
LINC Caring Communities Before & After School Program

Parent Handbook



LINC
Local Investment Commission

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Basic Non-Negotiable Expectations for School-Age Child Care Programs

1

All parents/guardians sign their children in and out daily.

2

Staff maintain eyes-on supervision and account for children at all times.

3

Kind, respectful communication throughout the program.

4

Warm, friendly, informative greeting of parents/guardians.

5

Staff interacting with children at all times.

6

Staff on-time and prepared.

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LINC's Core Results

1

Adults working

2

Children and youth succeeding in school

3

Healthy children and families

4

Young children ready to enter school

5

Children safe in their families and families safe in their communities

6

Youth prepared for productive adulthood

7

Elders and people with disabilities valued and living as they choose

8

Well-informed citizens making decisions about their communities

9

Strong, thriving neighborhoods

Overview

Vision

The LINC Caring Communities Before and After School Child Care program will provide high quality school-age care for all families in a safe, fun and caring environment that supports children's social, emotional and physical development.

Mission

The program will provide recreational and academic activities that support children's social, physical, and emotional development. The program will help achieve LINC's Core Results in support of the child, family and community.

Program Basics

For most of the school day, students are involved in structured school activities. By the time class lets out, they are ready for a change. To meet this need, the LINC Caring Communities Before and After School program will provide a stimulating and supportive environment for all children.

When children arrive at the LINC program, they will be personally recognized and welcomed by an adult in a positive way. Activity schedules will be flexible and will accommodate the varied interests of our children.

Before and After School Staff

It is the intent of LINC to hire high-quality, experienced school-age staff. All staff hired to work in the Before and After School programs have been interviewed by the coordinator and an advisor. We also require a medical examination, TB test, completion of 18 hours of in-service training annually, and background checks on all staff through the Family Care Safety Registry. This screening conducts both criminal and child abuse checks on all staff members.

The "Big Six" Expectations

All LINC Caring Communities Before and After School program staff will follow these expectations:

1. Follow basic health and safety procedures and ensure that parents, guardians and teachers sign the children in and out daily.
2. Maintain eyes-on supervision and account for children at all times.
3. Communicate with a kind, respectful tone throughout the program towards children and adults.
4. Greet parents, guardians, and children in a warm and friendly way.
5. Participate/supervise in children's activities at all times (e.g., snack, special programs, assemblies, activities, etc.).
6. Be on time, motivated and prepared with age appropriate activity plans and materials before the arrival of the students.

Parents' Expectations of the Program

1. Children are cared for in a safe, supportive, consistent and stimulating environment.
2. Parents may visit with the Site Coordinator about concerns related to their child or the program.
3. Team members will establish open communication with parents to discuss both positive and challenging behaviors.
4. The Site Coordinator will inform them regularly about program activities.

Children's Expectations of the Program

1. Safe, supportive, consistent and stimulating environment.
2. Access to all program equipment, materials and facilities on an equal basis.
3. Respectful treatment
4. Redirection that is fair, positive and consistent.
5. Nurturing care from staff members who are actively involved with them.

Staff Expectations of the Children

1. Be responsible for their actions.
2. Respect the school rules that guide them during the day and while at the Caring Communities Before and After School Program.
3. Remain with the group and staff at all times.
4. Take care of materials and equipment properly and return them to their place when finished.
5. Treat each other and staff members with respect.

Licensing

LINC seeks to provide a healthy and safe environment for all children. We are required by the State of Missouri that all LINC-operated Before and After School sites become licensed.

Enrollment

The Caring Communities Before and After School program encourages children of all backgrounds to attend. The program does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, national origin, ethnic background, or ability to pay.

To attend the program, a child must be enrolled. This includes the completion of the full enrollment packet by the parents/guardians, all appropriate authorizations and an interview with a Before and After School staff member. Without a complete enrollment, the program cannot authorize services for the child, nor, under any circumstances, allow the child to attend the program.

The Before and After School program is not a 'drop-in' program. However, the program may be used for scheduled occasional use (for example, Tuesdays and Thursdays after school) if space is available.

Enrollment Forms

Parents/guardians will be required to complete the following prior to their child attending the program:

- Before and After School enrollment application
- Parent meeting/interview
- Medical report (if enrolled in the early childhood program)
- Easy reference card
- Immunization records

For the safety and security of all children, enrollment information is to be kept current. The parent/guardian is asked to notify the Site Coordinator immediately regarding any change of information on forms, such as emergency persons, names, employers, phone numbers, arrival/departure changes.

Breakfast and Snack

All enrolled children will have access to the school's breakfast program. All enrolled children will receive a daily after-school snack. All food served will meet USDA nutritional guidelines for school food programs. Children are not allowed to bring food to the program unless the food is available to all children.

Absences

Absentees without prior notification may be mistaken for a missing child, resulting in unnecessary concern and time spent in searching for the child. Parents should notify the Site Coordinator if their child will be absent from the program.

If your child will not be attending the program because of a scheduled appointment, vacation or other planned absence, please notify the Site Coordinator in advance.

If a child does not arrive at the program as intended, the Site Coordinator will contact the parents. If the parents cannot be reached, the Site Coordinator will contact the child's emergency contacts.

Hours of Operation

Generally, the Before and After School programs will follow the school district's holiday, inclement weather, and Teacher In-service schedule.

Daily program hours may vary from site to site. Check with your site coordinator for program hours at your child's program.

Afternoon Closing Time

We understand that problems occasionally arise that could prevent you from picking up your child on time. In that event, please call the Site Coordinator as soon as you know you may be late and identify who will be picking up your child.

If the program staff has not heard from you by 6 p.m., the persons on your authorized pick-up list will be contacted to come and pick up your child immediately.

Please discuss any questions about your site's late pick-up policy with the Site Coordinator.

The Before and After School program closes at 6 p.m.

Release of Children

Children are to arrive and leave the program according to the schedule indicated by parents on the enrollment form.

Parents or authorized persons are to sign children into the before-school program and out of the after-school program. Dropping your child off without signing them into the program can result in loss of the program.

All children must be signed in and out of the program daily by their parent/guardian or an authorized pickup person indicated on the enrollment application. Children will be escorted by the parent/guardian or authorized pickup person to and from the program areas as designated by the program policies.

Persons other than the child's parents may be required to present photo identification before being allowed to leave with the child.

If your child attends extracurricular activities or must for any other reason change his or her arrival or departure time, either on a given day or for the duration of the program, please notify the Site Coordinator prior to the date the change is effective.

Children who walk to and from school must meet the following conditions to be considered for "Walker Status":

1. Any child walking home alone from the program must be at least eight (8) years of age.
2. A child under eight (8) years of age cannot be dismissed from the program to walk alone.

3. A child who is eight (8) years of age or older can be the escort for children under the age of eight (8) years, with permission of the parent(s) or legal guardian.
4. After dusk, no children can be dismissed to walk home either alone or in a group.
5. Any child who is allowed to walk must have written permission (Walker Authorization) signed by the parent(s) or legal guardian of the child.

Changes in Child Custody

One of the primary goals of the Before and After School Program is the safety and well-being of each child. During the school year, a family situation can arise changing who the child lives with and who is authorized to pick up the child. If one parent requests that the other parent be removed from the authorized pick-up list, a legal document must be provided to the site coordinator explaining why this is to occur. A copy of the letter will be placed in the child's folder in the program office. If the document is not on file, the child will be released to the parent.

Only those persons identified on the application form will be allowed to remove children from the program.

Discharge from the Program

It is our desire to serve all children who are in need of the program's services; however, certain situations may require that a child be removed from the program either on a temporary or permanent basis. Generally these reasons include but are not limited to the following:

- Incomplete enrollment forms and required authorizations
- Specific incidences, or repeated behavior problems that endanger the child, others or property
- Conditions that cause health and safety concerns for the child or threaten the program's state license, such as children who are not signed in and out daily by their parents/guardians or an authorized pickup person

In the event that a child must be removed from the LINC program, staff will work with the parent and school staff to identify an alternative program.

Behavior Management

Children are entitled to a pleasant and harmonious environment at the program. The Before and After School program cannot serve children who display chronically disruptive behavior.

Chronically disruptive behavior is defined as verbal or physical activity that may include, but is not limited to, behavior that:

- inflicts physical or emotional harm on self, other children, or staff
- threatens the safety of others through actions prohibited under the Missouri "Safe Schools Act"
- damages property
- ignores or repeatedly disobeys the rules which guide behavior during the school day and program time, thereby endangering self and others

If a child cannot adjust to the program setting and behave appropriately, then the child may be discharged.

Health and Safety Policy

If your child has a known medical condition (asthma, diabetes, seizure disorder, etc.) please be sure the Site Coordinator knows what to do if a problem should occur during program hours. Please make sure that any medication is available and that the appropriate forms for its use have been completed. An individualized care plan must be filled out by the doctor and will be placed in the child's record.

If a child has any one of the following conditions, the parent will be notified to pick up the child immediately:

- contagious disease
- fever over 100 degrees F
- vomiting or diarrhea
- accident requiring medical attention
- head lice

In case of accident or illness, the child's parents will be called immediately. In serious cases, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital by emergency vehicle for treatment. The child will be isolated from the group in case of illness or injury.

Staff are instructed to make every effort to prevent a child from getting into a car with a parent who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In this circumstance, parents may be required to contact an alternative person to transport the child. In some cases, the local police may be contacted to determine if alternative arrangements are needed.

Staff may not, under any circumstances, provide transportation to parents or children enrolled in the Before and After School program.

Program policy and state law requires caregivers to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

Distribution of Medications

Whenever a child is to be given prescription medication, the parent must provide the Site Coordinator with this information on the enrollment application. This form is included in your enrollment packet. Additional forms will be supplied by your Site Coordinator.

Medication must be provided in the original container, or a container accompanied by the doctor's instructions.

If medication for treatment of a chronic condition is to be kept at the program site, no more than a week's supply should remain at the site, at any time.

Insurance

The program carries minimal liability insurance and a secondary accident policy for injuries that occur as a result of participation in the program, but has no financial resources of its own.

Because accidents do happen, parents may want to determine whether their personal insurance covers accidents at school. Many families are covered by the parent's policy at work or their own private policies. The program's secondary accident policy covers only limited expenses that are not covered by the parent's primary insurance policy.

Uninsured children may be eligible for insurance through MO HealthNet, the state of Missouri's health insurance plan for children. Please contact your Site Coordinator for more information.

Child's Personal Property

Children's personal property, coats, clothing, school bags, etc. must be removed from the child care room every day. Any personal property that remains will be placed in the lost-and-found box. Although the program attempts to help children stay organized, we cannot be responsible for lost personal property.

Children should not bring money, toys, food or other items not necessary for school activities without checking with the staff. Toy guns or other weapons are strictly prohibited and can result in discharge from the program.

Parent Involvement

Parents and residents play an important role in the Before and After School Program. Every site has a parent/neighbor advisory group, or site council, which serves as the decision-making body for the program. These groups assist LINC and the site staff by providing input, planning, oversight and support to ensure a safe, productive environment for their children. The site council meets approximately once a month, with structure and overall function determined by the group at each site.

All parents and neighborhood residents are encouraged to participate in their children's success by being a part of their school site council. Opportunities include being a volunteer or mentor, and assisting with school activities during program time or the regular school day.

Program Feedback

Parents and community members are always welcome and encouraged to visit and observe the program. Our number one concern is the safety of the children. Therefore we ask everyone to arrange visits beforehand with the Site Coordinator and sign in at the main office.

LINC Caring Communities welcomes and encourages feedback from family members and other patrons. The site coordinator and other

members of the staff are willing to meet with you to hear your ideas and resolve any concerns.

We do ask that you remember that we operate in a school setting serving children. This requires we maintain a safe environment and model appropriate relationship skills and problem solving.

We will not under any circumstances tolerate abusive language, threats, intimidation, or physical abuse toward children, administrators, staff, parents, family members, or other patrons. If this occurs, we may choose to terminate services for you and your family, and may seek other appropriate legal action.

Fees and Payment Policy

Information on program fees and payment policies will be provided to parents by the site coordinator upon request.

IRS Statements

Working families can receive a tax credit for 20 to 30 percent of the parent fees paid toward the Before and After School program, depending on family income. A maximum credit of \$5,000 is allowed for families with two children.

Receipts will be issued at the time of payment.

What is LINC?

The Local Investment Commission (LINC) is a state-chartered, citizen-led group in Kansas City and Jackson County, Missouri, charged with improving results for children and families through restructuring and reforming the delivery of human services. LINC places a Caring Community facility, a school-based source for diversified social service supports, at schools in low-income, underserved neighborhoods.

Fundamental to LINC's philosophy is citizen decision-making: citizen-volunteers, not state bureaucrats, form site councils at their neighborhood schools, develop neighborhood consensus, and decide what is best for the neighborhood. LINC uses a strong, multi-faceted, results-based accountability model to evaluate the implementation and the overall results.

To learn more about LINC or how to get involved, visit www.kclinc.org.

What is Caring Communities?

Caring Communities is an effort to create in neighborhoods what the courthouse square was long ago – a place where the community regularly gathers.

Our Caring Communities sites reflect a growing national interest in creating “community schools,” which recently were described as follows:

A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. In these schools, an integrated focus on academics *and* family support, health and social services, and youth and community development leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. Community schools are open to everyone—all day, including evenings and weekends. Community-based organizations or public institutions often work as lead agencies in community schools, helping to mobilize community assets and support student success.

Site Coordinator: _____

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