



Play & Learn All Year

After School Parent Manual 2017-18 School Year

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian,

Welcome to the Eliot Community Service Department's Before and After School program for children in kindergarten through fifth grade. The ECSD is pleased to provide this program for your family. KidsPLAY is a licensed childcare center with the State of Maine Department of Human Services, and it encompasses a variety of activities from homework time to arts & crafts, games and outdoor play. It is designed to meet the needs of parents and guardians during the before and after school hours. We are very excited to offer a fun, safe, and enriching program for children during those tough out of school hours.

We are a family friendly program and invite any new ideas. It is the goal of the department to have the program run as smoothly and efficiently as possible. With your participation and cooperation, it will continue to be a premiere childcare program. This program encourages parents to stop by, visit and/or volunteer during normal hours of operation. Your support for daily activities as well as special events is always welcomed and appreciated.

We understand that you have busy lives, and you have a lot going on. This booklet has been prepared for your convenience. It informs you of our policies and procedures, and will hopefully answer the questions you might have about our program. We ask that you keep this booklet in a handy place for easy reference. Our expectation is that each parent will read and understand this manual and act in accordance with our policies. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Amanda Paradis
Director, KidsPLAY

Heather Muzeroll-Roy
Director, Eliot Community Service Department

KidsPLAY PHILOSOPHY

The KidsPLAY Program is designed to support parents who need a safe place to send their children after school. The KidsPLAY Program is set up to complement your child's school day. Children are offered a quiet, relaxing place to spend their time before the school day begins. After a long day of highly structured schoolwork, children are offered an opportunity to choose from a variety of fun activities that are enriching, allow for exploration, and give your children a chance to relax. The KidsPLAY Program is a recreational and educational program that encourages children to be active and have fun. The program tries to meet the needs of the local community by providing a quality before and after school program for children in grades K-5 at an affordable price.

KidsPLAY PROGRAM GOALS

- To promote physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the children who are involved in the program.
- To provide experiences which contribute to the growth and development of a healthy, intelligent, and productive member of society.
- To support and strengthen the family unit through special activities and open communication between children, staff, and parents.
- To provide an atmosphere where children can develop a sense of independence, learn about responsible self-care, and develop appropriate decision-making and listening skills.
- Encourage the development of self-esteem by providing a place where children can learn about themselves, build self-worth and experience success.
- Promote relationships between participants that help form healthy friendships.
- Invite cooperation and sense of team between staff, children, and families.
- Foster a healthy respect for diversity.

RESPONSIBILITY OF KidsPLAY PROGRAM TO PARENTS

1. The KidsPLAY Program permits and encourages parents to visit their child(ren) at any point their child is present. We welcome families to come observe and participate in activities.
2. The KidsPLAY Director and/or Group Leaders will regularly exchange information with the parents about their child.
3. Staff will be available to parents by telephone or in person (at all times) when children are at the program to answer any questions or discuss any concerns.
4. The KidsPLAY Program will make available to parents a copy of all rules at the time of the child's admission to the program.
5. The KidsPLAY Director will give you a tour of the program at time of enrollment upon request.

PARENTAL PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

The parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the KidsPLAY Program shall be permitted unlimited access to the program during the operating hours for the purposes of contacting the child, evaluating the premises or the care provided.

Parent concerns, opinions, and suggestions are always welcome. Parents who need assistance with issues or have questions about the program, PLEASE contact the KidsPLAY Director or speak with a staff member on site.

Conferences with staff of the KidsPLAY Program will be available upon the request of the parent.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Registration Fee for the *school year* 2017-18 (September-June) is **\$25.00 for Residents and \$35.00 for Non-Residents.**

An **Enrollment Form** must be completed for each child that participates in the KidsPLAY Program. **Please fill out one form per child.** It contains important information about your child that we may need over the year. The information contained in the enrollment form is the property of the Town of Eliot and will be kept in relative confidentiality: information will only be available to the Program's Staff and in the event of emergency, medical personnel. Please bring your child's **insurance card** with you when registering.

Registration Checklist:

- ✓ Familiarize yourself with all procedures & policies
- ✓ Registration fee paid
- ✓ Fill out all information on the enrollment form
- ✓ Bring a copy of your child's insurance card with enrollment form

GENERAL INFORMATION & SNOW POLICIES

KidsPLAY is available Monday through Friday and operates out of the Eliot Elementary School Cafeteria.

KidsPLAY will be closed on all State of Maine legal Holidays. These holidays include: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Patriot's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day and

Christmas. We will also be closed the day before and day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas break.

We do not hold the program on any days that school is closed or released early due to snow. When there is a two-hour delay for school, the Before School Program will also have a two-hour delay (open at 9:00am). Also, when after school activities have been canceled due to the weather, we will close early. This is a liability issue with our own staff, and it is consistent with our policy for all other programs that the Recreation Department sponsors during the winter months.

We will hold the program on scheduled early release days, teacher workshop days and during the February and April vacations. These special program days require advance registration. If a minimum number of participants have not registered for a special program day, we may elect to close for the day. Children who are not regularly enrolled in the after school program may sign up for special program days.

HOURS OF OPERATION & FEE STRUCTURE

The hours of operation are designed to allow flexibility with your work and home schedules. Drop in care is available for those who do not need regular child care. Availability is not guaranteed; advance notice is required for Drop In Care.

<u>Full Time Before School Care:</u> 7:00-8:20 AM \$6.00 per day ~ 2 day per week minimum	<u>Drop In Before School Care:</u> 7:00-8:20 AM \$8.00 per day ~ No minimum advance notice required
<u>Full Time After School Care:</u> 3:20-6:00 PM (M, T, W, F) \$18.00 per day ~ 2 day per week minimum \$20.00 per day Before & After Care	<u>Drop In After School Care:</u> 3:20-6:00 PM \$20.00 per day Advance notice required
<u>Early Release Thursdays:</u> 1:55-6:00 PM (Thursdays only) \$20.00 per day \$22.00 per day Before & After Care	<u>All Day Care: Workshops ~ Vacations:</u> 7:00 AM-6:00 PM \$30.00 per day

SCHEDULED DAYS

You will be given a regular schedule or monthly calendar to select the days your child will be attending our program. You will be required to pay for the days you have selected regardless of attendance. Sibling discounts are available.

PAYMENT POLICIES

When you enroll your child into the program you are obligated to pay for those days regardless of whether your child attends or not. You are also responsible for payment for snow days. Payments can be made either in person at the Eliot Community Service Department, at KidsPLAY or by mail. Payments are due the Thursday before the intended week of attendance. There will be a \$35.00 bank service charge for any checks returned to the Department.

Please mail payments to:

Eliot Community Service Department
1333 State Rd., Eliot, ME 03903

Checks Payable to: KidsPLAY or ECSD

Late Payment ~The Department has implemented the following policy to reduce the frequency of late payments. Payments made after 6:00 PM on the Thursday before the intended week of participation will be considered late and will be subject to the non-payment policy below.

Non-Payment ~The Department has implemented the following policy to reduce the frequency of participants that reserve days, do not attend those days and/or do not make payment. This is necessary to administer staffing decisions. In addition, another potential user may not be able to attend a particular day because it appears that we are at our capacity.

Failure to make payment in full will result in the issuance of a past due notice and the assessment of a \$10.00 late payment fee per missed payment. Payment will be due within 30-days of receipt of such notice. If you need assistance or would like to set up a payment plan, please contact the KidsPLAY Director at 451-9334. If arrangements or full payment has not been made prior to 30 days, then your child(ren) will be dismissed from the program until full payment is made.

Withdrawing from the Program ~ This requires a 2 week notice in writing. It is your responsibility to notify the Eliot Community Service Department. The registration fee is non-refundable.

Financial Assistance ~ Please ask the director for more information.

ATTENDANCE AND PICK UP PROCEDURES

- All youth must be **signed in and out** by a parent or guardian. Please **DO NOT** just drop off your child at the door and leave. When picking up your child you **MUST** come in and sign your child out. Take a minute to talk with a staff member to see what kind of day your child had.
- If your child shows up on a day that he/she is not scheduled to attend, you will be notified as soon as possible. First we will take group attendance, then check with the KidsPLAY Director to see if any child has added an extra day, and then we will call the parents to let them know that their child is at KidsPLAY. The child will remain in our care until a parent/guardian comes to pick them up.
- **We take our responsibility to care for your child very seriously. Unless your child is absent from school or you have made other arrangements which we are notified of, we are going to expect your child each day you have registered them for the program. It is so important that you notify the KidsPLAY Director or ECSD Office of any changes to your child's schedule.**
- No one will be allowed to remove a child from the program that has not been listed on the enrollment form. Please also notify a staff member if your child will be picked up by someone else on that day. Staff may ask for identification prior to releasing the child. Please understand that this is for the safety of your child.
- Note: To allow for a smooth dismissal, please leave pets in your car. Due to safety and potential allergy concerns, pets are not allowed in the school.

LATE PICK UP POLICY

Parents that have not picked up their child by 6:00 PM will be charged at a rate of \$10.00 per 15-minute increments per child for additional care. This is necessary to cover the expense of the additional staff time. If we have not heard from you by 6:30 PM and we cannot contact anyone to pick up your child the police will be called and an additional fee of \$25.00 will be charged.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

All our activities will promote the child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social well-being and growth. We encourage the children to make decisions regarding activities and allow them to make choices on how they would like to spend their time: safe, unhurried and flexible choices, reading quietly, hanging out with friends or taking part in a group organized game or craft.

Our before school program is designed to be a quiet place for children to come to in the morning before school starts. Children can bring in homework to finish, they can read, draw, color, play quiet games or talk quietly with a friend. Kids are welcome to bring in their own breakfast, or they may purchase breakfast from the school beginning around 8:15am.

A sample of our after school program schedule is:

3:05pm – Kids are dismissed to KidsPLAY by EES staff. Attendance is taken.

3:10pm – Snack, homework and quiet free play for those without homework

3:30pm – Bus kids arrive and have snack and begin homework

4:00-5:15pm – Outside time on the playgrounds, weather depending; Inside game or craft

5:15-6:00pm – Inside free time and clean up

DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR POLICIES

KidsPLAY is committed to providing a safe, non-threatening environment. Inappropriate behavior from one can spoil the experience for an entire group; therefore the following behavior guidelines have been adopted.

- Fighting will not be permitted.
- Swearing, name calling, etc. have no place at KidsPLAY or any ECSD program.
- Misuse of equipment or destruction/defacing to the facility will not be tolerated. Parents will be financially responsible for any damage done by their child.
- Children must stay within the designated childcare areas.

- Children will be expected to listen, respect, and follow directions given to them by staff.
- Other behaviors deemed inappropriate by staff member(s).

Our staff will use positive methods of child management, which will encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem and cooperation. Staff understands that each child is an individual, and we will make every effort to handle the needs of each child. We believe that rules, expectations, and limits should be applied consistently and explained in a clear and age appropriate manner. Children in the program are entitled to a safe and secure environment. This means that no child may jeopardize the well-being of his/herself or any other child or staff, in the program. All participants will be introduced to the program rules and reminded of them when necessary. Positive behavior will be encouraged. Part of our efforts will be to help children identify inappropriate behavior and learn how to redirect their actions in a positive way.

Staff will ask a child to “take a break” for behavior issues. Staff will never require a child to sit facing into a corner or any other humiliating position. Staff will not engage in a discussion about the behavior until the child has had an opportunity to reflect. Time will not begin if the child is trying to argue with a staff member. After giving the child time to reflect, the staff member will discuss the situation and ways to avoid the same difficulty in the future. As soon as a child can complete all of the above, he/she will be allowed to rejoin the group.

If behavior issues are continuous with a child, parents will be notified to discuss the situation. If negative behavior continues and becomes disruptive to the program as a whole, we reserve the right to remove the child from the program either temporarily or permanently depending on the severity of the situation. Parents will be kept informed of issues as they arise and may be asked to follow through at home in special situations. Communication between staff and parents concerning any changes in the child’s routines will enable us to work as partners to provide the best care for your child.

Any inappropriate behavior that does not warrant a warning or down time may result in immediate suspension or expulsion from program. This will be at the discretion of the KidsPLAY Director and the Eliot Community Service Department Director.

Program staff is encouraged to use physical activity for rewards or incentives for participants’ behavior or performance. Physical activity periods shall not be denied to any participant, excluding academic obligations.

SPECIAL NEEDS

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the KidsPLAY Director at the time of registration if your child needs special accommodations in order to be successful in our camp program (i.e. behavior plans, special information for staff, etc.). If your child receives special services from the school district please let the director know at the time of registration. Failure to inform us may adversely affect the program experience for your child.

If your child has a special assistant to help them get through their days at school, they will also need one during their time at KidsPLAY. It is your responsibility to provide one. We do not have the means to provide extra staff to meet that need. Please speak with the director if you have any questions.

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

Children should wear clothing that is comfortable and appropriate for the weather and the day's activities. Children will be painting, gluing, and playing outside in all kinds of weather. We recommend sending an extra set of clothes with them.

In the case of extreme weather we will follow the school's decision for the day as to whether we go outside or not. Please send your child with appropriate footwear for both inside and outside activities as well. Hats, scarves, snow pants, gloves, boots, jacket, sneakers, slippers, etc. are just a few suggestions of what your child may need during their time at the program. Please label all belongings.

SNACKS

Please provide an afternoon snack for your child. A small snack store is provided; this may be used for emergency purposes when a snack has not been sent in. Snack cards can be purchased. You can put up to \$5.00 on a card and then the children do not have to be carrying money around with them. Snack cards are kept at KidsPLAY. **KidsPLAY has partnered with York Hospital's Choose to Be Healthy and the "Let's Go, 5210" program to inform children about healthy lifestyles. We are asking parents to provide healthy choices, such as water, fruits and veggies. Please do not send soda or candy.**

MEDICATIONS

Medications~ There is an *Authorization to Dispense Medication* sheet that **must** be filled out and signed before your child can be given any medication at KidsPLAY. Please see the KidsPLAY Director to obtain one of these forms. No medication will be given without the permission of a parent/guardian. All medical information is confidential. The senior staff member on duty will be responsible for possessing and administering all pre-approved medications.

ILLNESS

Guidelines have been established for the comfort and well-being of your child and that of other children in the program. Children who do not feel well should be at home. Children who become ill at school should be home. If a child becomes ill while at KidsPLAY, a parent will be notified to pick up their child within one hour. Children will not be permitted to come to the program if:

1. They pose a significant health risk to other children;
2. They feel so poorly that they require an excessive amount of time from staff;
3. They feel so poorly that they need comfort from their parents.

*In the event that your child develops/contracts a contagious disease, please contact the director within 24 hours so then we may inform other parents.

If your child stays home sick from school and is scheduled to attend KidsPLAY on that day please call the Eliot Community Service Department at 451-9334 or the KidsPLAY phone at 439-4832 and leave a message that your child will not be attending that day. This is important to know as this affects staff ratios and makes staff aware of your child's whereabouts.

INJURIES

In the case that an injury requires attention beyond basic first aid a staff member will make every attempt to notify you, before seeking necessary treatment at the Hospital. *Please note that 'parental release' to act in an emergency situation is signed on the enrollment form at the time of registration.*

Parents will be informed of other injuries not as serious that do not require medical attention at the time the child is picked up from the program.