

Minimum Standards for School-age Care Programs

A framework for school-age care programs operating in Minnesota schools.



Minnesota Community Education Association
Task Force • revised in 2016



This document defines minimum guidelines for school age care programs operating in Minnesota schools. In order for a program to be eligible to receive child care assistant funds (CCAP), programs must also meet DHS requirements as stated in Chapter 119B.

History of Program Guide Development

This Program Guide was the work of a Minnesota Community Education Association (MCEA) task force comprised of school-age care (SAC) professionals who represented a variety of SAC programs throughout the state: programs administered by public schools, by community youth service organizations, as well as private child care organizations. They worked together to discuss and develop minimum standards that would help all programs develop safe and healthy learning environments for school-age children before and after school and all day during school release days. For many children, the time spent in these programs represents a greater amount of time than in the classroom during the school year.

Because many school-age care programs are legally exempt from child care licensure requirements in Minnesota, these minimum standards were developed to be similar to the regulations for child care programs that are required to be licensed by the State of Minnesota through Child Care Center Rules, Chapter 9503.

The State Board of Education was authorized in the 1988 legislative session to adopt standards for SAC program run by public schools. New language was proposed and passed which prohibited the state Board of Education from adopting rules, requiring instead that local Boards of Education adopt their own standards on an individual basis. Approximately 95% of school district programs in the state report having adopted these standards, or a variation of, in their entirety.

The Program Guide was updated and revised in 2016 to improve clarity and format and update criteria. Programs may find the following additional resources helpful:

- MN School Age Indicators of Progress
- MN School Age Core Competencies
- MNSACA website
- MCEA website

Minnesota Community Education Association

SCHOOL-AGE CARE TASK FORCE

Chair: Linda Sisson, Kids Club, Edina Public Schools
 MCEA Board: Ann Coates, Community Education Director, Prior Lake

Task Force Members - 1989

Roz Anderson	Adventure Club, Robbinsdale Area Schools
Dave Borgert	Boys Club, St. Cloud
Ann Clapper	Southwest ECSU, Marshall
Catharine Cuddeback	Minneapolis Kids, Minneapolis Public Schools
Lois Engstrom	Minnesota Department of Education
Judy Gammel	Stepping Stones, Maplewood Public Schools
Mary Lou Gorski	Community Education, Anoka-Hennepin Public Schools
Susan Gustafson	Adventures Club, Robbinsdale Area Schools
Janelle Kirsch	Minneapolis Kids, Minneapolis Public Schools
Ardis Kysar	Extended Day, St. Paul Public Schools
Gail McDermott	Stepping Stones, Maplewood Public Schools
Robin Mercier	Glendale, Minneapolis
Deb Miller	Adventures Plus, Anoka-Hennepin Public Schools
Michelle Miller	Kidstop, Osseo Public Schools
Pat Ribeau	South Washington County Schools
Kathy Soucy	Fun Club, Richfield
Janet Szasner	Kidstop, Osseo Public Schools
Marty Tyminsky	Northwest YMCA, Mounds View
Sally Wheeler	Adventures Plus, Anoka-Hennepin Schools
Tom Wicks	Boys Club, St. Cloud

Revision Task Force Members - 2016

Jason Anderson	Kidstop, Osseo Public Schools
Breezy Barrett	KidVentures, Northfield Public Schools
Amy Brengman	Kids Club, South Washington Public Schools
Becca Eccleston	Adventure Club, Robbinsdale Area Schools
Amy Frey	Minneapolis Kids, Minneapolis Public Schools
Monika Helmen	Adventures Plus, Anoka-Hennepin Public Schools
Karri Kerns	Minnesota School Age Care Alliance (MnSACA)
Peggy Cunningham	Department of Human Services, Licensing
Annette Salman	Minnesota Community Education Association (MCEA)
Becca Seiberlich	Tiger Kids Club, Delano Public Schools
Brian Siverson-Hall	MCEA
Stephanie Thomas	Twin Cities YMCA
Michelle Vaught	Department of Human Services, Licensing
Lisa Walker	Kids & Company, Hopkins Public Schools
Tiffany Weeks	Discovery Club, St. Paul Public Schools
Tom Wicks	Boys Club, St. Cloud

CONTENTS

- SECTION I.** Definitions
- SECTION II.** Staff Functions, Qualifications and In-service Training
- SECTION III.** Staff Distribution and Ratios, Substitutes and Volunteers
- SECTION IV.** Facilities
- SECTION V.** Program and Curriculum
- SECTION VI.** Health and Safety
- SECTION VII.** Nutrition
- SECTION VIII.** Organization and Administration

SECTION I. DEFINITIONS

Background Study	All staff who have contact with children need a background study done before starting as required by MN Statutes section 123B.03 using forms prescribed by the Commissioner.
Center	Each location at which activities take place within a program.
Child Guidance	Procedures that outline for staff specific techniques for supervision of children and youth. Examples might be: communication, discipline, behavior improvement strategies, etc.
Clean	Free from dirt or other contaminants that can be detected by sight, smell, or touch.
Corporal Punishment	Corporal punishment is conduct involving hitting or spanking a person with or without an object or unreasonable physical force that causes bodily harm or substantial emotional harm.
Credits	One post-secondary credit is the equivalent of 10 hours of approved in-service training.
Current First Aid Certification	Documentation of training received from a certified instructor, public health nurse, Red Cross instructor, or a postsecondary teacher.
Disinfected	Treated to reduce microorganism contamination after an object has been cleaned. Disinfection must be done by rinsing or wiping with a solution of one-fourth cup chlorine bleach plus water to equal one gallon or an equivalent product or process approved by the Board of Health or its designee.
Emotional Abuse	The infliction of verbal or psychological abuse. Emotional abuse includes, but is not limited to, name calling, ostracism, shaming, derogatory remarks about the child or child's family and language which threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.
Facility	The indoor and outdoor space in which the child care program is conducted.
License	A certificate issued by the Commissioner authorizing the license holder to operate a child care program. Under current law, child care programs for school age children under the auspices of schools are exempt from licensing.

Medicine	A substance used to treat disease or injuries, maintain health, heal, or relieve pain. The term applies to prescription and nonprescription substances taken internally or applied externally.
Parent or Guardian	The person or persons with legal custody of the child.
PreK Child	Students participating in the school's PreK program no more than 12 months prior to the start of their kindergarten year.
School-Age Care	A school-age care program provides care, organized activities, and nurture for school age children during those hours of the day in which the children are not in their primary school setting.
School-Age Child	A child who is at least of sufficient age to have attended the first day of kindergarten, or is eligible to enter kindergarten with the next four months, but is younger than 13 years of age.
Special Needs	Special needs refers to children who have been identified by the local school district as a child with disabilities or has been determined by a licensed physician, psychiatrist, or licensed psychologist to have special needs relating to cognitive, physical, social or emotional development.
Special Needs Levy	School districts that offer a SAC program are eligible for SAC revenue for the additional costs of providing services to children with disabilities or children experiencing family or related problems of a temporary nature who participate in the SAC program. MS 124D.22
Transition	Movement of children within a program; may be arriving, departing, going outdoors, coming inside, etc. It is a component of the program.



SECTION II.

STAFF FUNCTIONS, QUALIFICATIONS AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING

A. Staff Function

Staff members of a school-age care program must perform the following functions. The positions are given job titles for the purpose of defining levels of responsibility; each district/organization may use titles consistent with its own personnel practices, provided the definitions of responsibility functions are maintained.

1. **Program Coordinator** is the administrator responsible for, and must be competent in:
 - a) Overall program implementation and evaluation;
 - b) Compliance with child care rules;
 - c) Long-range planning;
 - d) Fiscal management;
 - e) Personnel management;
 - f) Maintenance of program records;
 - g) Reporting to a governing board or school district administration; and
 - h) Coordinating parent involvement and input.

2. **Site Supervisor** is primarily responsible for, and must be competent in:
 - a) Overall site management
 - b) Site fiscal management
 - c) Responsible for site staffing and staff management (coaching, work direction)
 - d) Maintenance of site records
 - e) Coordination with school staff

3. **Site Leader** is primarily responsible for, and must be competent in:
 - i) Planning program activities;
 - j) Designing the program environment;
 - k) Communicating with parents;
 - l) Directing the work of staff members; and
 - m) Supervising children.

4. **Program Assistant** is responsible for, and must be competent in:
 - a) Assisting the site leader in planning the program and environment; and
 - b) Independently supervising a group of children with the assistance of a program aide.

5. **Program Aide** works under the direction of a site leader or program assistant supervising children in carrying out program plans.

B. Staff Qualifications

1. Recruitment and hiring of staff members must be consistent with the school district/organization's personnel policies.
2. All staff members must demonstrate upon hire through direct observation of performance :
 - a) an ability to relate well with children and families;
 - b) dependability; and
 - c) cooperation with other staff members
3. Experience. At least one-half of related experience must be in paid or unpaid employment serving school-age children.
4. "Relevant training" means accredited course work or hours of training in areas such as child development, child guidance, cultural dynamics, family studies, child nutrition, child health and health, communications, recreational programming, special education methods or theory, behavior guidance, curriculum planning, parent involvement, art/craft methods or theory. Relevant training specified in column B can be part of the education credential.
5. In addition, staff members must meet the following qualifications for each specific position:



Program Coordinator

A program coordinator must be at least 18 years of age.

Staff members with credentials listed in Column A must have the relevant training and experience listed in Column B. Experience may also include supervisory or management experience.

Column A	Column B
No educational credential	18 credits or 180 hrs. relevant training Six additional credits or documented competency in the following areas: - staff development - program evaluation - personnel management - relevant statutes, rules and policies - cultural dynamics 4160 hours experience
AA degree/vocational certificate	18 credits or 180 hrs. relevant training Six additional credits or documented competency in the following areas: - staff development - program evaluation - personnel management - relevant statutes, rules and policies - cultural dynamics 2600 hours experience
Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university	18 credits or 180 hrs. relevant training Six additional credits or documented competency in the following areas: - staff development - program evaluation - personnel management - relevant statutes, rules and policies - cultural dynamics 2080 hours experience

Site Supervisor

A site supervisor must be at least 18 years of age.

Staff members with credentials listed in Column A must have the relevant training and experience listed in Column B. Experience may also include supervisory or management experience.

Column A	Column B
No educational credential	18 credits or 180 hrs. relevant training in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - staff development - program evaluation - personnel management - relevant statutes, rules and policies - cultural dynamics 2600 hours experience
AA degree/vocational certificate	18 credits or 180 hrs. relevant training in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - staff development - program evaluation - personnel management - relevant statutes, rules and policies - cultural dynamics 2080 hours experience
Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university	18 credits or 180 hrs. relevant training in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - staff development - program evaluation - personnel management - relevant statutes, rules and policies - cultural dynamics 1040 hours experience

Site Leader

A site leader must be at least 18 years of age.

Staff members with credentials listed in Column A must have the relevant training and experience listed in Column B.

Column A	Column B
No educational credential	12 credits or 120 hrs. relevant training 2080 hours experience
AA degree/vocational certificate	12 credits or 120 hrs. relevant training 1040 hours experience
Baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university	12 credits or 120 hrs. relevant training 520 hours experience

Program Assistant

A program assistant must be at least 18 years of age.

Staff members with credentials listed in Column A must have the relevant training and experience listed in Column B.

Column A	Column B
No educational credential	6 credits or 60 hrs. relevant training 1040 hours experience
AA degree/vocational certificate	6 credits or 60 hrs. relevant training 520 hours experience

Program Aide

A program aide must be at least 16 years of age and hold a current first aid certification.

4. Meeting Staff Qualifications

a) Minimum entry level requirements:

- 1) All staff members must meet the minimum age requirements at the time they are hired.
- 2) All staff members must submit documentation of current first aid training within 90 days of beginning date of employment. Within the first six months, all supervisory staff has completed Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training; updated annually. For programs who serve students ages four and under, staff must also be trained on abusive head trauma.
- 3) All program coordinators, site supervisors and site leaders must have had at least 500 hours of relevant experience at the time of hire.
- 4) Before supervising children alone, even for a short time, new site leaders, assistants, and aides must complete the program's orientation training. Orientation shall provide training in the program's philosophy and goals, personnel policies, procedures for illness and emergencies, reporting requirements in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, health and safety and other program procedures.
- 5) All staff have a background study before being hired as required by Minnesota Statutes section 123B.03.

b) Grace period for meeting staff qualification requirements:

With the exception of the minimum entry level requirements above, if fully qualified staff are not available to fill all positions, the school district/organization will have two years from the date of hire for staff members to complete the training and experience requirements. A development plan for the staff achieving the appropriate qualifications must be in place and on-file.

c) In-service training requirements:

In-service training will be aimed at developing and enhancing such competencies as child guidance and behavior management, communication skills, team building skills, social-emotional skills, activity planning, environmental design, family studies, child development, child health and safety, cultural dynamics, child abuse and neglect prevention, recreational skills, etc.

- 1) Postsecondary coursework, seminars, conferences, workshops, and documented observation of other programs shall constitute In-service training. Staff meetings held for administrative purposes, program planning, or dealing with specific discipline problems do not qualify as in-service training.
- 2) Each staff member must annually complete a number of hours of In-service training equal to at least 2% of the hours up to a maximum of 25 hours for which the staff member is paid. Required health and safety trainings such as CPR, First Aid, Bloodborne Pathogens, and head trauma cannot account for more than half of the required training hours.
- 3) 25 percent of the In-service hours must be received from a source other than the regular staff of the program in which the staff member is employed unless program staff providing the training hold a certification specific to that training topic (i.e. internal staff are certified Red Cross CPR trainers).

- 4) Documentation including date, number of hours, topic, and presenter will be signed and approved by the program coordinator and the presenter and kept in the employee's personnel file.

Rationale for Staff Qualification, Grace Period and Training

The single most significant determinant of quality in a school-age care program is the staff. The effectiveness of staff is largely influenced by the maturity, creativity, relevant training, and experience level of the people on staff. The requirements ensure that the staff will have basic training in the areas of competence required for each position, will be of a minimum age to assume the responsibility required of the positions, and will have enough experience to be familiar with the requirements of the positions.

The reason no allowance is made for the minimal age and first aid training requirements is that the maturity level of the staff and their ability to handle and prevent accidents and emergencies is directly related to the basic safety of the children in the program. The level of responsibility of the site supervisor and the site leader require that they be somewhat experienced in working with children in this age group and have some first-hand knowledge of programming for the age group.

There may be programs in operation where some staff members do not meet all of the training and experience requirements. A two-year grace period is a reasonable time during which all staff should be able to complete the requirements through the program's In-service training plan. The allowance for programs to provide the training within two years from the date of hire is included so those programs will not be prevented from operating in areas where they may not have currently qualified staff. By requiring that the training be completed within two years, the district is responsible for attending to the training needs of staff.



SECTION III.

STAFF DISTRIBUTION AND RATIOS, SUBSTITUTES AND VOLUNTEERS

A. Staff Distribution (Minimum)

1. The first staff member needed to meet the required staff to child ratio as stated below must be qualified as a site leader; the second staff member shall be qualified as a program aide; the third staff member shall be qualified as a program assistant; the fourth staff member shall be qualified as an aide; the fifth staff member shall be qualified as a site leader; this pattern must be repeated as enrollment increases.
2. A staff member who is at least program assistant qualified must be on site at all times children are in attendance.
3. A staff member with current first aid and CPR certification must be on site at all times; including field trips, when children are in attendance.

B. Ratios (Staff to Child)

1. Only qualified staff persons working directly with the children shall be counted in the staff- to-child ratios.
2. The minimum ratios of staff to children shall be:

PreK (year before Kindergarten)	1:10
Grades K-6	1:15
Mixed groups PreK-6	1:10
3. For any group including PreK children a maximum group size shall be no more than 20.
4. For children in grades K to 6 a maximum group size shall be no more than 30.

Maximum group size applies at all times except during meals, outdoor activities, field trips, rest time, and special activities, such as assemblies, movies, etc.

C. Substitute Staff

1. Substitute staff are used when regular staff are not available.
2. Short-term substitutes are used for no more than 10 consecutive working days or less than 10% of scheduled working days per year. Existing staff may move up one position to fill in for each absent staff.
3. Long-term substitutes are used for more than 10 consecutive working days or more than 10% of scheduled working days per year. A person designated as a long-term substitute must meet the qualifications of the staff person being replaced.

D. Volunteers

A volunteer may be included in the staff-to-child ratio if they meet the requirements for the assigned staff position including the background study as specified in staff qualifications.

Rationale for Recommended Ratios and Staff Distribution:

The ratios recommended for school-age care programs are necessary due to the nature of activities involved and the developmental needs of children who are in a group setting for extended periods of time. The chart below describes typical SAC program practices.

Typical School-Age Care/Practices

ACTIVITIES:	A variety of diverse choices, optional activities: active and passive, loud and quiet, individual and group.
SETTINGS:	Settings, rooms, and spaces used may change often; in new settings (e.g., on field trips) and in the regular setting allowances are made for more freedom of movement from one area to another.
CONFIGURATIONS:	Children are in a variety of fluid mixed-age groups, usually based on children’s choices of activities.
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:	Strong emphasis on individual choice of activities based on children’s own interests.
DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS:	Staff need time to give individual choice of activities based on children’s own interests.
PARENT INTERACTION:	Daily, informal interaction with parents.



SECTION IV.

FACILITIES

A. School Buildings

Buildings in current use as school operated facilities shall be considered appropriate for use by school-age care programs caring for children.

B. Other Buildings

Programs conducted off school district grounds in public or private buildings (i.e. community centers, recreation centers, churches, non-used school buildings, etc.) may not operate until:

1. It has been ascertained that such use conforms to local codes and ordinances, and until the premises have passed inspection by:
 - a) Fire Marshall. The premises shall have been inspected by the fire marshall holding local jurisdiction and any changes required by the fire marshall have been completed before children may occupy the premises. A floor plan of the area used by the program must be on file with the local fire department.
 - b) Building Official. Local building authorities having jurisdiction over the premises shall be satisfied with building code compliance and documentation kept on file. Any required changes shall be made before the program may occupy the space.
2. Enforcement. The district superintendent of schools is responsible for seeing that the above inspections are carried out and that any needed modifications to program facilities are made. Documents verifying these inspections and any changes or reconstruction carried out pursuant to official's requirements shall be available for inspection by any citizen in the superintendent's office. If any person has reasonable cause to believe that a potential hazard exists, he or she may request that the superintendent order a re-inspection.

C. Indoor Space

Programs shall provide a minimum of 35 square feet of usable space per child. Indoor active play space must be available to children daily.

1. Primary space is space used exclusively by the school-age care program during hours the center is in operation. Such space may be used by others at other hours of the day.
2. Auxiliary space is space that may be used cooperatively with other groups during hours the school-age care program is in operation, e.g. gymnasium, lunchroom, media center, playground, etc. Auxiliary space may not be counted for more than one-half of the total space requirement.

D. Outdoor Space

1. Unless the program operates for less than three hours per day, the facility must have an outdoor activity space of at least 75 square feet per child. The area must be equipped with adequate large muscle playground equipment for the group size.
2. If there are hazards such as highways, railroad tracks, a body of water, or old wells nearby, the outdoor play area must be safe and well supervised and may require extra precautionary measures.

E. Storage, Toilet, Water, Phone

1. Space for storage of equipment and children's personal belongings must be available.
2. There should be access to an appropriate number of toilets, sinks, and drinking water.
3. A telephone must be within or immediately accessible to the program's primary space and accessible to staff at all times. Program staff must be available to parent/guardian by phone during hours of program operation. Phone numbers for emergency services must be readily available to staff and posted in program space.

Space Requirements At A Glance	
Indoor Space	Outdoor Space
* minimum of 35 square feet per child space for indoor active play * auxiliary space can represent up to 1/2 space * storage space * access to water, toilets, phone	* minimum of 75 square feet per child * play equipment and equipment storage * protection from hazards

Rationale for Facilities:

Many children spend as much time in SAC programs as they spend in a classroom during the year. It is critical that space is thoughtfully planned and developmentally appropriate for the children served. Children need to feel comfortable and have reliable space that they can call their own. It needs to be safe and free of hazards.



SECTION V.

PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM

A. Goals

The program must have written goals, which provide a balance to the academic emphasis of the regular school day. SAC programs should pay primary attention to social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language and literacy development, creativity and the arts, cognitive development, physical development and health. In addition, programs serving PreK students should have an emphasis on kindergarten readiness. Curriculum for school age children must be based on the following developmental goals.

1. Social and Emotional Development: To develop an understanding of self and learn skills to successfully understand and interact with the world.
2. Approaches to Learning: To develop skills necessary for the successful acquisition of knowledge, for processing information and for thinking and reasoning.
3. Language and Literacy Development: To develop skills and use the knowledge for successful verbal and written communication.
4. Creativity and the Arts: To experience the creative arts through understanding and participating in artistic process.
5. Cognitive Development: To use age-appropriate learning to practice and apply skills in the areas of math, science, and social systems understanding
6. Physical Development and Health: To develop skills to live a safe, healthy, fit and productive life.

(Goals 1-6 were identified in "School-age Indicators of Progress, 2012")

B. Program Content

Curriculum and environment offered must meet the widest possible range of personal and cultural interests and development levels. Personal choice and self-initiated learning experiences are to be encouraged and supported in all curriculum planning. The program should offer, but not necessarily be limited to, the following list of recommended activities, activity centers and projects:

1. Blocks and manipulatives
2. Books and literacy
3. Math, science, and technology
4. Art
5. Dramatic or creative play
6. Service Learning
7. Opportunity for homework
8. Health, safety, and care of self
9. Active outdoor and indoor activities
10. Clubs
11. Field trips, walks and park activities

A SAC program must provide for cooperation with the K-12 system and other partners in the planning of activities.

Activities and program materials should reflect a diverse population (race, gender, culture, family structure, ability, socioeconomic status).

C. Plan

The program must have a written curriculum plan that reflects recommended goals and objectives for the program. Written daily, weekly, and monthly schedules of activities for the various components of the program (before and after school, non-school days, summer) must be posted and available to parents and students.

D. Outdoor Activities

Daily outdoor activities should be an option in each child's schedule. If the outdoor play area is not immediately adjacent to the program facility, children must be supervised in transition to the outdoor area.

Program Curriculum Examples can be found in the School-age Indicators of Progress: Minnesota's Learning Guidelines for ages Five to twelve.

Rationale for Program and Curriculum Development:

School age children spend a large part of their day in a structured academic setting. The program needs to offer a variety of self-directed learning activities that allow children to develop a sense of competence in controlling their environment and leisure time.

In order to meet the wide variety of developmental levels that exist in these programs, a wide variety of choices need to be made available. Children need a balanced day, with opportunities for rigorous physical activity, outdoor time, quiet time, time with friends, time to be alone, time to reflect and time to discuss, debate, problem solve and explore. Staff may need to plan a day that has a wide variety of activities from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and that has new challenges and opportunities to explore weekly, monthly and annually.



SECTION VI.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

A. Policies

The program shall have written health and safety policies covering exclusion of sick children, procedures in illness and emergency, control of infectious diseases and reporting procedures for cases of suspected child abuse or neglect. These policies must be in written form and available to staff and parents/guardian and members of the public.

B. Environmental Cleanliness and Safety

A safe environment free of hazards must be maintained.

1. Items such as sharp objects, medicines, cleaning supplies, poisonous plants and chemicals shall be stored out of reach of children.
2. Tables, chairs and other furniture shall be appropriate to the age and size of the children who use them.
3. Equipment and furniture must be without sharp corners, splinters.
4. Areas used by children must be free from debris, loose or peeling paint or wallpaper, crumbling plaster, holes in walls, floors, or ceilings, and litter. Rugs must have nonskid backing and be free from wrinkles, tears, or edges that interfere with walking.
5. The program facility must be cleaned daily, including disinfection of toilets and table tops.
6. A minimum temperature of 68° Fahrenheit must be maintained in indoor space used by children.
7. Each program shall be designated a non-smoking area under Minnesota Statutes, section 144.414 to 144.417 and part 4620.0400.

C. Health Statement

Upon initial admission of each child, the parent/guardian must provide current health information (medications, allergies, medical conditions, health concerns). The program may require that a child have a new physical examination at any time. The health statement must be accessible to authorized personnel at any time.

D. Sick Children

The program shall follow existing local school district policies in regard to the definition of excludable illness, care of sick children, and notification to parents.

E. Medication

1. Medication will be administered in accordance with the district's policy and only with written permission of a parent/guardian.
2. All medicine
 - must be kept in its original container
 - must have a legible label containing the child's name and written instructions for use from a licensed physician
 - must be kept in a place inaccessible to children
 - must be recorded in a log each time it is administered
3. Parents/guardian should give the first dose of any new medication so that they may personally observe the child's reaction.

F. First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

1. A standard first aid kit and directions for its use must be available within the program space and taken on all activities outside the program space.
2. All staff will take first aid training and maintain current certification.
3. At least one staff person with a current CPR certificate will be on-site at all times, including field trips. It is recommended that all site supervisors, site leaders, and assistants maintain CPR certification.
4. CPR certification must be kept current.

G. Emergency Procedures

Systems are in place to protect children from harm.

1. All programs must have written emergency preparedness plan that includes procedures for evacuation, relocation, shelter in place (severe weather), lockdown, fire, missing children and other emergencies.
2. All staff must have training and annual review of the emergency preparedness plan. Plan must also be available to substitutes and volunteers.
3. Programs must conduct and document (date and time) emergency practice drills with children according to school district/organization policy.
4. Programs must review policies and procedures annually.

H. Supervision and Guidance Procedure

1. Staff have written procedures to ensure that children are supervised at all times.
2. Staff use Positive techniques to guide the behavior of children and youth:
 - give positive attention, appreciation
 - set appropriate limits
 - use no harsh discipline methods
 - help children learn problem solving and conflict resolution skills

Rationale For Health and Safety Policies:

It is critical that policies and procedures are established to ensure the safety of children. Most of the program hours occur when other school building personnel are gone and when there is no access to a school office or to health records. This section is also reasonable in that several of the children could be bussed to the program from other school locations, meaning their health records would not necessarily be at the particular program location.

It is important that the program have written emergency procedures, because many activities occur off school grounds, and because substitute and volunteer staff need to have access to such procedures at all times. It is critical that staff have current emergency safety training to effectively respond to children's emergencies.

Health and safety issues are ever changing. It is important that programs review their policies, procedures and practice annually to ensure that staff are aware of emerging issues of child safety and safe practice. School districts and public health agencies are continually reviewing child safety and can be a good resource for updated practice.

It is important that staff are continuing to develop effective guidance and supervision skills that promote the development of healthy, happy and responsible citizens.





SECTION VII.

NUTRITION

A. The program will provide or ensure the availability of adequate and nutritious meals and snacks appropriate to the ages and needs of the children.

1. **Menus.** Programs need to serve food and drinks that meet the needs of children and youth.
 - Menus must follow the requirements of the school district/organization and they must comply with the nutritional requirements of the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7, part 210, 220 and 226).
 - School district/organization food service personnel must review the program's menus and food preparation practices at least annually.
 - Food nutrition facts must be available upon request.
2. **Food Preparation and Sanitation.** Procedures for preparing, handling, and serving food, and washing food, utensils, and equipment must comply with the school district's/organization's food service policies.
 - Both staff and children must wash hands before food service.
 - All program personnel involved during food preparation or services must be trained in sanitary procedures.
3. **Meals and Snacks.** Nutritious meals and snack are made available at appropriate times for children.
 - The amount and type of food is appropriate for age and size of children.
 - Programs may make breakfast and lunch available.
 - Programs must ensure the availability of an afternoon snack.
 - Staff members must be engaged with children during meal times.
4. **Special Dietary Needs.** The program must provide for a child's special dietary needs as prescribed by the child's source of medical care or require the parent to provide the prescribed diet items that are not part of the program's menu plan.
5. **Food Allergies.** A list of the allergies of children in attendance in the program must be in possession of program personnel.

B. Water Supply.

Safe drinking water will be available throughout hours of program operation through a drinking fountain or single service cups.

1. A center that uses water from a source other than a municipal water supply or an approved commercial supplier must have its water source tested annually by a Minnesota Department of Health certified laboratory for coliform bacteria and/or nitrate nitrogen levels.
2. Any results indicating unsafe coliform bacteria and/or nitrate nitrogen levels must be sent to the public health officer with jurisdiction who may require re-testing and corrective measures.

Rationale for Nutrition:

Many children receive a third to two-thirds of their daily nutrition in SAC programs. It is important that food served is nutritious, prepared and served in a sanitary manner and helps children develop healthy life styles. Parents/guardian need to be informed of what children are eating. Staff need to have systems in place to ensure that children with food allergies and special dietary needs, such as cultural restrictions, are protected.





SECTION VIII.

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Written Program Procedures

The designated program administrator is responsible for developing written procedures and guidelines which are consistent with the policies of the school district and the health and safety of children in group care. All policy, procedure, and guideline statements must be made available to all parent/guardian and staff and other persons upon request.

1. Written program procedures or staff guidelines must include:

- program philosophy and goals and program mission
- ages of children served
- hours and days of operation
- admission requirements and registration procedures
- fees and procedures for payments and subsidies available
- intake process for children with special needs/disabilities and plan to implement any reasonable accommodations
- plan of supervision of children
- guidance and discipline, including procedures regarding the exclusion of children from group activities or program
- plan for staff-parent communication, including procedures for parent complaints
- system for orientation of parents to the program
- procedure regarding staff contact with children enrolled in the program outside working hours
- field trips and permission procedures
- data privacy provisions
- procedures for parental input regarding program design and direction for consideration by program administrators
- procedures for using volunteers
- procedures allowing parent/guardian to visit any time
- missing child procedures
- transportation arrangements and procedures
- health procedures including reporting and communicating about communicable diseases, allergies, administering medications, handling or excluding sick children
- plan for meals and snacks provided including food service procedures and sanitation
- emergency and safety procedures including recording and reporting accidents

- child protection procedures including release of children to authorized individuals, reporting of child abuse, release of child to intoxicated parent
- training requirements for first aid and CPR
- playground safety check

2. Written family procedures or information must include:

- mission of program
- program hours, days, holidays, days closed
- enrollment policies and cost
- availability of subsidies
- program's commitment to include children with special needs
- activities provided
- program's philosophy of child guidance and discipline
- invitation to visit any time
- orientation to program for families
- opportunities for family/staff communication
- ways for families to have input into program policies

3. Health and safety policies, procedures, or guidelines must include:

- medication administration
- sick child
- accident and injury recording and reporting
- emergency response and management
- food served and nutrition
- child check in and release
- field trip and transportation safety
- emergency closing

4. Written personnel policies, procedures, or guidelines must include:

- equal opportunity employment
- job descriptions, staff qualifications, benefits, employment concerns or grievance procedures, performance evaluation, resignation and termination
- staff orientation and in-service training
- first aid and CPR training and documentation
- substitute staffing procedures
- use of volunteers
- background study

5. All records must be kept in accordance with the data privacy provisions of Minnesota Statutes, Section 13.32, subdivisions 2 and 3.

a) Staff records must include:

- identification-name, address, hire date and phone number
- terms of employment
- documentation of education and experience
- records of in-service training
- documentation of completion and updating of first aid and CPR
- performance evaluation
- daily attendance records

b) Records on children must include:

- registration information
- name(s), addresses, and phone number(s) of legal guardians
- two persons who can be contacted in case of illness or emergency
- list of persons authorized to pick up child from program and, if applicable, name of persons not authorized to do so
- phone numbers of child's health care providers
- signed parental permission slips for field trips and for administration of medications
- information on special medical, dietary, or health needs, allergies, etc.
- updated health information
- immunization records or access to records if records are held by school office
- if applicable, documentation of parent/guardian conferences, observation of behavior, accident reports, records of any medication administered
- daily attendance records.

6. Written policies, procedures, or guidelines for the supervision of children must include:

a) Guidelines for supervision of children by age group should identify specific supervision requirements for age groupings:

- Pre-Kindergarten: Children in this age group must be under direct supervision. Independence should be encouraged by allowing children to do things for themselves but in the presence of adult staff.
- Elementary school children: While these children should generally be under direct supervision, they may be beyond the vision or hearing of the staff for short periods of time, such as moving about the building or going to the bathroom. Definite rules must be communicated to the children.

b) Children are carefully supervised to maintain safety

c) Staff have systems in place for knowing where children are at all times

d) Staff have written systems for recording when children arrive and leave; parent release protection; missing child

7. Plan for guidance of children:

Persistent behavior concerns should be documented and parent/ guardian and professionals, if appropriate, should be involved in addressing the concern. Corporal punishment and emotional abuse of a child are strictly prohibited. 121A.58 Minnesota Statutes states that: "An employee or agent of a district shall not inflict corporal punishment or cause corporal punishment to be inflicted upon a pupil to reform unacceptable conduct or as a penalty for unacceptable conduct."

- Staff have plans to respond to the individual needs, cultures, and abilities of children
- Staff have a plan and training to relate to children in positive ways
- Staff encourage children to make choices and develop independence
- Staff use positive techniques to guide the behavior of children
- Staff document serious behavior concerns and have plans to address those concerns in consultation, as appropriate, with parents and school staff
- Staff work together to meet the needs of children

Rationale for Written Procedures, Record Keeping, Supervision and Guidance Procedures:

Established policies and procedures facilitate consistency and promote understanding. Having written policies allow the school district's/ organization's staff to evaluate consistency of policies. The staff needs to have easy access at all times to emergency information and authorization for medical treatment.

Certain records (e.g., attendance, and medical records) need to be available for compliance with requirements of programs, which provide parents public subsidy for childcare. Accident reports need to be kept on file and logged so the program can identify problem areas that may need attention in order to prevent future accidents. Accident reports also need to be kept in case of possible litigation against the program.

The documentation of serious behavior concerns and related communication is important. This documentation is critical in the case of severe behavior concerns when a family needs to be referred for professional assistance or when it becomes necessary to terminate a child's enrollment in the program.

Written guidelines are necessary to safeguard children against undue risk and physical harm. Staff need to be aware of the wide range of developmental levels between the youngest and the oldest and know a wide range of guidance techniques. Many behavior and discipline concerns can be prevented by providing a positive social climate, an emotionally secure atmosphere, an appropriate routine, consistent guidelines and a challenging environment.



Minimum Standards for School-age Care Programs

Minnesota Community Education Association
Task Force • Revised in 2016