

Hilltop Child Development Center Family Handbook



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Hilltop Overview and Connection to KU

Hilltop is a private, non-profit facility incorporated in the State of Kansas. It is federally tax-exempted as a 501(c) (3) educational corporation. Hilltop is licensed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). The main Hilltop site is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Both sites follow NAEYC guidelines. Hilltop is governed by a Board of Directors composed of nine Hilltop parent members and six public members who are interested and experienced in early childhood education. The majority of the Board of Directors must be University of Kansas (KU) affiliated. The Board of Directors functions in an advisory, policy-making capacity according to the by-laws and policies of the corporation. The bylaws are available on our website.

Many public board members come from the KU community. Hilltop parent board members are elected each year. Because Hilltop is designated as a University Affiliated Corporation and receives administrative support from KU's Office of Student Affairs, a representative of that office serves as a Hilltop board member.

Hilltop History

The February Sisters Movement brought to the attention of the University administration and the student body the need for campus childcare. Through the combined efforts of Molly Laflin, then a student representative on the Student Senate, and an initial allocation of \$20,000 by the Student Senate, Hilltop opened at its original site on Jayhawk Blvd. in the fall of 1972. The center was originally established to provide all day care for children whose parents were affiliated with the University as a student, faculty, or staff member. Presently, Hilltop provides full day childcare five days a week, after school care and full day summer care for school age children with priority given to University students, faculty, and staff. (Priority enrollment does not apply to school age.)

The program grew from three to eight classrooms as the need for quality childcare increased through the '70s and '80s. By the early 1990s, the building was full and long waiting lists made it clear that more space was needed. Attempts to find additional space on campus had failed. In 1994, the university-wide Child Care Task Force assigned to study the need for campus childcare proposed that a new, larger facility was needed. The Student Senate strongly supported the proposal and established a \$2.00 per semester student fee to help fund construction. This fee was doubled in 1997 when lack of university funding threatened to end hopes for the new facility. The continued strong support from the Senate and the student body convinced the University administration to move forward with plans for the new childcare facility. Design work began in the fall of 1997 and continued with some difficult ups and downs until mid-1999. The groundbreaking for the "new Hilltop" was held on June 27, 1999, and

the move to the new building was completed in early August 2000. Hilltop underwent expansion in 2008, adding six new classrooms. This “Main Hilltop” site is home to eighteen classrooms.

As KU Innovation Park started work on The Crossing development, a campus edge commercial development featuring services that would be attractive to researchers and the campus community, high quality daycare was one of the first things that took priority. Hilltop was chosen out of a number of high-quality providers under consideration. Through an advance loan by KU Endowment and support of the University Chancellor, Hilltop designed and constructed the West location. KU Endowment provided the land at virtually no cost for the term of the loan and then at a very low cost after the loan. After a soft launch in the summer of 2024, the West location officially opened for the 2024-2025 school year. The West location has ten classrooms and provides an additional 133 spaces for children which includes eighteen spots for infants.

Connection to University of Kansas

From May 1976 through early 2000, Hilltop was recognized as University-related through a liaison with KU’s Department of Human Development and Family Life. In 2000, Hilltop was designated as a University Affiliated Corporation. Administrative support for the program has been transferred to Student Affairs. It is through this liaison that Hilltop receives several university services and a small amount of financial support to help pay for much needed part-time student aides, and to pay for office supplies and printing services. Hilltop staff also receive some KU staff privileges but do not receive state salaries or benefits.

Hilltop entered into a formal management agreement with the University beginning in July of 1999. The University provides important support for the program by providing a subsidy that assists with part time KU student salary support. The KU Student Senate also offers substantial support with a required campus fee. This fee provides for tuition assistance for qualified KU Students as well as facility upgrades and part-time staff salary support.

Service to the University

Hilltop serves the University in many ways. First, the center provides quality childcare and education for a wide age range of children whose parents study, teach, or work at the University. Hilltop also provides a work site on campus for students who are interested in working with young children. Other services to the University include being a site where students may volunteer for class credit or as part of a class assignment, where they can conduct special projects, implement research, or observe teachers, children, or special activities. Students from the Early Childhood Unified program are sometimes placed in Hilltop classrooms as part of their training programs. Hilltop also continues to be a site for student teachers.

Children Involved in Research Projects

Sometimes University researchers are interested in working with Hilltop children. All such research projects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board and by the Hilltop Executive Director. Classroom teachers may also be consulted. Individual parents are contacted for permission to have their children participate in research projects, and children are never allowed to participate without prior written consent. All research is optional for our families, and they are under no obligation to participate in any study.

General Information

Note: To simplify the text in this handbook the term “parent” is used to mean a child’s primary caregiver – in some cases that person is a foster parent, a grandparent, guardian or co-parent.

Programs Offered

Hilltop is licensed by the State of Kansas to provide childcare for up to 314 children at our Main Campus location and 133 children at our West Campus location. The centers meet all state licensing requirements. Hilltop currently serves children ranging in age from 8 weeks -12 years old.

Location & Contact Information

Hilltop Main is located on the University of Kansas main campus within the Central District. Hilltop West is located in The Crossing in the West District of The University of Kansas campus. Contact information is provided on the cover of this handbook and below:

Main Campus
1652 Ousdahl Road,
Lawrence KS 66045
Phone: (785) 864-4940
Fax: (785) 864-5389
E-mail: hilltop@ku.edu

West Campus
2509 Town Center Drive,
Lawrence KS 66047
Phone: (785) 856-4433
Fax: (785) 856-0268
E-mail: hilltopwest@ku.edu

Website: www.hilltop.ku.edu

The center also has several electronic communication options:

- Hilltop utilizes Playground to communicate important events and announcements pertaining to Hilltop.

- Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/hilltopcdc and “like” our page to receive information about upcoming events and important family notices.
- Receive frequent email reminders about fees, events, Optional Care periods, etc. Email addresses will be collected from each family to facilitate this communication.

A staff member is in the office from 7:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. each day. Please call or email the office by 9:00 a.m. if your child is unable to attend or will be arriving late. This helps the kitchen in planning and enables teachers to go on walks or trips as planned without feeling like they need to wait on your child to arrive. If your child is sick, please describe the illness. This helps us stay aware of current health problems.

At least one of the program administrators is scheduled to be in the building at all times. Their offices are located immediately inside the main entry of each building. Administrators are available to answer your questions about the center and its programs. Please feel free to stop in the office at any time or call to make an appointment with a specific administrator. Please see our [website](#) regarding specific administrative responsibilities.

Hours of Operation

Hilltop opens at 7:15 a.m. and closes at 5:30 p.m. Fees are charged if children are picked up later than 5:30 p.m. (see *Late Pickup Fees*). Children may not be taken to a classroom prior to 7:15. School-age children attending the after school programs may attend the program from the time public school is dismissed until 5:30 p.m. Children may also attend optional full day care when public schools are closed. (Pre-registration is required and additional fees will apply)

Early Childhood Calendar 2025-2026

The following calendar applies to Infant through PreK programs:

Fall Semester 2025

Mon-Fri	8/4-8	Staff Development – HILLTOP CLOSED
Thu	8/7	Open House (pre-registration required)
Mon-Fri	8/11-15	Optional Care (pre-registration required)
Mon	8/18	First Day Fall Semester
Mon	9/1	Labor Day - HILLTOP CLOSED
Mon-Thu	10/20-23	Parent/Teacher Conferences

Mon-Fri	11/10-21	December Optional Care Registration (for 12/15-19)
Wed-Fri	11/26-28	Thanksgiving - HILLTOP CLOSED
Mon-Fri	12/1-12	January Optional Care Registration (for 1/6-9, 1/12-16)
Fri	12/12	Last Day of Fall Semester
Mon-Fri	12/15-19	Optional Care (pre-registration required)

Monday, Dec 22 – Monday, Jan 5 - HILLTOP CLOSED

Spring Semester 2026

Mon	1/5	Staff Development and Training – HILLTOP CLOSED
Tue-Fri	1/6-9	Optional Care (pre-registration required)
Mon-Fri	1/12-16	Optional Care (pre-registration required)
Mon	1/19	MLK Day - HILLTOP CLOSED
Tue	1/20	First Day of Spring Semester
Mon-Fri	2/9-20	Spring Break Optional Care Registration (for 3/16-20)
Mon-Fri	3/16-20	Spring Break Optional Care (pre-registration required)
Mon-Fri	4/20-5/1	May Optional Care Registration (for 5/18-22)
Mon-Wed	4/20-23	Parent/Teacher Conferences
Tue	5/5	Wing Transition Night (<i>Early Preschool Only</i>)
Fri	5/15	Last Day of Spring Semester
Mon- Fri	5/18-22	Optional Care (pre-registration required)
Mon-Fri	5/25-29	Memorial Day Week - HILLTOP CLOSED.

Summer Semester 2026

Mon	6/1	First Day of Summer Semester
Mon-Thurs	6/8-18	July Optional Care Registration (for 7/27-31)
Fri	6/19	Juneteenth - HILLTOP CLOSED
Fri	7/3	Independence Day Observed - HILLTOP CLOSED
Mon-Fri	7/6-17	August Optional Care Registration (for 8/10-14)
Tue	7/14	New Parent Night at 6:00 pm (<i>subject to change</i>)
Fri	7/24	Last Day of Summer Semester
Mon-Fri	7/27-31	Optional Care (pre-registration required)
Mon-Fri	8/3-7	Staff Development – HILLTOP CLOSED

Mon-Fri 8/10-14 Optional Care (pre-registration required)

Note: Weeks designated as “Optional Care” are not included in tuition rates for the semester sessions (Fall, Spring, Summer). Families may choose to add these weeks. There are designated periods of registration for each optional enrollment period. **Applications submitted after the deadline will be placed on a waiting list for possible availability and are subject to a \$25 late fee.** *There is a separate fee agreement for each optional enrollment period.*

Hilltop reserves the right to make changes to the calendar as necessary.

Grade School Calendar 2025-2026

Fall Semester 2025

Mon-Fri	8/4-8	Staff Development Week – HILLTOP CLOSED
Mon-Tues	8/11-12	Optional Care (pre-registration required) *
Wed	8/13	First Day of After School Program
Mon-Fri	8/25-29	Fall Full Days Optional Care Registration (for 9/15, 10/10, 10/16-17, 11/24-25)
Mon	9/1	Labor Day - HILLTOP CLOSED
Mon	9/15	Full Day Care (pre-registration required)
Fri	10/10	Full Day Care (pre-registration required)
Thu-Fri	10/16-17	Full Day Care (pre-registration required)
Mon-Tue	11/24-25	Full Day Care (pre-registration required)
Wed-Fri	11/26-28	Thanksgiving - HILLTOP CLOSED
Fri	12/12	Last Day of Fall Semester

Monday, Dec 22 – Monday, Jan 5 - HILLTOP CLOSED

**8/12 is the first day of kindergarten. Hilltop will not provide transportation but kindergartners who have signed up for optional care may attend in the afternoon if brought by their family.*

Spring Semester 2026

Mon	1/5	Staff Development and Training – HILLTOP CLOSED
Tue	1/6	First Day Spring Term After School Care
Mon-Fri	1/12-16	Spring Full Days Optional Care Registration (for 2/6, 2/12-13, 3/13, 4/17)
Mon	1/19	MLK Day - HILLTOP CLOSED
Tue	1/20	First Day of Spring Semester

Fri	2/6	Full Day Care (pre-registration required)
Mon-Fri	2/9-20	Spring Break Optional Care Registration (for 3/16-20)
Thu-Fri	2/12-13	Full Day Care (pre-registration required)
Fri	3/13	Full Day Care (pre-registration required)
Mon-Fri	3/16-20	Spring Break Optional Care (pre-registration required)
Mon-Fri	3/23-27	Summer Program Registration (6/1-7/24)
Fri	4/17	Full Day Care (pre-registration required)
Mon-Fri	4/20-5/1	May Optional Care Registration (for 5/22)
Fri	5/22	Full Day Care (pre-registration required) Last Day of Spring Semester
Mon-Fri	5/25-29	Memorial Day Week - HILLTOP CLOSED.

Summer Semester 2026

Mon	6/1	First Day of Summer Semester
Mon-Thu	6/8-18	July Optional Care Registration (for 7/27-31)
Fri	6/19	Juneteenth - HILLTOP CLOSED
Fri	7/3	Independence Day Observed - HILLTOP CLOSED
Mon-Fri	7/6-17	August Optional Care Registration (for 8/10-14)
Tue	7/14	New Parent Night at 6:00 pm (<i>subject to change</i>)
Fri	7/24	Last Day of Summer Semester
Fri	7/27-31	Optional Care (pre-registration required)
Mon-Fri	8/3-7	Staff Development – HILLTOP CLOSED

Our Team

Professional & Support Staff

Hilltop's staff consists of administrators, classroom teachers, and support staff. The administrative staff includes an Executive Director, Finance Director, Site Directors, Assistant Directors, Operations Coordinator, Food Services Coordinator, and Student Support Services Coordinator. Support staff include Administrative Assistants, Kitchen Managers, Cook, and Kitchen Assistants. Hilltop makes every effort possible to hire diverse staff that reflects the diversity found in center families.

Childcare staff members have a vital influence on a child's behavior and development, so teachers who have formal educational training and previous teaching experience are selected. Care is taken to choose teachers who have knowledge of developmental needs of children and are qualified to plan and direct activities which meet the cognitive, physical, and social needs of young children. Teachers work as a team, jointly planning daily learning experiences which promote creative and intellectual expression, stimulate learning, and build an accepting and comfortable climate for children.

Part-Time Student Aides

Hilltop employs many part-time aides to assist in the classroom who are often KU students. Aides help supervise children during rest time while teachers have planning and break time. They assist teachers during other parts of the day, particularly during late afternoon hours. Extra adults in the rooms allow teachers to plan walks, field trips, and other special activities that require additional supervision. Aides supervise children while teachers attend outside meetings and act as substitutes when a teacher is absent. Aides meet all the regular staffing requirements of KDHE and are supervised by their site administrative team and classroom teaching staff.

Volunteer Information

Volunteers are a vital part of the Hilltop program. Their assistance allows teachers to individualize more of the curriculum for the children. KU student volunteers represent many departments, including, but not limited to; Applied Behavioral Sciences, Psychology, Music Therapy, Education, and Social Welfare. They may aide for course credit or as part of a class project, but often for their own personal experience. Most volunteers are KU students, however people from the community are encouraged to participate at Hilltop. Parents are always welcome to assist classroom teachers, so if you have family members who would like to volunteer their time, we would love it! Volunteers must be 14 years of age, submit mandatory KDHE paperwork, and complete required training orientation. Non-teaching staff (excluding admin) are not counted in the teacher-child ratios and are never left alone with a child for any reason.

Practicum Students

Practicum students often help teach in some of the classrooms as part of course requirements. Teachers utilize the valuable services of these volunteers to enrich programs, while providing these students with training and experience in inclusive classroom settings. Non-teaching staff (excluding administrators) are not counted in the teacher-child ratios and are never left alone with a child for any reason.

Enrollment Policies

Non-Discrimination Statement

Hilltop Child Development Center admits children of any race, color, religion, national origin, sex and qualified children with disabilities to all rights, privileges, programs and activities of the center and does not discriminate on the basis of any of these factors in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, fee payments, food service program and other school administered programs.

Children with disabilities are enrolled through the regular enrollment process. Hilltop works with USD 497 (children over three), and the Infant-Toddler Services of Douglas County (children under three) to meet the needs of the children in care. If the staff are unable to reasonably meet a child's needs because necessary facilities, services or staff are not available, families will be assisted to locate an appropriate placement to the best of their ability.

Classroom Age Requirements

There are currently eighteen classrooms at Hilltop Main and ten classrooms at Hilltop West. Room placement at the Main campus is made according to the age of the child enrolled as of August 1st in all rooms except Pre-K where placement can be made according to the age of the child as of August 31st. Children remain in the same classroom throughout the entire school year at Hilltop Main. Children at Hilltop West move up throughout the year according to age, development, and space available. These movements are necessary to remain in compliance with the licensed age requirements for the classrooms. There will normally be about a six-month to one-year age range in each classroom. We follow NAEYC guidelines for structuring our staffing. In emergency staffing situations or to cover lunch breaks, we may adjust staffing to comply with Kansas childcare licensing required ratios.

Classroom Placement Policies

Toddler room enrollment is contingent upon the following by the child's start date:

- . All non-infant children should be walking independently. This is required by Kansas licensing through the Lawrence/Douglas County Health Department.
- . The child must eat independently.
- . The child must not require a bottle during the day.
- . The child must not require a morning nap.

If a child is set to begin at Hilltop and does not meet the walking requirements by his/her first day, the family may choose to either withdraw the child and reapply when the child is walking independently or continue to pay tuition to secure enrollment until walking guidelines are met. Evaluation and assessment of a child's walking skills will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Yearly classroom placements are completed by the Hilltop administration in late spring or early summer. **Hilltop does not guarantee any parent requests for classrooms.** Placements are made based on overall classroom composition, teacher feedback, administrative input, and input from the Behavior Specialist staff. Classrooms assignments are based on the needs of each individual child's academic needs and social development.

After School Program

Hilltop Main Campus offers an onsite after-school program for public school children in full day kindergarten through fifth grades (Jayhawk & Bobcat rooms). Transportation is provided from as many schools as possible, depending upon enrollment and the closing times of the schools. The teachers for the school-age program, who are also van drivers, plan daily activities to meet the varied needs of young primary children. Care is also offered when the public schools are closed pending availability of staff during weather-related closings.

Optional Care

Hilltop offers several Optional Care periods each year. There are normally 6-8 weeks of Optional Care offered between semesters and during Spring Break for currently enrolled children. Please check your current Hilltop calendar for the current year's scheduled Optional Care weeks. Only parents who use this service pay for childcare; other parents are not billed. Optional care weeks are determined by Hilltop at the beginning of each academic year. Please review the calendar to ensure that you know what dates are considered optional.

Applications for each Optional Care session are available via email each semester. Email reminders are sent to families on Hilltop's email list. These dates are also published in the newsletter well in advance and are indicated on the Hilltop yearly calendar posted in the entryway. It is the responsibility of the parent to read emails and sign up within the required timelines provided. All fees, including Optional Care fees, must be paid in advance. Due to lower enrollment and because many teachers take vacation leave during Optional Care, classrooms may be combined during these times. Efforts are made to have at least one teacher present for each classroom. For a complete description of enrollment policies, including Optional Care enrollment, please refer to the "Enrollment" section in this handbook.

Priority Enrollment Acceptance Policies for Non School-Aged Children

Hilltop prioritizes enrollments for families in which one or both parents, or primary caregivers are University of Kansas students, staff or faculty. For Hilltop enrollment purposes, students must be enrolled for at least six (6) credit hours which require the KU campus fee during fall and spring semesters. An exception will be made for doctoral students taking a smaller number of dissertation hours. Note: some KU classes, continuing education classes, and independent studies courses do not require this fee and do not establish eligibility. Summer enrollment at KU for parents/guardians is not required.

Verification of student enrollment and KU tuition payment or KU employment status for fall semester is required by September 15th if the KU student or KU staff status is used as a factor in determining Hilltop enrollment priority. If the KU student or staff/faculty status is used for Hilltop enrollment priority and a parent was never enrolled or employed at KU or dropped enrollment/employment before September 15th, enrollment of the child will be terminated immediately.

For Hilltop enrollment purposes, full and part-time employees of the University, KU Medical Center and designated University Affiliated Corporations (Athletics, the Alumni Association, the Endowment Association, Student Housing, the Unions, Continuing Education, KU Center for Research, Hilltop, etc.) are considered University affiliated.

As vacancies occur, children are accepted from the waiting list in the following order:

- Children of Hilltop full-time staff.
- Siblings of children currently attending Hilltop according to the date of application.
- Children of KU students according to application date.
- Children of KU faculty and staff according to date of application.
- Children of non-KU affiliated families according to application date.

Enrollment Acceptance Policies for School-Aged Children (Grades K-5)

Enrollment procedures vary for school age K-5th grade children. **KU affiliation does not apply to school age enrollment.** Administration will consider schools available for pickup, transportation capabilities and siblings as we enroll our classrooms. These rooms are incredibly limited in space each year.

Enrollment Acceptance for Children Funded By DCF

Hilltop accepts enrollments funded by DCF. The parent agrees to pay the difference between the fees charged less the DCF assistance received.

Optional Care Enrollment

Optional care periods are defined as weeks that Hilltop is open and KU classes are not in session. Parents have the ability during these times to keep their child at home without having to pay for these periods of time. However, parents are required to follow the pre-registration requirements in order to attend during these time periods.

If you need care during Optional Care periods, it is important to remember the following policies:

- Enrollments will be accepted up until the deadline. If requests are received after the deadline, children's names will be placed on a waiting list for available spaces. Enrollment is not guaranteed after the deadline. An additional \$25 late Optional Care application fee will be added to your fees.
- Optional Care enrollment/fee agreements will be available via Qualtrix survey each optional care period. It is the family's responsibility to read the survey provided and register, indicate on the form whether or not they wish to enroll for the Optional Care period, and to register electronically by the deadline to Hilltop. Notifications of the survey link will be provided by email and Playground message.
- Optional Care enrollments may not be cancelled or changed after the signed application/fee agreement due date. There can be no refunds for cancellation of Optional Care enrollment after the due date of the application.
- Parents are responsible for paying Optional Care fees as specified in the fee agreement. Fees for Optional Care are in addition to your standard fee agreement.

Optional Care Enrollment Guidelines

These guidelines may be put into effect at the discretion of the administrative staff.

- Classrooms may be combined in each wing in order to meet parent requests and adequate cost-effective teacher/child ratios.

- An attempt will be made to employ at least one regular classroom teacher per room for each Optional Care session. When this is not possible, aides will be hired to substitute for the teacher.

Summer Enrollment

If a child has been accepted for the summer session, and the parent must withdraw the child prior to the first day of the session, notice of withdrawal must be given by May 1 in order to have the security deposit returned. After the session has begun, a withdrawal request cannot be accepted and all fees shown on the fee agreement are due in full. Fees are payable as designated in the fee agreement. Fees are payable for all days in the contract period whether or not the child is present.

Re-Enrollment

Requests for changes in current enrollment may be honored if classroom teacher/child ratio permits. If the requested change in enrollment is not available, the family may choose to withdraw and place the child's name on the waiting list. See "Re-admittance After Withdrawal." KU affiliates with university required activities may make an appointment with Hilltop administrators to discuss readmission options.

Notice of Withdrawal

All notices of withdrawal should be emailed to the site's main email address. Intent to withdraw from Hilltop Main should be sent to hilltop@ku.edu. Intent to withdraw from Hilltop West should be sent to hilltopwest@ku.edu. If the date falls on a national holiday or weekend, notice is due the next business day.

Deadlines for canceling enrollment prior to beginning of a semester:

1. Fall Semester—notice required by July 1st
2. Spring Semester—notice required by November 1st
3. Summer Semester—notice required by May 1st

Within the Fall and Spring Semesters: After the semester has begun but before the deadlines listed in (1) above, a written notice of withdrawal is required 21 days in advance of the date of withdrawal to have the security deposit refunded (also see Financial Policies section).

Summer: Request to withdraw a child from the summer will not be accepted after the session has begun. Withdrawal after May 1st will not receive the deposit back.

Withdrawal of acceptance of enrollment prior to the beginning of a semester: All withdrawals require at least 21 day's notice.

Exception for DCF Families: Enrollment may be terminated by DCF families by providing a 14-day written notice of termination in advance of the ending date. Payment by the family is due for the notice period whether or not the child is brought to the center for care.

Re-Admittance after Withdrawal

If a parent withdraws a child from Hilltop and later wishes to re-enroll the child, a new application for admission must be completed and the application fee paid (fee exception for KU Students). Choosing to stop enrollment for the summer and asking to return in the fall is considered a withdrawal from the program. The child is placed on the waiting list according to Hilltop admittance priorities. The date of the new application is the date used for placement on the waiting list.

Enrollment Delays or Interruptions

Hilltop families unable to attend, for any reason, are subject to a full tuition payment in order to maintain their child/children's place in the classroom. Otherwise, a family must withdraw and be placed back on the waitlist. Should a family experience an unforeseen circumstance (including but not limited to major medical issues, immigration delays, quarantine, etc.), the family may apply for a partial tuition waiver from the Hilltop Executive Committee. If a family is granted a waiver, they will be granted a reduced tuition payment of 60% for up to two months.

Parent Conduct Policy

We believe that mutual respect is a core component of a quality childcare experience. We expect, even in times of disagreement or conflict, adults to model a spirit of problem solving in front of and on behalf of children. We expect families and staff members to treat each other with respect and dignity.

- Parents are expected to communicate respectfully with staff, other parents, and children, both in person, and through other forms of communication such as email, phone, and social media.
- Parents are expected to address concerns through appropriate channels, in a calm, respectful manner, prioritizing direct communication with the parties involved.

- Parents are expected to model positive behavior for children and the wider center community, demonstrating respect for guidelines and authority.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the center or center staff are prohibited.
- Verbal or physical violence, harassment, disruptive behavior, and the use of offensive behavior will not be tolerated.

Termination of Care

If rules and policies are not followed, Hilltop reserves the right to terminate childcare at any time. Childcare services may be terminated for any of the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to comply with the policies set forth in the handbook
- Non-payment of tuition or late fees or recurring late payment of fees
- Repeated failure to pick the child up at scheduled times
- Failure to provide adequate diaper or feeding supplies to care for the child
- Failure to report diagnosed communicable disease
- False information given by a parent either verbally or in writing
- Failure to collaborate and cooperate with child behavior management plans
- Failure to seek additional professional help through behavioral referral
- Inability to meet the child's needs reasonably without additional staff
- Failure to follow the parent conduct policy

Financial Policies

To meet the goals of the center, it is essential that Hilltop maintain financial integrity by:

- Establishing and following sound financial principles and practices.
- Developing a budget which:
 - Identifies funding sources sufficient to meet the goals of the center.

- Monitors expenses carefully to stay within the budget.
- Maintains a fee structure and tuition subsidy program that allows families with varying degrees of financial need to share fairly in the financial support of the program.

Application and Re-Application Fees

Families may apply for care once the child is born. We must have a birth date to process an enrollment application. The name of the child is placed on the waiting list according to priority status. An initial application fee of \$35/\$25 for KU Students is charged at the time an application for admittance is made. When a child is withdrawn from Hilltop and the parent applies for admittance at a later date, another application fee is required along with the application form. This process is called re-application.

Security Deposit

A \$350 security deposit is required at the time an acceptance to Hilltop is received. This deposit guarantees the child's enrollment in the center for a specific starting date. The security deposit is held throughout the child's continued enrollment at Hilltop. When a child is withdrawn from Hilltop, the security deposit is refunded within sixty (60) days after the last day of the child's enrollment IF:

- Fees have been paid in full according to the family payment plan included in the fee agreement.
- Additional charges incurred have been paid in full at the time of billing.
- Written notice of withdrawal has been given according to the designated deadlines in the section "Notice of Withdrawal Policies."

Fees

Fees are set annually by the Board of Directors, approved by the university, and are based on the classroom age and the family fee level according to family size and income. Exception: during the fall and spring semesters there is only one fee level for the school age programs.

Determination of Family Fee Level

Fee Level Questionnaire Form: Families with children enrolled in the toddler through preschool classrooms submit an Enrollment Start Date and Fee Level Questionnaire form prior to the beginning

of the fall semester. All families having children enrolled for the summer session submit a Fee Level Questionnaire form. Family income includes gross salary from employment, financial aid grants, scholarships, fellowships, tuition/fees paid by the University (i.e. GTA/GRA fee waivers), or other sources (family funds, unemployment payments, social security, etc.) during the semester to which the fees will apply. Loans are not counted as income.

Families indicating B fee level in section 1 of the Fee Level Questionnaire form have a fee payment plan agreement at the B fee level for the fall/spring semester and no further information is required until the summer semester unless the family income/size changes during the year and makes the family eligible for a lower fee level.

Families who indicate that their gross monthly income will be at the A fee level in section 1 must complete sections 2, 3, and 4 of the Fee Level Questionnaire. A deadline will be communicated to families on the Fee Level Questionnaire form for the return of the application form with all documentation attached.

Fee payment plan agreements will be prepared at the B level for families failing to return a completed Fee Level Questionnaire form before the semester begins. Hilltop will not retroactively adjust charges. If a parent is late to complete this form, charges will be adjusted for the next month moving forward. If there is a change in the family’s income during the school year, a new form will be required if there is a request for lower tuition.

INCOME GUIDELINES FOR SLIDING FEE SCHEDULE							
The following table details the maximum gross monthly income per number of family members to be eligible for A or B level fees.							
Fee Level	2 members	3 members	4 members	5 members	6 members	7 members	8 members
KU Student							
A	4,419	5,557	6,694	7,830	8,969	10,105	11,243
B	over 4,419	over 5,557	over 6,694	over 7,830	over 8,969	over 10,105	over 11,243
Families at "A" level may qualify for additional financial assistance. See our website for more information.							
All KU student families at "A" level will qualify for a discounted rate provided by KU Student Senate.							

Grace Period – Fall Semester Only: If a family returns the Fee Level Questionnaire form and verifying documents no later than seven (7) days after the beginning of a semester, a revised fee payment plan will be issued retroactive to the first day of the semester.

Children Enrolled After the Semester Begins: The Fee Level Questionnaire form must be submitted with a signed acceptance letter.

During the Semester: A family may apply for a change in fee levels during the semester. The application and documentation must be provided at least fourteen (14) days prior to the end of a month for the change to be effective at the beginning of the following month. A family requesting a change from A or B level is to provide a written notice of the change. The change in fee will be effective in the next payment period.

Grade School Program: Fall and Spring Semesters: These programs do not have a sliding scale; there is one fee level for these enrollment types. Summer Session: Fees for summer school-age programs are on a sliding scale, and a Fee Level Questionnaire form needs to be provided unless the family income is in the C fee level range.

Families Eligible for DCF Funding: Families may be eligible for full or partial funding from the Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF). Families must complete and return the Fee Level Questionnaire as described above. Childcare benefits on the family's Vision card may be used to pay the fees due. Fees due that exceed the amount of benefits on the Vision card must be paid by the family according to the due dates stated below. Hilltop must receive all documentation to determine the payment level placement.

Fee Payment Plans

Fees are determined according to the information provided on the Fee Level Questionnaire form and the Enrollment Start Date Information form. Once the fee level is determined, fees are entered online on the Playground website. The website will list the fees due, due dates and bank account being used to pay the fees.

Supply / Activity Fee

There is a \$35 supply/activity fee charged per semester in August and January and \$30 each June and July during the summer program. The supply/activity fee is used by Hilltop to purchase materials for educational materials and classroom activities.

2025-2026 Fee Schedule

	KU STUDENT	A	B
INFANTS (must be 8 weeks old by August 1, 2025)			
Monthly fees: Sept, Oct, Nov, Feb, Apr, Jun, July	NA	\$1,456	\$1456
Monthly fees: Mar, May (¾ month)	NA	\$1,092	\$1092
Monthly fees: Aug, Dec, Jan (½ month)	NA	\$728	\$728
Monthly fees: Aug (¼ month)	NA	\$364	\$364
Optional Care weekly fees: 8 weeks available	NA	\$364	\$364

TODDLERS (must be 1 year old by Aug 1, 2025)			
Monthly fees: Sept, Oct, Nov, Feb, Apr, Jun, July	\$777	\$1,058	\$1199
Monthly fees: Mar, May (¾ month)	\$583	\$795	\$900
Monthly fees: Aug, Dec, Jan (½ month)	\$389	\$529	\$600
Optional Care weekly fees: 8 weeks available	\$194	\$265	\$300
EARLY PRESCHOOL (must be 2 years old by Aug 1, 2025)			
Monthly fees: Sept, Oct, Nov, Feb, Apr, Jun, July	\$734	\$996	\$1,135
Monthly fees: Mar, May (¾ month)	\$551	\$748	\$852
Monthly fees: Aug, Dec, Jan (½ month)	\$367	\$498	\$568
Optional Care weekly fees: 8 weeks available	\$184	\$249	\$284
PRESCHOOL AND PRE-K			
Monthly fees: Sept, Oct, Nov, Feb, Apr, Jun, July	\$694	\$934	\$1,070
Monthly fees: Mar, May (¾ month)	\$521	\$702	\$804
Monthly fees: Aug, Dec, Jan (½ month)	\$347	\$467	\$536
Optional Care weekly fees: 8 weeks available	\$174	\$234	\$268
PRIMARY AGE (grades K-5)			
<i>School Year (Includes transportation and early Wednesday dismissal)</i>			
Monthly fees: Sept, Oct, Nov, Jan, Feb, Apr, May	\$350	\$350	\$350
Monthly fees: Aug, Dec (¾ month)	\$263	\$263	\$263
Optional Care weekly fees (full day care)	\$235	\$235	\$235
Optional Care daily fees for public school out days	\$47	\$47	\$47
<i>Summer:</i>			
Monthly fees: June, July	\$694	\$934	\$1,070

Hilltop will be closed for the following weeks and tuition will not be charged:

August 4, 2025 – August 8, 2025

December 22, 2025 – January 5, 2026

May 25, 2026 – May 29, 2026

Activity fees are \$35 for Fall and Spring semester, added to the fees for January and August.

Activity fees are \$30 for June and \$30 for July.

Optional Care Sessions: Optional Care Week fees are charged in addition to the regular semester fees in the Playground System. Dates of Optional Care weeks and their registration dates are listed on the school calendar. Applications will be emailed from Hilltop approximately 3 to 4 weeks before the optional care period.

The first day of a child's enrollment for the fall semester is the date chosen on the Enrollment Start Date Information form. Families have a choice of the starting date for their child (ren): it may be one or three weeks prior to the first day of the regular fall semester, or the first day of the regular fall semester.

For children enrolled in the Jayhawk room or Bobcat room a public school out optional enrollment email is available near the beginning of the fall and spring semesters and is to be completed indicating if care is needed for special days when the public schools are closed for in-service or conferences. Billing for these special days is separate from your standard fee agreement.

Fee Payments

Hilltop uses an online payment system called Playground. After a child is accepted to the Hilltop program, instructions are given to the family regarding how to set up family, child and payment information on the Playground System. Families must set up payment information in the Playground System for payments to be withdrawn from a checking or savings account for fees due one week prior to beginning enrollment. Failure to do so will result in a delayed start of Hilltop services.

Fees are payable in advance. Fees are due on the 20th of each month. Payments received after the 20th of the month are considered late. If the 20th falls on a holiday or weekend, payment is due the following business day.

Hilltop accepts funds provided by the DCF, KVC and DCCDA. If the plan is written for less than the amount of the fees due, the parent is responsible for payment of the fees not covered in the DCF plan. Parents must notify Hilltop of any changes in their DCF plans. Contact Hilltop's Finance Director to get information on how to use the DCF payment.

Late Payment Fees

A late payment fee of \$15.00 is assessed when payment is not made by the scheduled payment date plus a five-day grace period. An additional five-day grace period will be allowed after the first grace period to provide the family with an opportunity to secure funds for payment during which time the child

may not be present at Hilltop but fees continue to accrue. If payment has not been received by the end of the additional five-day grace period, your child is considered to have withdrawn and becomes ineligible for future enrollment. As soon as fees are paid in full – but no later than the fifth day of the additional grace period, the child may return to Hilltop. Thereafter, the next time fees are in arrears by the payment due date services are immediately discontinued. In extenuating circumstances, appeals may be made to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. If a payment is still unpaid two weeks after the original due date, the family may no longer use Hilltop's services. If a pattern (3 per semester) of late/failed payments continues, the family will be notified they may no longer use Hilltop's services. The security deposit is forfeited at time of notice. Hilltop will take action to recoup unpaid fees through Small Claims Court or by a collection agency.

Returned Fees or Check Charge

Financial Management Systems charges a \$30 fee if funds aren't available when withdrawn from the chosen account. Families are notified by e-mail or a letter from the financial management system if a failed payment occurs. Failed payment must be paid according to the late payment fees section above. Payment can be made at Hilltop for failed payments and Hilltop will enter the payment in the financial management system.

Late Pick Up Fee

There is a late pick-up charge if a child is picked up after 5:30 p.m.

- First time – grace period up to 5 minutes; after 5 minutes, \$2 per minute/child
- Second time - \$20 plus \$2.00 per minute per child
- Third time - \$30 plus \$2.00 per minute per child
- Fourth time - \$50 plus \$2.00 per minute per child plus communication with Director
- Fifth time – possible removal from Hilltop

Receipts for Payments

Monthly receipts are available through the Playground system. The statement includes Hilltop's Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) for tax and FSA reimbursement purposes. If you have trouble accessing your receipt, please contact the Finance Director.

Forms for cafeteria plan reimbursement of dependent care expenses should be turned in at the front desk. The Finance Director will review the dates and amounts of the claim and sign the form. The form will be available at the front desk once it is completed.

Absence Policy

Optional Care Periods: No credit is given for absences for any reason.

Positive Bright Starts (PBS) Support: PBS will pay for five absences per month. PBS assigns a daily absence rate to children based on the amount of monthly assistance they receive. Assistance is reduced by the amount of the daily absence rate for each absence, more than five in a given month. Please consult PBS on their requirements.

All Other Days: Parents pay for all other absent days during the contract period. No credit is given for family vacations, visits to grandparents, etc. Hilltop offers several weeks of Optional Care; hopefully parents can schedule vacations and special visits for their children during these times.

Notice of Change in Fee Schedule

Families will be notified 30 days in advance of any change in the fee schedule unless a change is necessitated by a substantial change in a major funding source or a catastrophic event.

Holiday/Professional Development Day Fee Policy

Hilltop incurs salary and other fixed costs even when closed. Hilltop families are charged for holidays and PD days when the University is closed. The included holidays are Labor Day, Thanksgiving (Wed-Fri), Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, and Independence Day.

Emergency Closing Fee Policy

Because Hilltop incurs salary and other fixed costs even when closed, Hilltop cannot refund fees for those rare days when the center must be closed due to emergencies include closing for inclement weather.

End of Year Statements

Statements of receipts for the calendar year are available through FACTS. The statement includes Hilltop's Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) for tax and FSA reimbursement purposes. If you have trouble accessing your receipt, please contact the Finance Director.

Daily Child Care Policies

What to Bring to Hilltop

All full time enrolled children should bring the following items to Hilltop:

- Two complete changes of LABELED clothing including underwear and socks
- Sunscreen LABELED with your child's first and last name. (Non-aerosol only; does not apply to infants under the age of 6 months)

Children in the Infant, Toddler and Early Preschool rooms should also bring:

- Disposable diapers* (bring at least a one-week supply) OR
- Three pairs of cloth training pants or regular underwear if the child is toilet trained already.
- If choosing cloth diapers, you should bring daily supply and a sealed container to send home each night with soiled diapers.

Children who nap should bring a small LABELED blanket for rest time. You are also welcome to bring a "cuddly" or stuffed animal and/or a small pillow. Infants are encouraged to bring sleep sacks, but no other items are permitted in the crib per KDHE guidelines.

Hilltop provides cot/crib sheets for each child and these are laundered weekly and/or more often if needed. Please take your child's blanket home at the end of each week for laundering.

Bringing Toys & Food to School

Children should not bring toys, candy, or gum to school. Any food items brought to school to be shared with classmates must follow the policies listed for birthday treats in this handbook. All children will want to play with the toys or eat the goodies, and it frequently causes quarrels among the children. Hilltop is not responsible for any item brought to school from home. Please communicate with Jayhawk and Bobcat teachers for their rules regarding toys in their classrooms.

Occasionally favorite toys are brought for sharing time or to complement a specific classroom theme. Hilltop encourages parents to monitor what children bring to share as we encourage nonviolent actions between the children. Hilltop provides toys that do not promote or imply violent actions. Books are great to share with others. Items must be labeled and picked up after school. If your child shares a video, animal, insect or some “discovery,” please make prior arrangements with the teachers.

Pets in the Center

Families will be informed whenever children have access to animals at the facility. KDHE requires written verification from a veterinarian that pets visiting the center have up-to-date immunizations and are safe for contact with children. No pets should enter the facility without approval of the Site Director. Before handling any animal, children will be taught safety protocols when handling them. Close supervision will be provided by a teacher who is able to intervene quickly if necessary. Children and staff will wash hands after feeding or handling any animal.

Arrival

Hilltop supports safe transitions of child supervision between families and teachers. . Please do not leave your Hilltop student or any other siblings in your car during arrival or departure. We also ask that cars not be left idling. This creates health and safety concerns for others. Children should walk with families to their classrooms and not be allowed to run ahead of the parent.

Arrival time is an important time for your child. Please bring your child to the adult in charge when you arrive and we encourage everyone to have their child in your child’s classroom by 9:00 am. The person bringing the child to the center must sign the child in on the tablet posted outside their child’s classroom and put all belongings in the child’s cubby. **Failure to sign your child in creates a safety hazard for the entire classroom of children when we are moving children from one space to another because we will not have an accurate log of the number of children in attendance.** Please give any additional items directly to classroom staff. Never drop your child off at the door or leave them in a classroom if there is no staff person present. If there is no staff person present, please check with the office immediately. This rule applies to school age children as well as younger children.

When your child arrives in the classroom, one of the adults in charge may perform a quick health check before you leave. This allows teachers to make sure there are no signs of illness or injury that they should be aware of and provides a moment for you to share information with the teacher if needed. If the normal classroom teacher is not present at drop off, then a health check will not be performed until she/he arrives.

Departure

When you come to pick up your child, please communicate with the adult in charge before leaving. Check your child's cubby daily for messages, artwork or written work. Then sign your child out. It is very important for families to sign out children individually as they are picking up their children. **Not signing your child out or signing your child out before you pick up your child creates a safety hazard for the entire classroom of children.** If the class is on the playground, one of the teachers will have the tablet with them. If a parent would like to speak with a teacher regarding their child's day, then they must arrive prior to 5:15pm. This will allow the teacher to provide appropriate response in a timely manner. Student Aides are not permitted to provide updates on a child's behavior to any parent. Please keep your child with you at all times when leaving the classroom and the building. It is strongly encouraged for families to turn off the car while picking up. Idling vehicles are discouraged in the parking lot.

People Authorized To Pick Up Children

Families provide authorization in enrollment paperwork for additional adults who may pick their child up. Anyone picking up a child from Hilltop (including guardians) should have identification with them in case the supervising adult has not previously met them. Hilltop will only release children to adults who are at least 18 years old. Hilltop staff members are trained to never release a child to an unidentified or unauthorized person. If it becomes necessary for someone to pick up your child who has not been authorized on enrollment paperwork, please provide approval in the form of an email or Playground message stating that person's name, telephone number, and personal identification number.

Meals

Fees include a morning breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack for full day programs and an afternoon snack for the school-aged programs. (During the summer and on full days when school is out,

school-aged children receive am snack, lunch & snack). Please be aware of the scheduled serving times for your child's class. If your child will arrive after the serving time in the classroom, please provide the meal at home before coming to Hilltop. Food or drinks from home should not be brought into the classroom unless it is something prearranged to be shared with the entire class for a meal or snack. If your child brings food with them on their way to school, it must be finished before entering the building.

Child & Adult Care Food Program

Hilltop participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) administered by the Kansas Department of Education (KDE). Our meals meet or exceed the daily requirements set forth by the program. Hilltop is audited by KDHE annually. Families are required to sign an annual enrollment/income eligibility form related to this program. All children receive the same food services regardless of income category.

As a participant in CACFP, parents can provide one meal component but Hilltop MUST provide the other components. This means that if a family provides milk, then Hilltop will provide ALL other components of the meal. All questions can be sent to the Food Service Coordinator regarding menus

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in this program on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S. W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (866) 632-9992 (voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through Federal Relay Service (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Special Diets, Restrictions, & Allergies

CACFP requires that a child be served milk two times daily, and that certain food requirements are met daily. **If your child is allergic to an item on the menu or has a medical condition that restricts certain foods, you must provide a medical doctor's note stating the medical condition present that will prevent a specific food.** Hilltop does not accommodate for preferences. Please ask the front desk about ANY food accommodation you are requesting. If your child is on a restricted diet due to religious preference and cannot eat certain foods, provide a list of these foods with suggested alternatives for each food item listed. You will need to share this the front office. We may not be able to accommodate certain requests due to cost or preparation time required. Allergies and other food restrictions are posted in classrooms with your written permission.

Please do not bring nuts or nut products into Hilltop. Some children have life-threatening allergies to these items, so we strive to keep the building as free of them as possible. This also applies to items you might bring for teachers on Staff Appreciation days or as gifts. Hilltop does not use plastic or Styrofoam in our classrooms or kitchens. We ask that families do not provide classroom treats in these materials if they need to be reheated in any way.

Infant Feeding

Your baby will be fed (no feedings after 5:00pm) according to a schedule you discuss with us. We develop an individualized feeding plan with each family including feeding responsively as we observe hunger cues and coordinating the last feeding of the day to meet breastfeeding needs. Families should bring their own formula (must be iron fortified) or breastmilk with bottles needed each day for your child. Hilltop can provide formula at your request. Hilltop will provide all additional baby food for the classrooms.

Starting some bottle feeding at home prior to a baby starting assists with their transition. Hilltop staff work with families to transition babies to bottle feedings. Infants are fed by the same caregivers as often as possible. Children will be held during bottle feedings unless they choose to independently hold their own. As your baby gets older, we encourage you to introduce them to finger foods and using a cup. Around 10 months, we will provide two snacks and a lunch from our menu and start taking them off the bottle during the day to prepare for the toddler room. At this time, you will no longer need to provide food from home. The Hilltop Food Service Director will work with any family with allergies and food substitutions to be provided.

KDHE guidelines require that each bottle that contains prepared formula or breast milk must be stored in the refrigerator with the nipple covered. **If prepared formula is used, the following requirements must be met:** The bottle must be labeled with the child's name, the contents, and the date received and must be used within 24 hours of the date on the label. If a child does not finish a bottle, the contents of the bottle must be discarded within one hour from when the feeding from that bottle started. **If breastmilk is used, the following requirements must be met:** All breastmilk must be labeled with the child's name and the date and time expressed. Unfrozen breastmilk must be stored in the refrigerator and must be used within 96 hours from the time it was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be stored in a freezer and must be used within six months from the time it was expressed and within 24 hours from the time it was thawed. If a child does not finish the bottle within two hours from when the feeding from that bottle started, the contents shall be discarded. Teachers will inform families about the quantity of milk remaining in bottles to avoid waste.

Breastfeeding

Hilltop welcomes and supports families who breastfeed their babies. Breastfeeding has many benefits including protecting infants from many childhood illnesses, reducing the risk of SIDS and promoting secure attachment. All families needing to breastfeed, may do so at Hilltop. Each site has a clean, quiet, and comfortable space for breastfeeding and expressing milk. Breastfeeding is also welcome in the classroom. All staff caring for children ages 0-3 and site administrators receive professional development to support breastfeeding in the program and educating families. Individualized feeding plans may include feeding infants as teachers observe hunger cues.

Infant Safe Sleep

Your baby will nap according to their individual schedule. Infants will always be put to sleep in their beds and on their backs. We cannot swaddle or cover babies with blankets while in bed due to safe sleep practices enforced by state licensing. We encourage parents to bring sleep sacks for their infants. We will launder their sheet and sleep sack as they are soiled (at least once a week). We will rock or pat your child to sleep. Please let us know what works best. We cannot allow babies to sleep in swings or infant seats and toys are never placed in their beds. You may provide a pacifier for use at naptime but not while your child is awake.

Naps & Rest Time

Licensing requires that a nap or rest period is provided for all children after lunch. It is scheduled from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30/3:00 p.m. There is a great deal of a variation from room to room. Usually, the younger the child, the more rest needed. Quiet activities are provided for older children who do not need to sleep. Hilltop is not permitted to prevent any child from sleeping. We are required by the KDHE to provide at least 20 minutes of quiet time each day. If the child falls asleep within that time, we will not wake them until their designated time in the classroom.

Toilet Learning

Learning to use the toilet is a significant milestone that happens in a young child's life. Children accomplish this milestone at different ages. Parents and teachers work together to determine when children are ready to begin training. Each child's readiness and needs are taken into consideration so that the training process is positive for the child. Parents should not expect Hilltop to be solely responsible for teaching their child to use the toilet. Families should be prepared to support their child's toilet learning in anticipation of moving into later Preschool rooms. A child's ability to use the toilet mostly on their own may or may not impact their movement into older classrooms. These decisions are made on an individual basis. Some children may need additional support with toileting after the age of three. Parents and teachers should discuss how best to assist individual children with their toileting

needs. If you believe your child will need additional support after the age of 3, please meet with the site director to discuss how we can best support your child's development.

Adjustment to School & Leaving Your Child

If your child is new to Hilltop, we suggest a brief visit or two before your child's first day of attendance. It is important to create a consistent routine for drop-off which you will be able to follow all year. Try hard not to give your child mixed messages when you leave them in their first days in care. Modeling trust with the teaching staff will help your child feel more comfortable in their first days. Forlorn or worried glances from parents convey to children that this may not be a fun experience after all. Try not to feel guilty if you leave your child in tears. Teachers will comfort children needing extra nurturing when they are dropped off. Most children cease crying within a very short period of time after they become engaged in activities. Please feel free to call or email Hilltop to check on how the day is going, and remember that sometimes it takes a week or two before a child feels comfortable and secure about coming to school. If it is taking longer for your child to adjust, we will begin a joint plan of action. These procedures may be used for a child who is not new to Hilltop but is having a difficult time coming, due to changes at home or school. Please keep the teachers informed of all changes or any distress your child may be experiencing.

Diversity & Observance of Holidays

Hilltop is fortunate to have families who represent a variety of cultures, faiths, and personal beliefs. Children benefit from opportunities to interact with children and adults from different countries and cultures and are encouraged to share activities and customs with your child's classroom. Whenever possible, we recruit staff and volunteers who mirror the diversity of our center population.

It is a family's responsibility or prerogative to determine the extent that religion should play in their children's lives, so religious holidays are not celebrated at Hilltop. However, throughout the year, classrooms may learn about various holidays around the world and may study them in relation to planned curriculum themes. Teachers are trained to understand **the difference** between learning about a holiday and celebrating a holiday. While most (not all) of our families celebrate many different holidays, both commercially and spiritually, Hilltop does not attempt to recreate or become involved in one holiday over others.

Some celebrations or projects are planned around holidays such as: Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Valentine's Day. Families who do not wish their children to take part in celebrations at Hilltop should discuss possible options with the classroom teachers and the Site Director. A family may choose to keep the child home when these activities are scheduled.

Many different types of families are represented in the center. Children learn to recognize and celebrate this diversity through social interactions and planned learning in the classroom. Our goal is to help every child feel part of a cohesive, accepting, loving group. We do not want any child to feel left out or discriminated against because of their race, nationality, family structure, disability, or their family's religious preference or non-preference.

Birthday Celebrations at Hilltop

Parents should check with classroom teachers prior to bringing any outside food into Hilltop. Families may bring treats to share with the class at snack time. It is strongly encouraged to provide nutritious and commercially prepared snacks. All foods should come with an ingredient list. Check with the classroom teacher to be aware of any food allergies present in your child's classroom. Parents will be asked to provide alternatives to children who require food substitutions. Hilltop is a nut-free facility. Snacks brought into Hilltop will be checked by kitchen staff for allergens prior to serving. The following foods should not be brought to Hilltop at any time for any reason: peanuts, nuts, popcorn, rice krispy treats, or any food including gelatin including marshmallows. Treats from families will be served along with the CACFP required snack. Families are welcome to come and join the celebration. Please make arrangements with the classroom teachers, so they are prepared. Some families opt to donate a book or learning material to the classroom use instead of providing treats; this is always welcomed. Balloons are a choking hazard and not allowed.

Please do not bring party invitations to Hilltop. Children's feelings are easily hurt if they are not invited, and we ask that you be sensitive to the feelings of all children. A class directory may be provided from the office upon request if you would like to mail invitations to children or children in another classroom. A parent may request emails from the front office for children within their own classroom. This is part of the permission given to all families upon entry to Hilltop.

Programs and Curriculum

General Education Curriculum

Hilltop children experience a well-rounded curriculum which draws from many areas of development. This includes language and cognitive, gross and fine motor skills, dramatic play, art and sensory, health and safety, music, pre-literacy, pre-math, and pre-science. As part of creative development, children are allowed to use materials freely and to move with spontaneity. However, this freedom does not mean the child functions without direction. Teachers will encourage children to develop the habit of observing, questioning, and listening by modeling these behaviors themselves. They help

children feel free to make choices, to experiment, to change, and to respect the feelings and rights of others.

Toddler Rooms will focus on self-help, independence, and social development. Children gain experience and knowledge through both child-initiated and teacher-directed activities with a strong emphasis on curiosity, exploration, and fun! The teaching staff strives to maintain a very warm, comforting and loving environment for the toddlers as they are the youngest members of the Hilltop community.

Early Preschool Rooms build on the skills from the toddler year, and will focus even more on self-help skills, including toilet learning and dressing. Children will begin to experience more involved large group curriculum and will gain more exposure to making choices with activities. As the children approach preschool, activities will begin to naturally take a more structured shape, and the emphasis will remain upon fostering inquisitiveness, expression, and again, fun!

Preschool and Pre-K Rooms are designed to offer a stimulating learning environment while maintaining a play-based approach with developmentally appropriate activities. The teachers plan engaging projects and use innovative ideas that address the diverse needs of each group and promote creativity and exploration. The Pre-K Rooms have a more pronounced emphasis on exploration of writing, pre-reading, and pre-math skills as they approach the transition to kindergarten.

These rooms also continue to build on the foundation of self-help skills, independence, and social development. There is a balance of child-initiated vs. teacher-directed activities, and children have many chances to participate individually, in small groups, or as a large class. Children will also be given many choices in the Preschool and Pre-K classrooms, providing them with experience in controlling their own activities.

Art & Sensory Curriculum

There are many opportunities in the day for your child to engage in music, art, and dramatic play. To sing, dance, move, create, construct or pretend is a very real part of a child's world. The teachers will provide a large number and variety of materials or props, show an interest in what the child is doing and help when the child expresses the need for assistance. Children will have the opportunity daily to get their hands messy, explore, and nurture their individual abilities to creatively express themselves.

When children bring home artwork, it is vital to express an interest and try not to impose adult standards or expect a child to tell you "what it is." We focus on the process of the art experience, rather than the finished product. Comments pertaining to color, texture, or lines tell the child you appreciate

his/her art without judging it or labeling it. Teachers date and display children's artistic endeavors and children will enjoy having their work displayed around home for short periods of time.

Pre-Academics

As described above, children learn through play. At Hilltop, there will be countless opportunities for your child to learn new concepts, learn new vocabulary words and be exposed to a vast array of educational toys, supplies and equipment. Some of their learning will come about incidentally and informally; other times teachers will elect to teach directly. As children progress from classroom to classroom, there will be more direct opportunities for emerging writing, pre-reading, and pre-math experiences. If you desire formal reading instruction prior to kindergarten, we feel that parents should assume this responsibility at home.

Assessments

Hilltop will utilize the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment tool. This assessment will be conducted two times per year with results shared with families during conferences in the fall and spring semesters. All teaching and program administrative staff are required to complete two-hour training upon hire with an annual review of tool.

Physical Activity

Hilltop will provide all students with a 60-minute (moderate to vigorous) activity time in the morning and a 45-minute (moderate to vigorous) activity time in the afternoon. If weather prevents outdoor play, active indoor options will be provided such as dancing activities and indoor obstacle courses.

Infant Care and Activities

Infants grow and change quickly. It is important for us to maintain good communication to be sure each child's needs are being met and we are on the same page regarding their care. Whenever your child is not eating, sleeping or being changed, they will be in the infant play area. Hilltop teaching staff will work with all infants as they develop different small motor, large motor, social, language, and individual developmental activities are conducted each half hour throughout the day. Toys that have been in babies' mouths are washed and disinfected after each use. Each child's diaper will be checked and changed (if necessary) at least once an hour. You are responsible for bringing a supply of disposable diapers with you each day. Cloth diapers will not be used because of Health Department regulations. You must also supply any powder, lotion or ointment you would like us to apply. When the weather is

good, the babies will spend some time outdoors playing on the playground, going on stroller rides, or sitting on a blanket. Hilltop will not use sunscreen on students in the infant rooms.

Your child will nap according to their individual schedules. Infants will always be put to sleep in their beds, on their backs. We cannot swaddle or cover babies with blankets while in bed due to safe sleep practices enforced by our state licensing agency, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). We encourage parents to bring sleep sacks for their infants. We will launder their sheet and sleep sack as they are soiled (at least once a week). We will rock or pat your child to sleep. Please let us know what works best. We cannot allow babies to sleep in swings or infant seat and toys are never placed in their beds. Pacifiers can be used at naptime but not while children are awake.

Screen Time

The use of screen time is not to be used in classrooms with children under the age of 2 and only used for intentional learning activities of less than 30 minutes per week for children under five and must be approved by the administration.

Discipline and Guidance

Positive discipline is an essential part of childcare. Discipline helps children feel secure, meets their needs, and builds self-control and self-esteem. The objective of discipline is to promote behaviors that are beneficial to the child's development and welfare and to change and/or eliminate behaviors that are harmful or distressing to a child or to others. Discipline is different from punishment. Corporal or negative verbal punishment may change children's behaviors, but often through fear. Punishment stresses what children should not do but rarely teaches them what to do. Children controlled by punishment (i.e., spanking, threatening or severe consequences) may "behave" to avoid a penalty chosen by the adult. It often teaches children to hide their mistakes and does not build long lasting inner controls or cooperation. Punishment may cause the children to focus on revenge rather than on changing behaviors.

Before we examine various techniques adults may use when guiding children's behavior, we must first look at the environment. The environment has a great deal of influence on how most discipline problems can be prevented, reduced or even eliminated. Changing the routine, classroom activities, the room arrangement or the use of space has a profound effect on how children will get along with each other. Staff will work to satisfy each child's need for; individual space, for social interaction, for quiet and rest or movement and stimulation, for new materials, for self-directed or teacher directed activities, for age-appropriate materials and behavior expectations, or for an abundant amount of love and affection.

The following is from the Discipline Policy given to Hilltop staff:

- *Hilltop uses a wide variety of discipline methods. Discipline is most effective when an adult goes to the individual child, bends down to the child's eye level, uses eye contact and simultaneously touches the child's shoulder or arm. Staff may use a firm, but not angry, voice to get and maintain the child's attention. The primary goal is to win the child's cooperation. In order to be successful, Hilltop suggests families use the following techniques:*
- *Use distraction, suggestions or re-direction.*
- *Use quiet, brief, private talks away from other children. Do not lecture or accuse.*
- *Use positive statements. ("When... then" or "as soon as...then..."; "When we finish putting away the blocks, then we can go outside.") Statements such as, "If you don't... then we can't..." is negative and may not win cooperation.*
- *Remind children of appropriate behaviors. ("We throw balls outside. If you have trouble remembering, then you will have to leave the area." "We walk inside." "Remember to use your inside voice.") Model a soft voice.*
- *Use and state logical or natural consequences and why it happened. Abuse a toy/lose the toy is a logical consequence. The consequences should be related to the misbehavior and should be fair.*
- *With the child's help, problem-solve and brainstorm for solutions and then help the child select a solution to try.*
- *Ignore annoying, unimportant behaviors.*
- *Remove the child from the area. ("It appears you are having trouble playing in the area right now. You can come back later." "You will have to leave the area for ____ minutes and then come back when you are able share.")*
- *Separate children. ("It appears that you two are having trouble playing together right now. We can find a solution to your concern, or you will need to find different activities.")*
- *Remove a privilege. A child may lose the opportunity to play with a toy for a specific period of time.*
- *Give choices. ("You may share the blocks or find something else to do. You decide." "You may leave the area by yourself, or I'll assist you. You decide.") Choices said in a fair, firm, but friendly way are usually very effective.*
- *Use positive statements. Tell the children what they should be doing instead of focusing on the negative. Only use "NO" or DON'T" in case of emergencies.*
- *Use calming music, stories, books or songs.*

- *Avoid sarcasm, nagging, threatening, name calling, accusing or disclaimers. A disclaimer is a statement such as “Why can’t you always do that?” after a positive statement.*
- *Use a great deal of positive reinforcement and encouragement. Be specific and descriptive. (“I see you are really working hard on that puzzle.” “Thank you for picking up the blocks.” “I’m glad that you remembered to share the book.” “I appreciate it when you tell someone you are angry.”) Statements such as “use your words” are sometimes too vague. Unconditional statements such as “I love the colors you are using in your picture” are always appreciated by the children.*
- *Avoid commands or demands that “back a child against a wall”. Children may want to appear brave or tough around others and to save face they defy an adult. After a calm, implicit direction, break eye contact, turn away briefly and give a child a few moments to comply. Avoid power struggles.*
- *Use love and physical affection. Touch the child’s arm, pat the head, give a hug, and allow a child to sit on your lap or knee. Some children may want you to exclude other children so don’t play favorites or overdo the lap sitting to the exclusion of others.*
- *If the preceding positive discipline techniques are not effective Hilltop will use the following:*
- *Sit and Watch: A child may be asked to sit away from the group for several minutes or until he/she is calm. The purpose is to give the child an opportunity to see appropriate behaviors or appropriate use of materials or to settle down before joining the group. (“You can join us when you feel you can...”)* The child is sometimes given the responsibility of when to return to the group, and other times will need to be invited to rejoin by a teacher. The child must be in view of an adult.

Calming Corner: A child who does not respond to the above methods or is repeatedly disruptive or aggressive may need to be further removed from the rest of the class. After a few minutes when the child is calm, they are encouraged to rejoin the activities after a teacher has redirected the child and briefly discussed appropriate behaviors so that they are not repeated. For severe or repeated problems, a child may be brought to the office to calm down or to be removed from peer attention. Consequences for misbehavior should be logical, developmentally appropriate, and as immediate as possible.

The following strategies are also used to help guide behavior.

- Staff go to the child or the problem, sit or squat down to child’s level and talk with a tone that communicates seriousness. Unless it is an emergency or teachers are prevented from getting to the child for safety, teachers never yell or scream across the room as it can berate or

humiliate a child, and it gives the child negative attention in front of peers. Negative attention is attention that should not be reinforced.

- Teachers maintain a good sense of humor. Teachers think of imaginative or clever ways to deal with noncompliance.
- Teachers pretend, sing, or repeat rhymes to help during routines, transitions, and clean up.
- If a child says or does something that a teacher does not like, the teacher tells the child. “I don’t like it when you. . .” The teacher is specific about what bothers them and uses “I” messages.
- The teacher remains the adult even when they are having fun. Teachers do not let children jump on their backs or hit them. Teachers walk away after telling children they do not like a behavior and make it clear what behavior is acceptable. (“If you would like to be my friend, you may hold my hand.”)
- Teachers always model polite, respectful behavior.

It is Hilltop’s policy, and a licensing requirement not to use physical punishment such as hitting or shaking, pushing, pinching, threats, sarcasm, prolonged isolation, denial of meals, or derogatory remarks about the child or the family. Every staff member and volunteer has read and is familiar with the discipline policy and signs they agree to follow all of Hilltop’s discipline methods and policies.

Challenging Behaviors

If a child’s behaviors have been identified as disruptive to the overall safety and well-being of the learning environment, then a behavior management plan will be designed and put in place for families. This plan will be presented to families identifying goals of the plan. This plan is designed to give administration, teachers, and parents clear expectations that will lead to the overall success of the student. This plan will then be reviewed every two weeks to gauge success and/or review goals. This plan will be in place until it is deemed all goals have been achieved or parties involved believe that Hilltop is no longer the best option for the student. This plan will be supervised and maintained by the Student Support Services Coordinator and the Site Director in coordination with the Executive Director.

If the parent(s) refuse to follow through on the referral or recommendation of services, or if these services are provided and significant progress is not made, or if continued enrollment of the child does not represent the best interest of the child, the center, staff, or other children, Hilltop administration reserves the right to give written notice to the parent or parents indicating termination of all childcare services. Every effort will be made to provide notice to a family so they may find alternative care for

their child. Hilltop will also work to provide available options for care that may be present within our community. Including, but not limited to, making calls on family's behalf to help with quick child placement. If the child's behavior is physically or emotionally dangerous to other children or staff, immediate termination may be necessary.

Hilltop will exhaust all possible options for children and families prior to any suspension or expulsion from Hilltop. Hilltop will work with families on management plans that may recommend interventions or services. If a child is removed from Hilltop, families will be reimbursed the pro-rated amount of monthly tuition for the services not rendered as well as their full deposit. Parents will not be reimbursed for the application fees paid upon enrollment in the semester or activity fees paid.

Guidelines for Referrals

Hilltop may recommend, or even require, families request supplemental services for a child with developmental, psychological, or medical problems. USD 497's Lawrence Early Childhood Special Education Services provides a free developmental screening for preschool age children who are referred to them by parents or teachers. Infant-Toddler Services of Douglas County Early Intervention (ITS) will do screening for children under three years of age. Areas tested include hearing, vision, speech/language, gross and fine motor skills, cognition (thinking and reasoning skills), and social development. If special services are needed, USD497 or ITS staff will provide them or the child will be referred to other agencies or programs. Families may also receive services from the KU Child & Family Services Clinic or any private provider of services a family may choose to utilize.

Health and Medical Information

Medical Requirements

Children under six years of age benefit from annual, well-child health assessments. These benefits include monitoring growth and development, preventative care and immunizations, early detection of health issues, parental guidance and education, establishing a medical home, and addressing behavioral and mental health. KDHE requires a medical health assessment conducted not more than twelve months prior to the start date for students. This assessment should be conducted by a licensed physician, physician assist, or by a nurse approved to perform health assessments. It is the responsibility of parents to complete these requirements on or before the child's first day of attendance or to have scheduled appointments by that first day. Parents who do not comply with these regulations will be asked to withdraw their children.

Immunizations required by the KDHE can be found at: [Recommended Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule for ages 18 years or younger; 2025 U.S.](#)

These timelines are critical. As your child receives additional immunizations, bring in a statement showing the immunizations received and the date received. Be aware that if immunizations are given prior to the designated age, they will not be accepted by the Kansas Health Department, the licensing agency for childcare facilities. A Kansas Immunization Requirements sheet is available upon request and a copy is posted in the entry area which is subject to change.

State law requires that individuals can decline a vaccine if they have a medical reason, such as an allergic reaction. A licensed physician must provide a written statement indicating that the required vaccinations would seriously endanger the child's life or health. KDHE may require that the exemption be renewed annually as long as the medical condition persists that warrants the exemption.

State law allows parents to request religious exemptions if their religious beliefs contradict a vaccination. There is no specific form required and parents can submit letters or documentation indicating they have a religious exemption to one or all vaccines. These letters should be submitted with your child's enrollment paperwork and do not require disclosure of specific religious beliefs.

If there is an outbreak of a communicable disease children with immunization exemptions may be required to not attend care until the incubation period has cleared. This is typically 30 days from last positive case. The family is responsible for continuing to pay tuition while the child is excluded from care.

The Douglas County Health Department gives physicals and immunizations for a small fee or you may make an appointment with your own physician. Required KDHE health forms are available from Hilltop, the Health Department, or online on the KDHE website. Yearly dental check-ups are recommended for children 1 year and older.

Illness Exclusion

Upon arrival each day your child will be observed by a staff member for symptoms of possible illness, fever, or contagious diseases and will be sent home immediately if such symptoms are present. Hilltop follows the KDHE's guidelines for exclusion of children (or staff working with children) who are ill as recommended in *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs (Third Edition)*. Parents will be notified immediately when their child has a sign or symptom requiring exclusion from the Hilltop, as described below:

- 1) The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in facility activities;
- 2) The illness results in a greater care need than the childcare staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children; or

3) The child has any of the following conditions and poses a risk of spreading harmful diseases to others:

- An acute change in behavior including lethargy/lack of responsiveness, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, uncontrolled coughing, noticeable (spreading) rash, or other signs or symptoms of illness until medical evaluation indicates inclusion in the facility.
- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher and behavior change or other signs and symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea). Children must be fever free without medication for a full 24 hours after the required sick leave before coming back to school.
- Uncontrolled diarrhea, that is, increased number of stools, increased stool water, and/or decreased form that is not contained by the diaper until diarrhea stops; blood or mucus in the stools not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools.
- Vomiting illness (two or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours) until vomiting resolves or until a health care provider determines the illness to be non-communicable, and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Abdominal pain that continues for more than two hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs or symptoms of illness.
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider or health official determines the condition is noninfectious.
- Rash with fever or behavior change, until a health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease.
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- Untreated scabies, head lice, or other infestation.
- Untreated Tuberculosis, until a health care provider or health official states that the child can attend childcare.
- Known contagious diseases while still in the communicable stage (chicken pox, streptococcal pharyngitis, rubella, pertussis, mumps, measles, hepatitis A)

Children's fevers are closely monitored. If a child's temperature is in the 100.0 to 100.3 (37.7-38 C) degree range, we will take the temperature a second time (approximately 15-30 minutes later). If the second reading is above 100 (37.7 C) degrees, the parents will be given a courtesy call. If the child has other significant symptoms and the temperature is over 100.4(38 C) degrees, the parent will be called and asked to take the child.

Hilltop follows the exclusion and reporting guidance given in the *Kansas Classroom Handbook for Communicable Disease* published by KDHE. Please report any medically diagnosed cases of communicable disease to your site administrative staff.

Accidents & Emergency Procedures

Despite precautionary measures, children do have accidents. Teachers have current Pediatric CPR and first aid training and are able to tend to minor injuries. In case of head bumps, it is routine procedure to attempt to notify you of the accident by phone and to give you the details. We watch these children for symptoms associated with concussion, such as dizziness, dilated eyes, and vomiting.

Hilltop will contact you if we think a physician should see an injured or ill child, and we will prepare them to be picked up. In case of a more severe emergency, we will call an ambulance and notify you immediately. For minor accidents, teachers will note the incident on an individual accident report form. More serious injuries that may require medical treatment will result in a more detailed two-page accident report being filed.

If your work, home or cell phone number changes, notify the office immediately. All families must have an additional person listed on their emergency treatment card. Hilltop must have a way of contacting at least one family member in case of emergency, at all times.

Teachers will notify you through the Playground app or by phone that an accident has occurred or your child has become ill. They will provide you with a written accident form to sign when you pick your child up. You will be provided with a paper copy.

Administering Medication

It is a KDHE licensing requirement that prescribed medicine can only be administered if it is in the pharmacy container labeled with the child's full name, name of the medication, dosage, name of the physician, and date it was filled. If you want your child to be given a non-prescribed medication, the medication must be in the original container and labeled clearly with the first and last name of your child. Non-prescription medication must be administered according to the instructions on the label or have a doctor's note with adapted instructions. All medication is stored in a locked box in the classroom.

Parents must fill out and sign an individual initial medication form and give it to the classroom teacher to be posted in the classroom. There are two types of forms, one for prescribed medication and the

other for non-prescribed. Teachers will write the time the medicine was administered and her/his/their name on the form that you filled out. Unless we receive a specific request from a parent to keep medicine on hand (i.e. asthma, allergies) all medication that is not being administered will be disposed of; so please take it home if you want to keep it. Parents are responsible for checking with classroom teachers that medicines are not expired. Children with rescue medications such as EPI-Pens or inhalers will not be allowed to attend without current medication on site. Teachers will administer medication while on field trips, if necessary. Emergency medications will be carried in the classroom backpack and kept with a teacher at all times.

Special Medical Conditions

If your child requires a specialized medical management plan as prescribed by a medical doctor (i.e. insulin administration, physical therapy, epi-pen, nebulizer, etc.), then an adult trained in the procedure must be on-site whenever the child is present. This may sometimes be a Hilltop staff member. This person will be identified at enrollment or whenever medical plan is presented. If Hilltop is not able to provide said provider, it will be the responsibility of the family to provide appropriate assistance as required by a medical doctor.

Developmental Screener

As a child enters a new classroom, their parents will be asked to complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). The Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ®-3) is a developmental screening tool that pinpoints developmental progress in children between the ages of one month to 5 ½ years. Its success lies in its parent-centric approach and inherent ease-of-use—a combination that has made it the most widely used developmental screener across the globe. This tool assists Hilltop with a more seamless transition into the classroom as we may be able to have additional support or training available to families and staff.

Wellness & Outdoor Play

Childcare regulations require one hour of outdoor play every day. Hilltop meets the requirement by taking the children outside in smaller increments. If your child is not well enough to go outside with his/her class, they may not attend childcare. Hilltop does not have staff to remain inside with one child. It is healthier for children to go outside every possible day rather than be confined indoors. Hilltop follows the Child Care Weather Watch matrix as recommended by KDHE to determine when it

is safe for children to play outside, particularly during extreme temperatures or hazardous conditions. This involves monitoring temperature, wind chill, and head index, and potentially adjusting outdoor play time or canceling it. Following the recommendations of Child Care Aware of Kansas, we reduce outdoor play when the temperatures is above 95 degrees or below freezing until conditions require cancellation of outdoor play. Infants may go outside if the temperature is between 40 and 90. Infants will spend time outdoors playing on the playground, going on stroller rides, or sitting on a blanket. We use Lawrence Regional Airport as the closest weather station for weather conditions.

Child Care Weather Watch

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)

		Wind Speed in mph								
		Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
Air Temperature	40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27
	30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13
	20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1
	10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15
	0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29
	-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43

Comfortable for out door play

Caution

Danger

Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)

		Relative Humidity (Percent)												
		40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
Air Temperature (F)	80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
	84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
	90	91	93	95	97	100	103	105	109	113	117	122	127	132
	94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
	100	109	114	118	124	129	130							
	104	119	124	131	137									

Sunscreen and Insect Repellant

Hilltop staff will apply sunscreen (school age students will apply their own sunscreen) that has written approval by a child's family. Sunscreen must be clearly labeled with the child's name and given to one of the full-time teachers for safe storage. It cannot be kept in the child's cubby or backpack. Parents must sign a parent authorization form available in the classroom before staff can apply sunscreen. This authorization will be effective for a period of one year and protects our staff from liability if your child has an adverse reaction to the sunscreen provided. We ask that parents apply sunscreen in the morning before leaving children at Hilltop. Staff will apply additional sunscreen at appropriate times later in the day. The morning classroom schedule does not allow time for staff to apply sunscreen to all children. Hilltop will apply sunscreen from April 1 – October 1. If it is raining, or too hot to go outside, teachers will not apply sunscreen on the children in the afternoon. Hilltop will not use sunscreen on students in the infant rooms. **Please do not bring aerosol sunscreens as they are a hazard to**

children with asthma or breathing problems. Any parent that does not wish for Hilltop to apply sunscreen to their child, they must refuse application via email to the Site Director.

Insect repellants can only be applied in special situations. The approval of a physician and written permission from the parent are required.

Appropriate Clothing

Children should be dressed in comfortable clothes (sneakers are preferable). Avoid sending your child to school in expensive or special clothes that might be damaged during active or messy play. Teachers dress informally to allow participation in all types of activities. Tennis shoes are recommended for safe climbing and walking (rather than slick bottomed shoes, flip-flops, heels or cowboy boots). Young children should wear clothes for ease of toileting. Drawstrings on clothing is a strangulation hazard and not allowed in rooms younger than grade school. Children will be changed into rain/snow boots if the shoes they wore are not safe for outdoor play. Children go outside in the winter months and should be sent with mittens, hats, and boots so they can enjoy playing for 10-60 minutes in cold weather. Fresh air and exercise are important to children's health and well-being.

Soiled Clothing

Check your child's cubby or diaper cubby each day for soiled clothing daily. Hilltop may not always have extra clothing for children. Children in infant through Early Preschool rooms should have a minimum of two changes of clothing. All other children should have one change of clothing. Please update your child's extra clothing as the weather changes. If a child consistently has accidents and does not have extra clothing, the teacher will call the parent to ask that either clothing be brought to school or that the child be taken home. Please note that Kansas Health Department regulations prohibit Hilltop staff from rinsing out clothing soiled from toileting accidents. These will be wrapped in plastic bags and must be taken home by families.

Reporting Child Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse or Neglect

The Kansas Child Protection Act mandates that all personnel working in a licensed childcare center must report suspected child abuse or neglect. There is a penalty for violation of this reporting law. This act protects the people reporting to the Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF) from any liability, civil or criminal. All records and reports concerning child abuse and neglect filed with DCF or

the district court are confidential and will not be disclosed. All staff at Hilltop are aware of their responsibilities regarding this Act.

Any staff member accused of a form of abuse will be placed on paid administrative leave until any accusation can be investigated. The staff member will be provided with the opportunity to provide feedback on the accusation to Hilltop administration as well as any local official that may be involved.

Tobacco Free Policy

No tobacco product, or vaping, is permitted inside Hilltop or within 100 feet of the property. As per NAEYC criteria, any employee or family member who smells of tobacco products will be asked to exit the building and/or change clothes prior to return. This will minimize third hand smoke exposure to the children while at Hilltop.

Additional Program Policies

Parking For Arrival & Departure

Parking in the Hilltop Load area at Main directly in front of the facility requires a Hilltop Load permit. This permit is also used for parking at West. This permit is \$42 annually or \$24 per semester. You will receive a link via email to purchase the permit.

When you purchase this permit, it will only allow you to place one vehicle on the permit. Please email kupark@ku.edu and they will add your alternate vehicles that need to have this access to pick up/drop off your child/children.

If you arrive to drop your child/children off and the load area is full, please park in Lot 93 across the street from Hilltop (your load permit will be accepted in Lot 93 from 8-8:45 and 4:45-5:00). Do not park along curbs or roadways as this impedes traffic visibility and could endanger the safety of pedestrians. Any valid regular KU permit is also valid in the Central District Parking Garage after 5 pm so you can also park in this garage to pick up your child/children.

During basketball season, there will be parking attendants along the Ousdahl Road. Please let them know you are picking up your child/children at Hilltop and they will allow you through to Hilltop Load or Lot 93.

If you anticipate a longer stay, we recommend paying the hourly toll in the garage across from Hilltop Main. At West you may use one of the KU parking apps. You may also go to ku.aimsparking.com and click on Purchase Permits. If you are a non-KU parent, you may register on the Visitor Login and purchase a daily yellow parking permit for \$4.

At Main, if you arrive to drop your child/children off and the load area is full, please park in Lot 93 across the street from Hilltop (your load permit will be accepted in Lot 93 from 8-8:45 and 4:45-5:00). Do not park along curbs or roadways as this impedes traffic visibility and could endanger the safety of pedestrians. Any valid regular KU permit is also valid in the Central District Parking Garage after 5 pm so you can also park in this garage to pick up your child/children.

During basketball season, there will be parking attendants along the Ousdahl Road. Please let them know you are picking up your child/children at Hilltop and they will allow you through to Hilltop Load or Lot 93.

Always use caution when driving through the parking lot. There are many pedestrians (adults and children) and cars pulling in and out. Please keep everyone safe by driving slowly, carefully and obeying all traffic signs. The parent lot is a one-way lot! We ask that all cars are turned off while in the lot to minimize exhaust where children are.

Any concerns about traffic flow or parking in outside lots should be directed to the University of Kansas Parking Department (kupark@ku.edu).

Emergency Closing Policies & Procedures

The Executive Director will make an announcement of any change in Hilltop's hours of operations via the social media accounts and Playground. In the event there is an emergency affecting only a Hilltop site (no heat, water, etc.), Hilltop will be closed or will operate on reduced hours. One or both sites may be closed depending on the emergency. If the KU Administration announces an official closing of KU classes or the entire KU campus due to unsafe travel conditions, Hilltop will be closed. This may be different if closed for temperature-related closings. Hilltop reserves the right to cancel services or alter hours if weather conditions are extremely dangerous for our staff and families or if we will not meet the staffing requirements of our childcare license. The Hilltop Executive Director will make all final decisions related to closings. Hilltop incurs salary and other fixed costs when closed, so fees **will not be refunded** for the rare days closed.

Hilltop does not always follow the public-school closings. In the rare case of a serious health emergency affecting the center or the KU campus, families will be notified and follow directives from the

local Health Department and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) concerning our operations.

Emergency Preparedness Policies

Fire and Tornado drills are scheduled monthly throughout the year. Each classroom practices using two different escape routes. Fire and tornado drill routes and procedures are posted in each classroom. Staff are trained to know what to do in emergency situations. Classrooms serving children with disabilities have an emergency plan that assigns staff the responsibility for the disabled child. Outside speakers make it possible for staff and children on the playground to hear alarm signals.

Hilltop can contact the KU Police Department immediately for assistance in case a dangerous situation occurs in or near the center. (Please note that presence of KU Police on site does not mean there has been an incident as we collaborate with police on reviewing security and other business matters.) Each classroom has procedures in place to move all children and staff to the safest possible locations as quickly as possible based on children's developmental needs placement of the classroom in the building. Drills are held quarterly so children and staff can become accustomed to the procedures just as they do for our regular fire and tornado drills.

If a potentially dangerous situation exists on campus outside of the building, we will follow our shelter in place procedures. All doors and windows will be locked and access to the building will be monitored closely. All children and staff will remain inside the building, but all other regular activities will continue as appropriate.

Hilltop has an evacuation plan in place in case there is a need to move all children and staff out of our building. In situations like a suspected gas leak or bomb threat, staff will immediately move children to the designated evacuation site. At Main Campus, staff will relocate in the Horejsi Family Athletics Center located on the south side of the main athletics complex. The Horejsi Center is east of Hilltop. West campus will relocate to Innovation Park to the southwest of our facility. Children will remain at the designated evacuation site until staff know it is safe to return to the building. Parents will be notified of the emergency by cell phone, local media and KU website. If they are in the classroom, then they must follow all classroom protocols in place for the drill until it has been completed.

Confidentiality Policy

Hilltop considers all information regarding enrolled children and families as confidential. Staff will not discuss a child with anyone other than pertinent staff, regulating bodies, accrediting agencies, legal guardians, custodial parents, or with those persons or agencies authorized by the family with a signed,

written release of information. Hilltop adheres to federal and state statutes concerning a child's information. No information requested by someone outside of Hilltop, other than parents or guardians, will be given over the telephone unless Hilltop has a written release signed by parents.

Please do not ask staff to discuss information about other children or families. Staff are expected to adhere to the confidentiality ideals and principles in the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.

In the event of any personnel changes, Hilltop must follow all privacy laws that are in place for all workers. Information regarding the reasoning for a staff change is confidential and will not be released to any person. The only information that will be provided is whether any child was put in danger due to staff behaviors.

Parent Liability Statement

If a child under the age of 18 injures a person or damages property maliciously or willfully, the person so injured can recover damages from the parent, up to \$1,000 (as is provided by Kansas State Law), unless it is found that the malicious or willful actions were the result of parental neglect, in which case there is no limit to the amount of liability. This law holds the parent, not the teacher or center liable.

Field Trips Off the Premises & Van Transportation

Classrooms must have adequate adult coverage to leave the premises. When leaving campus to go on field trips not near Hilltop, there must be three (3) adults present to assist with supervision, specifically a teacher, a part-time aide, administrator, or a volunteer. In some instances, at the discretion of the administration, one teacher and another Hilltop employee may be authorized to accompany children to specified locations. All trips away from the building must be pre-approved by the administration. If classrooms are under ratio, then two adults may accompany students offsite.

The State Health Department requires that all childcare centers obtain signed parental permission for any trips off the premises. The general permission form that each parent signs gives Hilltop teachers permission to take children on walking field trips on campus. Children are not allowed to leave Hilltop until this general permission form is signed and returned. Walks to other destinations and all van trips require a separate parental permission form for each trip. If a parent forgets to sign for each separate trip, we will make every effort to contact the parents to get permission. If you do not wish your child to attend the field trip, you will be responsible for care until the class returns. On all field trips teachers take along emergency treatment cards, children's health records and a first aid kit. Emergency treatment forms and completed child health assessment forms will be taken on all field trips. Should a child require immediate medical attention while on a field trip, Hilltop staff will attempt to reach

parents and/or other designees per the emergency treatment forms. If a trip to the emergency room or doctor's office is necessary, all health-related forms will accompany the child.

No child will be transported in a private car. Hilltop owns fifteen-passenger vans. The main purpose for having these vans is to transport school-age children to and from several elementary schools during the school year. The vans are also used to transport children to and from a variety of activities, including field trips.

Emergency Transportation

Hilltop staff will not drive a sick or injured child to a doctor's office or hospital. In the event a child must be transported to a doctor's office or hospital and the parents or other designated people on the emergency treatment card are not available, an ambulance will be called. The notarized emergency treatment form you provide at the beginning of each enrollment period gives Hilltop staff permission to call an ambulance for transportation to the hospital and for the hospital to administer emergency care in such cases.

When a staff member accompanies a child to the source of emergency care, she/he will remain with the child until a parent or parent's designee assumes responsibility for the child.

Any serious injury requiring hospitalization shall be reported by the next working day to the County Health Department and within 72 hours to NAEYC, Hilltop's accrediting agency.

Partnership with Families

Center-Wide Communication

Hilltop reminders and classroom updates will be provided via the Playground System. Hilltop reminders may include information on important fee payment dates, enrollment deadlines, and special events. Please check the app daily for important messages. Administrative letters will be sent by email. Parents will be added to our email list so that they can receive reminders concerning important deadlines and other Hilltop information. Please stop by the office to notify us if your e-mail address changes. Hilltop and classroom updates will be provided via the Playground System. Every parent should create their account once they enroll in a classroom. You may also follow us on Instagram or visit our Facebook page for updates on Hilltop info.

Individual Classroom Communication

Teachers will communicate with families about classroom information and children's activities. In the Toddler and Early Preschool Rooms, teachers complete charts that state how much each child ate, how long he/she slept, and details of diapering or toileting trips. Teachers may write notes about the day on a posted chalkboard or bulletin board. Lesson plans are posted near the entrance to the rooms. Often teachers send communication – either written in and placed in cubbies or electronically – to parents stating upcoming plans, themes, or events. It is essential to begin a routine of reading the information posted in the classroom or online, so you may stay up to date on events.

A good time to talk to teachers personally for a brief chat is during drop-off and pick-up (prior to 5:15), as long as they have the opportunity to do so while still supervising the children. If you wish to discuss a topic at length, you may arrange a time with the teacher when they can step away from the classroom or set up a conference. Parents are encouraged to message teachers via the Playground System, but teachers will only be able to respond when they are not working with the children directly. It is not an assumption that teachers will respond to family requests outside of the regularly scheduled workday.

Open House & Transition Nights

Open house is scheduled before the first day of the fall semester to familiarize families with the school, the teachers, and classroom. Prior to the start of the fall semester, a Preschool Transition Night will be held to orient Early Preschool families to the Preschool Wing.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled at least twice a year (except school age) to report children's progress in a variety of areas. A digital sign up will be provided in an email and on the parent communication app. A written conference report will be given to families, and one will be kept in your child's file at Hilltop. Additional conferences may be arranged upon parent or staff request. Please contact the teacher if you would like to schedule a conference.

Family Involvement

Families are encouraged to become involved at Hilltop by actively participating in activities and functions. Join classrooms on field trips or walks whenever you can! Any family attending a classroom field trip or walk **MUST** adhere to all classroom rules while with the class. Please see teachers with

any questions. Families are encouraged to participate in center events including family picnics, fundraisers, social gatherings, etc.

Families are always welcome to observe your child in relation to other children and learn about their daily routine. Parents of Toddlers and Early Preschoolers are asked to be thoughtful when going into the classroom unless you plan to take your child home at the end of the visit. Young children assume that when they see you arrive, it is time to go home. It may be stressful for a child if a parent leaves multiple times during the day, so it is discouraged.

Parent Members of the Hilltop Board of Directors

The Hilltop Board of Directors is comprised of Hilltop parents, University personnel and persons in the community who are interested and supportive of the program. Elections are held annually in the fall. This is an important way families can support the center and be involved in decision making. Current members are on the Hilltop website.

Meals with Children

Hilltop encourages families to eat with their children by making reservations in advance. Breakfast is \$3 and lunch is \$5 and is paid at the front office. Space limitations and food supplies limit this to two (2) guests per classroom per day. The first month of each semester is a transition time in classrooms, so you are encouraged to schedule meal visits after the first month. It may be difficult for a child who anticipates going home with you after lunch, so delay eating lunch with your child until he/she understands this is a brief visit.

Family Feedback

Family feedback information is an important part of the evaluation process for the program. Once a year you will be asked to fill out a Parent Feedback Survey. This is an opportunity to provide input into your child's program, reflect on teachers' efforts and evaluate the program. The administrators, teachers and Hilltop's Board of Directors take these evaluations seriously, so please let us hear from all of you. Hilltop staff believe that families play an important role in program evaluation and goal setting, so please participate and give feedback. The results of the annual program evaluation and goal setting process will be reported to families and staff early in the fall semester.

Hilltop is for you and your child, and staff are here to serve you and your child the best we can. If something concerns you, please do not delay in voicing your concerns, as small worries tend to grow if

they are not spoken. Please stop to ask questions to an administrator or request a sit-down meeting. The teachers are also available to talk with you before and after school or during their planning periods.

Parenting Information for Families

A part of Hilltop's mission is to provide our families with information that makes the difficult job of parenting a little easier. A newsletter is published regularly that will have reports on center activities, and include useful child development articles, parenting information, and fun activities to do at home.

Babysitting

Teaching staff may provide childcare if the family does not have a child currently enrolled in the teacher's classroom. The personal relationships formed when teachers babysit for families could make it difficult with regards to perceived favoritism and professional confidentiality. Children may find it hard to understand the differing roles of childcare provider and teacher and "sharing" a special person who comes to their home. Hilltop does not have responsibility for actions or behavior of any staff person while employed by a family away from the center.

Addressing Concerns

If a Hilltop parent or guardian has a concern, the first attempt to resolve the issue should be by the parties involved. Concerns or questions about a child's care should first be addressed to the classroom teacher. Concerns regarding billing may be addressed first to the Finance Director. If the issue is not resolved, please ask to meet with the Site Director. Concerns unresolved by the Site Director and program policy concerns may be addressed by requesting a meeting with the Executive Director. If a solution is not reached, a formal grievance may be filed in writing with the Executive Committee of Hilltop's Board for the purpose of reaching a satisfactory solution for all concerned. An email should be sent to the President of the Board stating reasons for the appeal and other pertinent information. The committee will examine the issue and notify the parties involved of their decision. Hilltop's Board has final authority in deciding issues relating to center policies and procedures. Appeals to KU administration or other outside entities will not be considered.

**Hilltop is a private, non-profit organization. We reserved the right to make additional changes to our policies and procedures as necessary and pursuant to the organization's bylaws. All changes will be communicated via email and on our website to all parents listed on child's enrollment materials.*