



The **KITE** Learning Center

Where **k**ids are **I**nvited **T**o **E**xplore

Handbook and Policies
May 2024

5100 Dierker Road
Columbus
OH43220
614.313.8131
www.thekitelc.com
thekitelc@gmail.com



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GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Location and Contact Information

Address: 5100 Dierker road, Columbus, OH43220

Phone number: 614.313.8131

Website: www.thekitelc.com

Email: thekitelc@gmail.com

Staff

Lynette Sieberhagen - Administrator

Stef Sieberhagen - Preschool Learning facilitator

Hannah - Preschool Learning facilitator

Becky Sieberhagen - Preschool Learning facilitator

Board of Directors:

Lynette Sieberhagen - President

Laura Liston – Vice President

Caleb Stertzler – Finance Officer

Melanie Trombetti

Jenn Peddicord

Chrissy Nettekoven Spears

2. Program Philosophy

Our Vision

Our vision is to see New American Families in the Columbus area integrated and thriving in their communities.

Our Mission

The Kite Learning Center (TKLC) is a non-profit organization that exists to provide inclusive and equitable resources and opportunities for learning to New American families living in Columbus, Ohio through a play enriched, special needs supportive training preschool.

Our Values

- Inclusivity of different cultures, languages and abilities
- Play-enriched environment with easy accessibility to the outdoors
- Hands-on training and mentoring in early childhood education
- Mental health & special needs support for staff and families
- Physical, mental and emotional safety
- Family and community engagement
- Transparency in the interests of reproducibility

3. Hours of Operation, Closings and Daily Schedule

TKLC will be in operation as follows:

Monday through Thursday from 9am to 3pm and Fridays from 9am-12pm.

If you are running late for drop off or pick up, please call the office. We reserve the right to implement a late fee if late pick-up becomes a chronic problem.

TKLC's classes follow the Columbus City Schools calendar. TKLC will be closed the week of Thanksgiving, two weeks in December, the day of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and one week in spring. Refer to the [TKLC calendar](#) for more detail.

TKLC does not provide any evening or overnight care.

Sample Daily Schedule:

9:00 Arrival, check in, wash hands
9:10 Outdoor/Indoor play/Interest areas
11:00 Cleanup
11:20 Group meeting
11:35 Wash hands
11:45 Depart/Lunch
12:15 Arrival, check in, wash hands
12:25 Outdoor/Indoor play/Interest areas
2:15 Cleanup
2:35 Group meeting
2:50 Wash hands
3:00 Depart

Outside time will be limited when temperatures are very warm or very cold. Children will not be taken outside when the temperature (wind chill and heat index factored in) drops below 25 degrees or rises above 90 degrees.

4. Staff/Child Ratios and Group Size

TKLC will not exceed the following state required ratios:

1:12 - 3 years- 4 years*

1:14 - 4 years until eligible for Kindergarten*

*Our multi-age programs follow the ratio for the youngest age of any child enrolled in the classroom.

The number of children in one group that may be cared for at any time is 24.

5. Family and Community Involvement

There will be many opportunities for family engagement at TKLC, including open houses, KITE nights, community days, field trips and special programs. At these events, all children are considered to be in the care of the parent(s)/guardian(s) and not in the care of the staff of TKLC. We welcome any family members to take part in our day-to-day activities provided no children not enrolled at TKLC accompany you.

6. Meeting Learning Facilitators and Staff

Staff are generally available to speak briefly with caregivers in person before or after class. Contact staff and/or Administrator for a consultation at thekitelc@gmail.com.

7. Payment Schedule, Charges, and Fees

Tuition payment is due on the 1st of the month in 9 equal installments, with the first payment made at enrollment. A non-refundable \$50 registration fee is required to reserve your child's place. Upon payment of your registration fee, your child will be placed on our class roster for the upcoming school year.

Morning only program (Monday through Friday 9am – 11:45am) tuition is \$500 per month and afternoon only program (Monday through Thursday 12:15pm – 3pm) is \$400 per month. Full-time tuition is \$800 per month. Tuition payments are made through the PFCC TAP payment system or through Huntington Bank for private pay. Any payment received after the 5th of the month will be charged a \$25 late fee, unless prior arrangements have been made with the Administrator. Our tax ID number is available upon request. There will be a \$40 fee for payment returned for any reason. If your plans change with regard to your child's attendance at TKLC, please let us know as soon as possible. TKLC reserves the right to disenroll a student in the event that school policies are not followed by parent(s)/guardian(s) or student, or in the event that tuition obligations are not met. If a family chooses to withdraw a child for any reason, we require 30 days written notice. Any tuition due in that time frame must be paid.

CENTER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Enrollment

Admissions

Children must be 3 years old by August 1 of that school year to enroll at TKLC. Returning members are given first priority for enrolling in classes. A child is considered to be enrolled in TKLC only after the registration fee and all required paperwork ([Find it here!](#)) has been received. Changes to this information must be communicated to the office immediately so that current information is always on file. A medical form ([Find it here!](#)) signed by a physician or certified nurse practitioner is required to be submitted within 30 days of admission. Children's records are confidential but will be available to ODJFS. Each form must be updated annually.

2. Attendance

Arrival

On arrival, please escort your child into the playground or the building (in inclement weather) and ensure that they are seen and welcomed by a learning facilitator and checked in with a staff member. Children should never be dropped off or left unattended inside or outside of the building. Families who are having children transported to TKLC from another program/activity need to provide a detailed transportation plan and contact information for the other program/activity. Families are responsible for the supervision of their children before sign-in and after sign-out. Families are responsible for any siblings accompanying them on school grounds during sign in and sign out. Please do not allow siblings to play in the preschool room, as many of our toys and supplies are choking hazards.

Departure

Pick-up will occur at the playground gate if weather permits or the main door in inclement weather; children will be dismissed by a learning facilitator to their parent(s)/guardian(s), who must sign their child(ren) out through a staff member. Staff will release children only to persons on the release form provided by each family. If an emergency arises, families must provide a written, signed note giving the person in question permission to pick up their child. Staff will check IDs of anyone they do not recognize; please inform concerned parties to avoid confusion or offense. Children's safety is our priority. If there are custody issues involved with your child, you must provide TKLC with court papers indicating who has permission to pick up the child. TKLC may deny a parent(s)/guardian(s) access to their child without proper documentation. Staff will not release children to anyone, including parent(s)/guardian(s), who appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Emergency contacts will be called to transport the child home. Police will be notified if necessary.

Absences and follow-up

Please call the school at 614.313.8131 to notify the staff if your child will be absent. If your child has missed a day of school without notice, or if your child was scheduled to arrive from another program or activity and does not, TKLC staff will contact you to inquire about the circumstances.

3. Supervision

A major responsibility of TKLC staff is to ensure the health and safety of each child entrusted to our care. Staff are alert to the safety needs of all children, anticipate possible hazards, and take appropriate precautionary and preventive measures. At no time will a child be left unattended. If a child becomes ill, they may be isolated in a section of the room not in use, but within the sight and hearing of a staff member.

4. Child Guidance Policy

TKLC staff believes that helping children to learn self-control is very important. Our hope is that each child will learn self-discipline through careful guidance. Your child will always be treated with love and respect. If children are treated with respect, they in turn learn to respect others. Our expectations will be kept within the child's capabilities and the child will be made aware of these expectations. Staff will not impose punishments for failure to eat, sleep or toileting accidents. This discipline policy applies to all staff and to parent(s)/guardian(s) while they are at TKLC.

Peaceful Classroom Strategies:

- Positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior (catching children doing the “right” thing)
- Redirection to a more appropriate behavior/activity (removing the child and giving them an appropriate activity)
- Talking about the specific situation
- Natural consequence
- Provide a quiet time. (This is a short time where the child is given time in the classroom to collect him/herself until they are ready to be a part of the group activities again.)
- In extreme cases, age-appropriate time away from the situation. Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief and appropriate to the child’s age and developmental ability and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space.

“Non-Peaceful Behaviors” or otherwise known as, unacceptable behaviors

- Verbal hurting or hurtful teasing
- Aggressive physical contact (hitting, biting, kicking, pinching, etc.)
- Intentional destruction of property (classroom materials, children’s work, school property, etc.)
- Repetitive leaving of assigned area
- Opposition to redirection

Discipline NEVER includes any of the following:

- Physical Punishment
- Making a child feel that they are “bad”.

Chronic Disruptive Behavior

If a situation arises where a child is consistently endangering him/herself, peers or staff, it may become necessary to disenroll the child. Every attempt will be made to work together with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the child to correct the behavior. However, the safety of children is always our primary concern. Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior which has been determined to be upsetting to the physical or emotional well-being of another child/class may require the following action:

- *Initial consultation:*
The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be asked to meet for a conference with staff member. The problem will be identified, and a course of action established to resolve the situation.
- *Second consultation:*
After 2 weeks of little or no improvement and the initial plan is ineffective, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to meet with the staff member again. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline new approaches to the problem, and discuss the consequences if progress is not apparent.
- *Final consultation:*
If, after 4 weeks and 2 parent(s)/guardian(s)/staff meeting, the child is unable to participate in group experiences, the discipline problems continue, the child poses a threat to self, staff or other children in the program and it is determined that all possibilities have been exhausted and that the child is incompatible with our program, the child will be dismissed from TKLC and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will need to seek other school arrangements. Dismissal decisions made by the TKLC are final.

Child abuse reporting

Staff are trained to recognize abuse and neglect and are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Franklin County Children’s Services hotline at 614.229.7000. To report abuse or neglect, parent(s)/guardian(s) can call the Children’s Protective Service on 614.220.7000. For further information about the quality of children’s programs or concerns about the operations of TKLC, call the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family at 614.4667765.

5. Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

All TKLC staff are prepared to administer necessary medication and care to children with disabilities, in compliance with the [ADA](#).

6. Food and Birthdays

TKLC does not provide any snacks or meals to students.

TKLC provides each child with a water bottle. Water bottles are cleaned and refilled with fresh water daily.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) must provide a snack and lunch for their child each day.

Written requests from families for special diets due to cultural, religious, or health reasons should be brought to the attention of the staff.

Healthy snack suggestions:

- Fresh fruits or vegetables - bananas, apples, clementines, carrot sticks, etc.
- Muffins/bread
- Animal crackers
- Pretzels or crackers
- Cereal/Chex mix
- Applesauce pouches
- Veggie Straws

Lunch guidelines for 3–5-year-olds per the USDA:

<i>Meat or meat alternative</i>	<i>1½ oz</i>
<i>Fruit or vegetable</i>	<i>½ cup</i>
<i>Bread/pasta</i>	<i>½ slice / ¼ cup</i>
<i>Fluid milk</i>	<i>¾ cup</i>

Birthdays

Birthdays are important milestones to be celebrated in our classrooms. TKLC is honored to commemorate your child(ren)'s birthday during regular snack time. Any snack that aligns with our suggestions (above) and birthday napkins, plates or party hats are appropriate for this special occasion. Please do not send cupcakes, ice cream, candy or other sugary treats.

7. Management of Illness

Children who are enrolled at TKLC must be fully immunized prior to attending.

TKLC provides children with a clean and healthy environment. However, we realize that all children become ill from time to time. If this is your child's first group care experience, it is possible that they may experience more frequent illnesses at the beginning before their immune system becomes more active. We observe all children as they enter the program to quickly assess their general health, and all families, staff, and volunteers are required to confirm they are symptom-free at check-in.

We ask that you not bring a sick child to the center; they will be sent home. Please also plan ahead to have a backup care plan in place if you are not able to take time off from work/school.

At all times there will be a staff member present who has completed six hours of training in the recognition and prevention of communicable diseases.

The following precautions shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease:

- a) TKLC will immediately notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.
- b) A child with any of the following signs or symptoms shall be immediately isolated and discharged to the

parent(s)/guardian(s) or person designated by the parent(s)/guardian(s).

- diarrhea (three or more abnormally loose stools within a 24-hour period)
 - severe coughing, causing a child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound.
 - difficult or rapid breathing
 - yellowish skin or eyes
 - redness of the eye or eyelid, pus discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching or eye pain
 - temperature of 100 degrees taken by the axillary (armpit) method with a digital thermometer
 - untreated infected skin patches
 - unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
 - stiff neck with an elevated temperature
 - evidence of lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation
 - unusual spots or rashes
 - sore throat or difficulty in swallowing
 - vomiting more than one time or when accompanied by any other sign or symptom of illness
- c) A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be:
- cared for in a room or portion of a room not to be used for other types of care
 - within sight and hearing of an adult at all times
 - made comfortable and provided with a cot
 - discharged to parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible

Notification of illness

Please call the school at 614.313.8131 to notify the staff that your child will be absent. If your child has missed a day of school without notice, TKLC staff will contact you to inquire about the circumstances. Families will be notified by a sign on the bulletin board if children have been exposed to a communicable illness. Children will be readmitted to the center after at least 24 hours of being free of fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and other symptoms. If they are not symptom-free, a doctor's note will be required stating that the child is not contagious. A list of illnesses seen at TKLC resulting in an absence will be posted on the licensing bulletin board and reported monthly to the Franklin Public Health District.

8. Emergency, Serious Illness, or Injury

Building Emergency

In the event of a building emergency, e.g. fire, power or water outage, staff will follow the written instructions posted in the classroom. TKLC conducts monthly fire drills. Should we need to evacuate, our emergency destination is the closest soccer goals on the nearby field. In the case that we need to move a greater distance from the building, we will take shelter at the grassy area the other side of the parking lot. A sign will be posted at the entrance indicating that we have been evacuated and the location where you can pick up your child. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified as soon as possible to pick up your child. If a parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot be reached, emergency contact(s) will be notified.

Environmental Emergency

In the event of a tornado warning, children will follow tornado procedures posted in the classroom. TKLC will conduct periodic tornado drills.

Lockdown

In the event of a threat of violence, lockdown procedures will be followed. Emergency authorities will be contacted and their direction followed. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted as soon as the situation allows. All staff have completed the ALICE training to be prepared for such an emergency.

Medical Emergency

Every staff member is trained in First Aid, CPR, Child Abuse and Communicable Disease recognition. In the case of a minor accident/injury staff will administer basic first aid and care. If the injury/illness is more serious, first aid will be administered, and parent(s)/guardian(s) contacted immediately to assist in deciding an appropriate course of action. If any injury/illness is life-threatening, EMS will be contacted, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified, and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital with all available health records. Staff may not transport children in their vehicles. Only parent(s)/guardian(s) or EMS may transport children to the hospital. We must have permission to transport by EMS on file for every child in our program.

Incident/Injury Report

An incident/injury report will be completed and given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) to sign on the same day if any of the following occur: the child has an illness, accident, or injury which requires first aid; the child receives a bump or blow to the head; or an unusual or unexpected event occurs which jeopardizes the safety of the child. In the event your child has to be transported by EMS a report will be available for the parent(s)/guardian(s) to sign within 24 hours after the incident occurs. The administrator will also contact licensing personnel from the appropriate ODJFS office within 24 hours when there is a “general emergency” or “serious incident, injury or illness”.

9. Administration of Medication

TKLC will administer medications for asthma (inhaler) or life-threatening allergic reactions (EpiPen) to a child only after the parent(s)/guardian(s) completes a Care Plan and Request of Medication form. ([Find it here!](#)). Families must provide instruction on how to administer any required medicine to the learning facilitators and the Administrator. Medicine administered will be documented on the appropriate state form. Completed forms will be kept on record for at least one year. Medications will be stored in areas inaccessible to children. Medications may not be stored in a child’s backpack. Medications other than EpiPens and rescue inhalers will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Prescription medications must be in their unexpired, original container and will be administered in accordance with instructions on the label.

Medical foods and modified diets

If your child requires a food supplement or a modified diet, you must secure written information from your physician to that effect. Please speak with the Administrator for more details. You will need to complete an ODJFS Child Medical/Physical Care Plan for Child Care ([Find it here!](#)). This form must be signed by the Administrator. A notice posting the general restriction such as “No Peanuts, Tree Nuts, or Dairy” shall be posted in a conspicuous place to make all TKLC staff and families aware of the restriction in question. Completed forms will be kept on record for at least one year.

10. Transportation

TKLC does not take driving field trips. We do not have preschool transportation for pick-up, drop-off, or for field trips.

Family Outings

We will occasionally schedule a family outing/off site field trip. These are not mandatory events. TKLC does not provide transportation for these outings. Families (including any authorized adult over 18 years of age) will accompany and transport their children. Each child’s family will be solely responsible for chaperoning and supervising their own children during the outing.

Routine walking trips

TKLC classes will occasionally take walking trips around the school building. Families must complete the ODJFS Routine Trip Permission Form ([Find it here!](#)).

11. Water Activities

TKLC does not offer swimming, but children may engage in water activities. All students must have a water activity form on file before the start of the school year.

12. Diapers and Toileting

TKLC does not provide infant care. Diapered children will be checked at arrival and as needed. Children will also be invited to use the bathroom at arrival and as needed throughout the day. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home at the end of the day.

13. Resting

As some children may require a nap during the day a quiet, supervised area is available.

14. Closings and Delays due to Inclement Weather

TKLC follows the [Columbus City School's calendar](#) regarding weather closures. If Columbus City Schools have a delayed start or are closed for bad weather, we will also have a delayed start or will be closed. Weather closures will be posted on our website, the Brightwheel app and other social media accounts

15. Withdrawal

Families occasionally alter their plans for enrollment after the school year is underway. Any family who wishes to withdraw their child(ren) must inform the Administrator in writing. In no event will registration or other fees be refunded, and no tuition reimbursements will be made after March 1st. Families may withdraw prior to the end of the year without forfeiture of tuition for the following reasons: Serious and/or prolonged illness of the child or another immediate family member, permanent withdrawal of the child with at least fifteen days written notice to the Administrator upon recommendation of the learning facilitator(s), where there is unsatisfactory adjustment of the child in the classroom. In such cases, withdrawal will be effective on the last day of attendance, and the prorated portion of unused tuition (based on the school's operating calendar, not simply class attendance weeks) will be refunded. If a student is withdrawn during the school year *prior to March 1st* for any reason other than those listed above, the family must provide written notice and agree to pay all tuition for four weeks following delivery of the notice to the Administrator even if the student is not in attendance.

16. Complaints and Grievances

In the event that any person wishes to make a complaint or grievance regarding the actions of TKLC in general, the Board, a staff member or the curriculum, they are encouraged to submit their complaint or grievance in writing to the Administrator thekitelc@gmail.com. In the event that complaints and grievances are not resolved to their satisfaction, the person may contact any of the Board members and the issue will place the issue on the agenda for the next scheduled board meeting.

17. Assessments

TKLC does not conduct any formal assessments on our students nor report any child level data to ODJFS. If families have questions about their children's development, they are encouraged to discuss any concerns with TKLC staff and seek additional resources or evaluations via the [Help Me Grow Early Intervention Program](#) (for children under age 3) or the [Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities](#) (for children 3 and older).

18. Clothing and School Supplies

Your child must bring a backpack marked on the outside with his/her name containing a change of weather appropriate clothing each day. Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes that are able to get dirty. We provide snow/rain boots, a rain jacket, snow hat and gloves so that your child will be able to go outside.

19. Separation Anxiety

Separation anxiety is a normal behavior and can occur anytime, at any age. Please encourage your child by telling them that you are happy that they attend TKLC, that you are sure they will have fun and that you will be back to get them when school is over. Please feel free to stay with your child as long as you need to.

20. Child Roster

A roster of families enrolled at TKLC is available at the office upon request. This roster contains names of parent(s)/guardian(s) children and preferred contact information. Rosters are strictly for personal use, such as setting up playdates. If a parent(s)/guardian(s) does not wish to be included on the roster, please check the appropriate space on the [enrollment forms](#).

21. Confidentiality

TKLC keeps all information regarding its members and children confidential and will not sell or release its child/family roster (addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers), or other personal information to any third parties other than as required by the rules and laws of the State of Ohio or in agreement with parent(s)/guardian(s). The records of all children maintained by the Administrator will be kept confidential, in a locked cabinet in the office. Employment records will be kept for a period of 3 years or as required by the laws and rules of the State of Ohio, whichever is longer. Upon disposal, all records will be destroyed.

22. Additional Licensing Information

TKLC is licensed to operate legally by the ODJFS.

All licensing information is posted on the licensing bulletin board.

ODJFS toll-free number is available and may be used to report suspected violations of childcare rules.

All licensing rules are available in the entryway hallway and in the TKLC office and online.

The Administrator and each employee of the facility are required to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Any parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child enrolled in the facility shall be permitted access to the facility after completing necessary Policies and Procedures during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the facility or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall notify the Administrator of his/her presence.

Licensing record of TKLC is available for review at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/childcare.stm>.

TKLC is committed to providing students and families with equal opportunity to education without discrimination based on race, color, veteran status, religion, national origin, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or age.

ADDENDUM

1. Center parent(s)/guardian(s) Information

Written information is provided to all parent(s)/guardian(s) and employees as required by Appendix B to Rule 5101:2-12-07 and is posted in the hallway.

ACTION: Final
Appendix C to Rule 5101:2-12-07

ENACTED
Appendix
5101:2-12-07

DATE: 10/13/2021 9:54 AM

Center Parent Information

The center is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). This license is posted in a noticeable place for review.

A toll-free telephone number is listed on the center's license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing rules governing child care are available for review at the center.

The administrator and each employee of the center is required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Any parent of a child enrolled in the center shall be permitted unlimited access to the center during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the center or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent, or guardian shall notify the Administrator of his/her presence.

The administrator's hours of availability to meet with parents and child/staff ratios are posted in a noticeable place in the center for review.

The licensing record, including licensing inspection reports, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments, is available for review upon written request from the ODJFS. Inspections are also online at <http://childcaresearch.ohio.gov/>. Parents may search for a specific program and sign up to be notified when the program's latest inspection is posted online.

It is unlawful for the center to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq. To file a discrimination complaint, write or call Health and Human Services (HHS) or ODJFS. HHS and ODJFS are equal opportunity providers and employers.

Write or Call:
HHS
Region V, Office of Civil Rights
233 N. Michigan Ave, Ste. 240
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 886-2359 (voice)
(312) 353-5693 (TDD)
(312) 886-1807 (fax)

Write or Call:
ODJFS
Bureau of Civil Rights
30 E. Broad St., 37th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-3414
(614) 644-2703 (voice)
1-866-277-6353 (toll free)
(614) 752-6381 (fax)
1-866-221-6700 (TTY) or (614) 995-9961

For more information about child care licensing requirements as well as how to apply for child care assistance, Medicaid health screenings and early intervention services for your child, please visit <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/families.stm>.

2. Choking Hazards



Choking Hazards January 2018

SUMMARY

Children of all ages can easily choke, especially those younger than age 5 because they have fewer and smaller teeth, weaker chewing ability and narrower airways than older children and adults. Most dangerous of all, they often put things in their mouths, unlike older children. Young children should always be supervised while eating and playing. Some potential choking hazards include: magnets, latex balloons, coins, marbles, toys with small parts, small balls, pen or marker caps, button type batteries, medicine syringes, screws, stuffing from a bean bag chair, rings, earrings, crayons, erasers, staples, safety pins, small stones, tiny figures, and holiday decorations including tinsel, or ornaments and lights.

TIPS FOR MAINTAINING COMPLIANCE

General

- Avoid allowing children to play with small objects unsupervised
- Cut food into small pieces
- Do not allow children to eat hard candy
- Children should not eat when walking, riding in a car or playing

Older infants and toddlers

- Cut food into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cubes (about the size of a pea)
 - Examples of food that need this preparation: hot dogs/sausage, apples/pears, celery, beans, cherry/grape tomatoes, grapes, cherries, strawberries and meat/chicken.
- Spread peanut butter thinly
- Avoid small, sticky or hard foods
 - Example include: skittles/M&Ms, nuts, popcorn, seeds, dried fruit, gum/gum drops, gummy candy or chips
- Do not allow children to eat marshmallows
- Bagels or crusty bread should be avoided as it can become gummy when chewed

Preschoolers

- Cut food into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch pieces
- Cheese should be thinly sliced or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch pieces
- Round foods should be cut in half lengthwise, i.e. hot dogs, grapes, tomatoes, strawberries
- Spread peanut butter thinly
- Hard candy over $\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter and gum should not be provided

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q.** Is there a way to easily identify items that may be a choking hazard?
- A.** Providers and parents can use a choke tube guide to judge whether an item is a choking hazard. It is a plastic device available in most baby stores or juvenile products stores. You simply insert a toy or a piece of food into the tube and if it fits in the tube, it poses a risk.
- Q.** What should I do for someone choking?
- A.** Parents and caregivers should learn first aid for choking and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in the event a choking episode occurs.