must be in the original container with the prescription label that includes: the child's name, name of the medication, dosage, dosage intervals, name of prescribing physician, date the prescription was filled, and date the prescription expires. No prescription medicine will be administered after an expiration date.

#### **Non-prescription Medication**

Non-prescription medications such as Tylenol, Sudafed, cough syrup, etc. can only be given for four consecutive days without a written notice from a physician. Non-prescription medications can only be administered in accordance with the directions on the bottle without written direction from a physician. If the bottle says age 2yrs and over or consult physician, we are unable to give the medication to a child under 24 months without written direction from a physician. Staff will only administer medication per medication instructions. Parent must provide daily authorization for Hillcrest Staff to administer non-prescription medicine.

#### **Non-prescription Topical Products**

Parents are required to fill out the Topical Products form for application of non-prescription items applied externally, such as diaper ointments, insect repellents, sunscreens, lip balm, and skin creams. Medication must be in the original container and be labeled.

### **Notification of Injuries**

In the event of an injury, a staff member will apply first aid (i.e., ice, wash cuts) and fill out an accident form on LifeCubby. Sometimes a courtesy call will be given to parents to inform them of an accident before pickup. If the child's injuries are significant enough that he/she cannot play or participate in group activities, then the child's parents are contacted and requested to pick up the child as soon as possible. In the event the staff is unable to reach parents, other names on the emergency contact card will be called to successfully reach the parent(s).

In the event of a life-threatening emergency, Hillcrest procedures require that the paramedics be called first to administer necessary aid and to transport the child to an emergency care facility.

The child's parents or designated contact persons are notified next.

Upon the child's enrollment, parents are required to sign a release authorizing Hillcrest to act in the child's best interest, granting permission to contact a doctor, nurse, hospital or other qualified health care provider to administer emergency treatment as necessary.

## **Appendix A: Program Description**

### **Infants**

Every baby is unique, yet what they all share is a need for good health and safety, warm loving relationships, and care that is responsive to their individual differences. In doing this, the caregivers create routines that are designed to meet the needs of the individual child. Infants are fed, diapered, hugged, and cuddled on their own schedule. Positive verbal communication and interaction is an essential part of the day, with caregivers promoting early literacy and language development using nursery rhymes, music, and lots of general day-to-day conversation with the little ones. Caregivers realize the need for special positive talk time during diaper changes, cuddle times, and floor time play. This classroom goes outside throughout the year, less frequently in winter, as the individual infant's schedule allows.

### **Respectful Caregiving**

In many instances, adults “do” things abruptly to children, such as picking them up, pulling a pacifier out of their mouth, taking away a toy, wiping their nose, handing them to another person. Usually, these are done as part of the tasks required in routine. If an adult had to experience such treatment without warning or explanation, it is very likely that the adult would complain or feel insulted or mistreated. Staff should approach children with more respect, letting them know ahead of time what will be happening, and giving them some time to adjust to whatever will be done to them.

Such treatment usually requires communication on the part of the adult to let the child know what will be happening. For an infant or young child with a developmental delay, processing time can take up to one-minute, so be patient. Examples include staff:

- Saying “Can we put your pacifier away now? Are you ready to let go?” and wait for a positive response before taking it from the child’s mouth.
- Holding out hands towards a child, letting them read the gesture before picking them up.
- Verbalizing for an infant the signs of sleepiness that you observe and informing them that it will soon be time to go into the crib. Asking the infant if they are ready to go to sleep now or would like to wait a few minutes before picking them up and putting him in the crib and giving the child time to process the idea.
- Holding out a hand when asking the child to give up a toy and respecting a child’s response whenever possible.

It is important to not give “choices” when there is not one. Do not ask a child if they want a diaper change when they need one. You can give the option if they want to go now or after their friend.

### **I Love You Rituals**

I Love You Rituals is the social-emotional “curriculum” for the infants. It is a playful means to promote optimal brain development, increase attention span, reduce hyperactivity, build self-esteem, amplify cooperation, and facilitate language development. These transformative rituals between adults and infants provide a structured connecting activity that includes eye contact, touch, presence, and playfulness. These rituals foster healthy connection and development.

### **Toddlers**

Life with young children is full of routines such as bedtime, chores, and mealtime. Routines are essential for young children. Routines help children learn to tell time and regulate their own internal clocks. They

learn to predict what will happen next and in doing so, they feel more empowered to tackle the task. The clearer the patterns for young children, the more brain-enriching the environment as they are not having to worry about what comes next. When the routine for the child changes, chaos and grumpiness can fill the space previously occupied by routine. Therefore, we maintain the same daily routines for children year-round.

7:00-8:30 Tabletop / Quiet Activities	Play
8:00-8:30 Breakfast	Eat
8:30- 11:00 Indoor / Outdoor Free Play Activities	Play
10:00-10:30 Snack	Eat
11:00-12:00 Outside Play	Play
12:00-12:45 Lunch	Eat
12:45-3:00 Nap / Quiet Time	Rest
3:00-3:30 Snack	Eat
3:00-6:30 Indoor / Outdoor Free Play Activities	Play

The day's activities unfold in an unhurried way with each day following the established rhythm, giving the child a sense of security and consistency. It is an environment of love, warmth, and harmony that serves as a gentle transition between the security of home and Hillcrest.

The Toddler Rooms provide opportunities for children to develop basic skills in social/emotional and language development as well as independence and self-care skills. These skills provide the foundation for future learning. At mealtime, you can expect to see the child sitting in a chair at a table (child-sized), drinking from a Sippy cup and later practicing drinking from a regular cup, using eating utensils, and cleaning up after themselves. Children will be allowed to have pacifiers during times of stress or sleep as needed. Typically, children will be weaned off of the pacifier and bottles within 1-2 months after being fully transitioned if not done before. Children over 12 months of age sleep on individual nap mats or cots. Proper hydration is important throughout the day so we ask that families bring in a water-bottle for their child to use at Hillcrest.

Toddlers are concerned about who they are and who is in charge. Beginning around 18 months of age, identity becomes the dominant developmental issue for children and closely tied to questions of independence and control. Of course, the sense of security that began to develop in the earliest months and the desire to explore (with increasing purposefulness) continue. You will help the children find appropriate ways to assert themselves by supporting their individuality, by giving them choices whenever possible, and by introducing social guidelines. The classroom environment offers toddlers the opportunity to be in control and to participate in group play and independent activities that foster cooperation and facilitates the toddler's development of a strong sense of self.

As the children become older, we adjust the materials and activities in the room to meet the developmental needs of the children. Older Toddlers require a room full of opportunities and activities that are like Preschool, only on a simpler scale. Children will be introduced to family-style food service which will continue into Preschool. Family-style meal service allows children and teachers to eat together and to make food choices based on individual appetites and food preferences. It promotes mealtime as a learning experience to help children develop positive attitudes toward nutritious foods, share in-group eating situations, and develop good eating habits.

### **Baby Doll Circle Time**

Baby Doll Circle Time® is a complete curriculum that's based on forming caring relationships and bridging the gap between the home family and the school family that is used in the toddler classrooms.

The children who choose to participate will each have a baby doll. We will sing, “Get your baby, get your baby, get your baby, time to play,” to the tune of “Oh My Darlin’,” signaling the beginning of the playtime. Then the fun begins.

The children will interact with their baby dolls in the same ways we interact with the children individually. If we play peek-a-boo, stop and go, or tickling games with a child, the child will play the same game with the baby doll. In doing so, the children re-experience our connection repeatedly, helping to optimize their development. Each time the children play these social games with their baby dolls, they will relive their loving bonds with you. This reduces the stress of missing you and increases the giggle moments.

### **The Infant and Young Toddler Classrooms**

All classrooms are full of opportunities and activities that allow the children to explore the world around them through a variety of curriculum areas. These areas include, but are not limited to: Reading, Block, Math, Science, Dramatic Play, and Art. Activities available in the different areas allow the children to learn and practice developmental skills in physical health, emotional and social well-being, motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, cognition, general knowledge, communication, language and literacy as guided by the Alaska Early Learning Guidelines.

As early childhood educators, we look to best practices to guide the work that we do. For classroom set-up, we look to the Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS). The ITERS looks at Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language and Books, Activities, Interactions, and Program Structure. You will learn more about this during your first-year training.

In the infant classroom, the classroom is set-up with two play spaces, while the toddler classrooms are arranged with interest areas and play areas. A play area is a space where play materials are provided for children to use. In the infant room, we try to move the louder toys away from the sleeping area. An interest area is a clearly defined play area for a particular type of play, with materials organized by type and stored for easy access. The interest areas in the toddler rooms are Books/Cozy, Blocks, Dramatic Play, and Nature/Science for the two-year-old. Additional materials that are accessible depending on the developmental level of the classroom are fine motor, art, math, music, and movement.

Free play is a child-centered activity, where the focus is on the process rather than the product of the play. Teacher interactions during play vary from caregiving responsibilities, assisting with problem-solving, asking open-ended questions to expand the children’s thoughts, redirecting undesired behaviors, and enticing children into play themes. Teachers also teach social skills, such as how to enter into play with peers, empathy, and conflict resolution. We encourage sharing but do not force it if a child wishes to work alone.

### **Preschool**

The Preschool classroom is designed for children approximately three to five years of age. Young children of this age thrive through successful social interactions and exploring roles around contributing to a group. Because of this, the Preschool teachers provide an environment that nurtures social skills and encourages confidence. The classroom is divided into different learning centers that allow children to become active participants in small group play and learn to use materials and activities so that they experience success. Children learn how to be part of groups and develop a sense of belonging where they share excitement about learning in this hands-on approach, rather than exposure to teacher-directed academic content. Children flourish when they don’t have to worry about what’s going to happen next, and in the Preschool classroom is supported by providing carefully planned daily, weekly, and seasonal rhythms.

The daily rhythm of the Preschool is created by the teachers following a set rhythm each day.

7:00-10:30 Free Play in Activity Areas  
7:30-8:30 Breakfast is open  
10:00-10:30 Morning Snack is open  
10:30-11:00 Clean-Up, Morning Gathering  
11:00-12:15 Outside Play Year Round\*  
12:15-1:00 Lunch  
1:00-3:00 Rest / Quiet Time  
3:00-6:30 Free Play in Activity Areas  
3:00-3:30 Afternoon Snack is open  
3:30-4:00 Afternoon Gathering Time

The weekly rhythm of our curriculum is accomplished by having different activities and a children's show and tell on different days. This creates a more meaningful relationship with each day and gives the children a concrete understanding of the world around them- knowing what the children can count on from day to day and week to week, as the day of the week becomes identified by the children with an experienced activity:

#### **Weekly Schedule\*\***

Monday: Walk Day  
Tuesday: Craft Day  
Wednesday: Exploration Day  
Thursday: Soup/Baking Day  
Friday: Cleaning Day

The yearly rhythm is experienced in the Preschool with the help of seasonal stories and crafts, and the children's birthdays. Seasonal celebrations (fall, winter, spring, summer) lead the children through the year, and each has its own colors, foods, songs, and verses.

\*Children go outside unless it is below 0, active downpour with wind or ice. In these instances, we have moderate-to-vigorous indoor activities such as a dance party, obstacle course or active game.

\*\*The weekly schedule may change year to year to accommodate different needs that come up. Families in that class will be informed of any changes.

#### **The Preschool Day Gathering Time**

Gathering Time is when the children come together to have a shared conversation. This may be in a large group or with smaller table groups. It is an opportunity to practice the skills of respecting each other's voices, keeping our bodies in our own space, and to work on following instructions. We keep this short, between 10-20 minutes depending on the day and topic. A child always has the option of staying in the reading area instead of participating in a large group activity. The skills of attentive participation in Gathering times are foundational skills for kindergarten. Teachers are expected to be participating in the gathering activity, modeling for the children's active participation.

#### **Show and Tell (Morning Gathering Time)**

Each week, your child may bring in one item from home on their assigned day that is tied to a "Letter of the Week". Focusing on a specific letter each week helps the children learn to recognize each letter and listen for its sound. Children are provided the opportunity to practice introducing themselves, share some information about their object. Having children present on different days allow for more time to go in-depth without stressing their attention span.

### **Feeling Buddies (Afternoon Gathering Time)**

Feeling Buddies are a comprehensive and innovative tool for teaching self-regulation. The Feeling Buddies curriculum and corresponding tools help children learn to identify what they are feeling, separate themselves from the feeling and regulate it through a five-step process. As children manage their Feeling Buddies, they learn a helpful language that eventually becomes their inner speech for self-regulation, emotional wellbeing and healing.

### **Yoga/Mindfulness (Afternoon Gathering Time)**

Yoga/Mindfulness time provides an opportunity for the young child to practice body awareness with a physical activity that is non-competitive and fun. As children learn the poses, it enhances their flexibility, strength, coordination, and concentration. It may become a technique that they can utilize for calmness and relaxation that will enhance their health and help them navigate life's challenges with a little more ease.

### **Free Choice Activity Time**

Free choice time provides the opportunity for children to choose activities of interest from a variety of options. This may be done by oneself or with peers and/or adults. Children's attention span will continue to expand as their play and investigations become more complex. Free choice activity time allows the child to develop and strengthen their peer and adult relationships through shared experiences, practice choice, initiative, and problem-solving, among other things, as they learn to manage themselves during this time. During Free Choice children are to have access to a variety of activities, most of which are child-initiated with no more than one teacher-directed option.

## **Appendix C: Municipality Parents' Guide to Licensed Child Care**

### **Choosing care for your child is a significant decision.**

When you entrust the care of your child to another person, you are making an important decision. Visit, ask questions and carefully compare several programs. Licensed care includes child care and educational homes and centers. Your choice depends on what you want and need for your child.

### **Licensing is a key to quality child care.**

It promotes good care by setting basic standards. Before a center or home is granted a child care license, it must meet health, safety, and program requirements. A Child and Adult Care Specialist from the Municipality of Anchorage visits and inspects the facility and investigates complaints. The goal of licensing is to prevent risks to children; however, licensing cannot guarantee that a facility meets all requirements at all times.

### **You as an informed parent are a key to quality child care.**

Parents are responsible for choosing and monitoring their child's care. Licensors visit one to four times a year, but you visit each time you take your child. Visit unexpectedly sometimes or in the middle of the day. Keep an eye on the quality of care. What do you see when you visit? Is the environment safe? Are caregivers capable and nurturing? How many children are present? Are meals nutritious? Are activities appropriate? Watch how your infant responds to the program and listen to what your child says. You are the person best able to decide whether child care meets your standards for safety, health, and quality.

### **If you have questions or concerns about your child's care.**

Discuss concerns with your caregiver. Talk to the caregiver if you observe health or safety problems or if you feel the program needs improvement. If you are still concerned, or if you believe children may be in danger or a standard is violated, contact the local Licensing office. The Licensing office will investigate your complaint. Address and phone of the local licensing office:

Child/Adult Care Program  
825 L Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
P. O. Box 196650  
Anchorage, AK 99519-6650  
(907) 343-475

## **HOW MANY CHILDREN MAY BE IN CARE?**

### **Licensed Child Care Homes**

(Children under the age of 12, including children related to caregivers)

No more than 8 children total

No more than 6 children total if only one door exit.

No more than 3 children under 30 months

No more than 2 non-walking children

At least 1 adult caregiver

No more than 5 children in nighttime care (including provider's own children) (10PM–6AM)

Children who live in the household under the age of 12 count in the total

### **Licensed Child Care Centers**

9 or more children

1 caregiver for every 4 infants (6 weeks thru 11 months)

1 caregiver for every 5 toddlers (12 thru 18 months)

1 caregiver for every 6 toddlers (19 thru 35 months)

1 caregiver for every 10 children (3 thru 12 years)

At least 2 adults on premises

## **Summary of Child Care Licensing Requirements within the Municipality of Anchorage**

PARENTS



Are responsible for selecting safe, appropriate care for their child  
Are responsible for monitoring their child's care  
Provide current emergency information and immunization records for their child  
Are encouraged to visit their child anytime the child is in care  
Receive written child care policies

### **LICENSING**

Child care license is required if more than 4 children (not related to caregivers) are in care. License must be renewed prior to expiration. Facility (including building, staff and program) is evaluated before a license is issued and is periodically monitored thereafter. Complaints are investigated. Licensing files are open to public review

### **CAREGIVERS**

Are required to care for children in a safe, healthy way. May not have physical, health, mental health, or behavior problems that might be a risk to children. May not have domestic violence or substance abuse problems that might be a risk to children. Complete child care training each year. Persons 16 and older have a criminal background check including submitting fingerprint cards. Caregivers meet early childhood training requirements

### **SAFETY**

Children are always supervised by an adult  
Caregivers know the whereabouts of children at all times  
Caregiver(s) with First Aid and CPR training are present  
Facility is free of hazards, inside and out  
Gates are required at accessible stairways if children under 36 months are in care.  
Medicine and poisons are stored safely  
Electric outlets have child proof cover caps if children under age 5 are in care  
Emergency information is kept for each child and is reviewed and updated semiannually

### **HEALTH**

Facility meets sanitation and safety standards  
Meals and snacks are nutritious  
Children are immunized or exemptions are on file  
Parents are notified if their child is exposed to a contagious or communicable disease  
If it chooses, a child care home may care for mildly ill children  
Facility may not care for a seriously ill child unless a medical provider approves attendance  
Drinking water is safe  
Smoking is not allowed  
Medicine is given only with parent permission  
Food preparation and handling are sanitary

### **EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**

Furniture and equipment are safe and durable  
Infant walkers are not allowed  
Toys are adequate and varied  
Children have storage space for their belongings  
Children under 5 years have a cot/mat/ bed  
Infants must sleep in a safe crib or playpen without materials that would increase the risk of suffocation

### **PROGRAM**

Promotes children's healthy development  
Includes quiet and active, group and individual, indoor and outdoor activities  
TV and video are limited to children's programs and limited to no more than 1½ hours in a 24 hour period  
High risk activities are not allowed  
Parent permission is required for moderate risk activities (for example, field trips)

Program includes minimum of 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity for every 3 hours the child is in care between 7 am and 7pm

**BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE**

Is positive, and never cruel, humiliating, or damaging to the child

Sets realistic expectations and clear, consistent limits

Is not related to eating, napping, toileting, or removing from other children for more than 10 minutes

No corporal punishment is allowed (Corporal punishment means “the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for a disapproved behavior. It includes shaking, spanking, delivering a blow with a part of the body or an object, slapping, pinching, pulling or any other action that seeks to induce pain.”)

**FIRE SAFETY**

Facility meets fire safety standards. Emergency evacuation plan is practiced monthly and documented

## Appendix D: Sample Menu's

<b>Hillcrest Children's Center Infant Menu</b>	
<b>Food Offered Throughout the Week</b>	
<b>Bottle</b>	Breast Milk (BM) or Formula (F) or Breastfed (BF)
<b>Fruit or Vegetable</b>	Peas, Carrots, Sweet Potatoes, Green Beans, Squash, Avocado
	Applesauce, Banana, Mangoes, Peaches, Pears, Strawberries, Blueberries
<b>Protein/ Grain</b>	Infant Cereal, Whole Egg, Cottage Cheese, Yogurt, Chickpeas
<b>Hillcrest Children's Center Toddler Menu</b>	
<b>Additional Table Foods Offered Throughout the Week</b>	
<b>Fruit</b>	Kiwi, Oranges
<b>Vegetable</b>	Tomatoes, Potatoes, Corn, Celery, Brussel Sprouts, Mushrooms, Broccoli, Spinach, Cauliflower, Pickles, Bell Peppers, Cucumber, Olives, Lettuce, Beets,
<b>Grain</b>	Rice, Oatmeal, Bread, Rolls, Crackers
<b>Protein</b>	Beans (Pinto, Black), Cheese, Ham, Chicken, Beef, Turkey, Tuna,

**Introducing solid foods:** Solid foods tend to be introduced gradually, which means that it may be appropriate to serve the solid food only once per day and then gradually increase the number of feedings per day. The infant does not need to be offered a solid food component that is part of every meal pattern, such as vegetables and fruit, until the infant has established a tolerance for that solid food at multiple feedings per day. It is important to remember that the quantity of food an infant consumes changes from feeding to feeding or day to day. Infants may want to eat less food when teething or not feeling well and more food on days when they have a very good appetite.

**On demand feeding:** Hillcrest offers all infants at the center meals that comply with the infant meal pattern requirements. Infants do not typically eat on a strict schedule and do not necessarily eat at traditional breakfast, lunch and snack times. Rather, it is best to feed infants when they show signs of being hungry. This helps ensure that the infant gets the right amount of food for growth. This "on demand" feeding is considered better for baby. Additionally, the quantity of food an infant consumes changes from feeding to feeding and day to day. Because of an infant's varied eating pattern, we are mindful of what the infant eats over the course of the day versus each individual feeding. As long as all the required food components (i.e. breastmilk and/or formula and the solid foods the infant is developmentally ready to accept) are offered over the course of the entire day, they may be counted towards CACFP meals. Infants do not need to consume the entire meal offered to be creditable.

**Following the food pattern of the individual infant:** As solid foods are introduced to infants gradually and often one at a time over the course of a few days, the infants eating pattern may change. If the child is eating another fruit or vegetable, it needs to be offered at the required times. It is important to remember that a food needs to be introduced over ten times before the child accepts it. If the infant refuses a food, it is OK. Offering infants a variety of food over the course of the week helps them get the nutrition they need. It can take time for infants to be introduced to and accept a variety of foods.

<b>Hillcrest Children's Center</b>		<b>WEEK 1</b>				
Serving Size		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
12- 36 mths	3-5 years	BREAKFAST				
4 f. oz.	6 f. oz.	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk

1/4 cup	1/2 cup	Fruit	Banana	Mixed Berries	Oranges	Apples	Dried Apricots
1/2 serving	1/2 serving	Bread/Protein	Banana Bread HM, WG	Overnight Oats HM, WG	Blueberry Muffin HM, WG	Cheese Sticks	Oatmeal WG
LUNCH							
4 f. oz.	6 f. oz.	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk
1 oz	1.5 oz.	Protein	Keema Curry HM	Chickpea Soup HM	Teriyaki Chicken HM	Chicken Soup HM	Chicken Chile Colorado HM
1/8 cup	1/4 cup	Vegetable	Curry Potatoes	Green Beans, Bell Peppers	Roasted Carrots	Green Beans	Tomato, Potato
1/8 cup	1/4 cup	Fruit	Oranges	Pineapple	Oranges	Maplesauce	Grapes
1/2 serving	1/2 serving	Grain	Tortilla	Pasta	Brown Rice WG	Pancakes HM WG	Tortilla
PM SNACK							
4 f. oz., 1/2 c, 1/2 c, 1/2 oz., 1/2 serving	4 f. oz., 1/2 c, 1/2 c, 1/2 oz., 1/2 serving	Milk, Fruit, Veg., Meat, OR Bread	Goldfish / Rice Crackers	Cottage Cheese	Hummus	Wheat Thins WG	Yogurt
4 f. oz., 1/2 c, 1/2 c, 1/2 oz., 1/2 serving	4 f. oz., 1/2 c, 1/2 c, 1/2 oz., 1/2 serving	Milk, Fruit, Veg., Meat, OR Bread	Apple / Applesauce	Apples	Carrot Sticks	Cheese and Turkey	Blueberries

Menu subject to change due to availability. Any substitutions are documented at time of change on menu located on kitchen fridge.

Children ages 12 months through 23 months are served whole milk. Children 24 months and older are served non-fat milk.

**HM=Homemade**      **WG=Whole Grain**