

Stepping Stones Children's Center, Inc.

Family Handbook Policies

School Age



Pine Richland Schools:

Richland, Eden Hall, Wexford and Hance

Seneca Valley Schools

Haine, Rowan, Connoquenessing Valley,
Evans City

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Program Information

Thank you for choosing to be part of our Stepping Stones family! We are proud to provide quality care for eight School Age locations located in Pine Richland and Seneca Valley School Districts. Stepping Stones has been successfully providing school age programming in the Pine Richland School District since 1993 and in Seneca Valley since 2012

Below is a list of all the School Age before and after care programs that are offered:

School	Hours of Operation (Monday-Friday)
Richland Elementary	6:30 am – 8:55 am / 3:30pm – 6:30 pm
Wexford Elementary	6:30 am – 8:55 am / 3:30pm – 6:30 pm
Hance Elementary	6:30 am – 8:55 am / 3:30pm – 6:30 pm
Eden Hall Upper Elementary	6:30 am- 8:15 am/ 3:05 pm – 6:30 pm
Haine	6:30 am – 8:40 am/ 3:25 pm – 6:30 pm
Connequenessing Valley (CVE)	6:30 am – 8:40 am/ 3:25 pm – 6:30 pm
Evans City	6:30 am – 8:40 am/ 3:25 pm – 6:30 pm
Rowan	6:30 am – 8:40 am/ 3:25 pm – 6:30 pm

Each before and after school program engages in standard based lessons in STEM, creative expression, language arts, and social and emotion development. We also provide time in the after school program for students to get assistance with homework.

To meet the need for an extended day kindergarten program in our community, Stepping Stones also provides a half-day school based kindergarten program for the alternating half of the school day. The LEAP (Learning Extension and Play) program provides care directly in each elementary school.

Below is a list of all LEAP programs that are offered:

School (AM/PM Leap)	Hours of Operation (Monday-Friday)
Richland Elementary	9:00 am- 1:00 pm/ 11:45 am- 3:30 pm
Wexford Elementary	9:00 am- 1:00 pm/ 11:45 am- 3:30 pm
Hance Elementary	9:00 am- 1:00 pm/ 11:45 am- 3:30 pm
Haine	8:40 am- 12:45 pm / 11:30 am- 3:25
Connequenessing Valley (CVE)	8:40 am- 12:45 pm / 11:30 am- 3:25
Evan City	8:40 am- 12:45 pm / 11:30 am- 3:25
Rowan	8:40 am- 12:45 pm / 11:30 am- 3:25

The LEAP program is staffed with highly-qualified educators and offers an academic program with hands-on and individualized learning experiences. Our curriculum is

based on thematic units that extend learning that the children are receiving from the district. In addition, our curriculum provides extended learning opportunities based on the development and interest of kindergarten-aged children.

All School Programs participate in the following programs and are monitored year round:

- CACFP- Stepping Stones offers snack in the after school program which is monitored monthly by the CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program)
- DHS- The Department of Human Services inspects all our programs annually. DHS regulations can be found electronically at <http://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=/secure/pacode/data/055/chapter3270/chap3270toc.html&d=>
- STARS- Keystone Stars is Pennsylvania's Quality Rating and Improvement System. Programs are monitored yearly to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early and school age care.
- ELRC- Stepping Stones works with ELRC to provide financial assistance to working families that need care.

All staff receives training in Pediatric First Aid, CPR, Fire Safety, Emergency Operations and supplemental professional development to meet the individualized needs of the program. In addition, all staff members are in compliance with the Department of Human Services including staff to child ratios. Stepping Stones maintains a one (1) to twelve (12) staff to child ratio in elementary programs, grades kindergarten to third, and one (1) to fifteen (15) staff to child ratio in programs that serve 4th-6th grade only. All programs that offer care to mixed age groups or contain just kindergartners follow the one (1) to twelve (12) staff to child ratio.

Contact Information

School Age Director

Ashley Thorne

724-625-2199 ext 235
schoolage@stepstonescc.org

Assistant School Age Director

Jody Posey

724-625-2199 ext 234
jody@stepstonescc.org

Billing/Family Accountant

Kerri Rudolph

724-625-2199 ext 228
familyaccounts@stepstonescc.org

Executive Director

Rhaslyn McGhee

724-625-2199 ext 225
rhaslyn@stepstonescc.org

Hance Elementary

724-321-8552
5518 Molnar Drive
Gibsonia, PA 15044
hance@stepstonescc.org
Hours: M-F 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM

Richland Elementary

724-321-8554
3811 Bakerstown Road
Gibsonia, PA 15044
Richland@stepstonescc.org
Hours: M-F 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM

Wexford Elementary

724-321-8556
250 Brown Road
Wexford, PA 15090
wexford@stepstonescc.org
Hours: M-F 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM

Eden Hall Upper Elementary

724-553-6707
3900 Bakerstown Road
Gibsonia, 15044
Edenhall@stepstonescc.org
Hours: M-F 6:30 – 8:15 AM & 2:45 - 6:30 PM

Haine Elementary

724-487-2020
1516 Haine School Road
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066
Haine@stepstonescc.org
Hours: M-F 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM

Rowan Elementary

724-487-2019
8051 Rowan Road
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066
Rowan@stepstonescc.org
Hours: M-F 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM

Evans City Elementary

724-487-3444
345 Rear West Main Street
Evans City, PA 16033
Evanscity@stepstonescc.org
Hours: M-F 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM

Connoquenessing Valley

724-487-3483
300 S. Pittsburgh Street
Zelienople, PA 16063
CVE@stepstonescc.org
Hours: M-F 6:30 AM to 6:30 PM

INTRODUCTION

Stepping Stones Children's Center, Inc., is a private, non-profit, corporation established in 1979 to provide care and education for children and their families in northern Allegheny and southern Butler counties. The center is incorporated with a volunteer parent and community member Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for the legal, financial, and community matters of the organization. The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services in accordance with the standards established by the Department of Labor and Industry and Health licenses all Stepping Stones locations.

Trained, professional staff implements each School Age Program. The Executive Director is responsible for carrying out the overall mission of Stepping Stones Children's Center, implementing Board actions, updating the board and general administrative functions. The School Age and Assistant School Age Director manage the enrollment, registration and regulations of each program. The Site Directors are responsible for the management of everyday operations, planning and implementing program activities as well as maintaining open parent-teacher communication. Group Supervisors and Assistant Group Supervisors assist in the planning and implementation of various program activities. The programs are expanded and enriched by volunteers.

Mission Statement

Stepping Stones Children's Center, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is the total development of children. We are committed to providing high quality education and childcare in an environment that fosters positive relationships among our children, staff, families, and the community we serve.

School Age Mission Statement

Stepping Stones' School Age mission is to create a safe and enjoyable learning environment. Our students, parents, and staff will work together to build an atmosphere where each and every child can learn and respect one another in an academic, physical, and social environment. Stepping Stones will offer a creative curriculum of diverse learning experiences, which meet the individual needs of all of our students. Stepping Stones School Age Program will provide activities for children to help them develop their skills as role models, team members, and responsible representatives of the community.

Vision Statement

Stepping Stones Children's Center, Inc. will strive to be an organization that exemplifies growth and opportunity for children, their families, and our community at large by providing the following:

- Provide high- quality childcare and learning that supports lifelong academic success.
- To foster relationships within the community.

- Provide caregivers with supports needed to help their children succeed.

Values Statement

Stepping Stones Children's Center, Inc., through its families, staff, board and administration, affirms its commitment to these values for our children and the community.

We will work diligently to:

- Create and maintain standards of high quality childcare and education for children and youth.
- Monitor the economic climate in the organization to foster quality programming and growth.
- Design and maintain high quality physical environments that are safe, clean and aesthetically pleasing.
- Promote innovative and creative development of programs, services, and solutions for children and their families.
- Respect and foster the unique talents and abilities of each child.
- Model behaviors that teach tolerance and respect for differences.
- Create a spirit of cooperation and partnership with and among community organizations.
- Serve as advocates for children, families, and the early childhood profession.
- Maintain high standards of ethical conduct.
- Maintain high standards of professionalism.
- Encourage teamwork.

Philosophy

Stepping Stones Children's Center Inc. provides an environment in which children can strive to achieve their full potential for social, intellectual, emotional and physical growth. Each child is unique and special with very individual gifts and strengths that must be nurtured by the adults in their lives. The way in which a child grows and realizes these gifts and strengths depends on parental guidance, love and understanding, and the positive growth experiences of the School Age care.

Our qualified professional employees are responsive to the needs and developmental progress of each child. In an atmosphere of acceptance, children develop relationships of mutual trust and respect with adults and peers. The development of the child's self-worth and feelings of competency are a priority.

Our childcare program helps children achieve developmental goals that are very critical in the early years. To accomplish these goals, we provide an environment that is comfortable and safe. The environment has stimulating materials and equipment and is staffed with knowledgeable, caring adults. The Site Directors plan daily programs of activities that help children become successful achievers who have initiative, independence and positive feelings about themselves.

Each child is unique and special. They each have very individual gifts within – qualities of strength and potentials awaiting development. We are happy to have a part in helping children grow. In partnership with parents, we work to make our School Age Program a place where children can just be kids, a place of security, love and fun, and a time to remember as special.

SCHOOL AGE PROGRAM GOALS

- To provide children with the opportunity to explore, discover, and be adventurous through hands on learning in a safe and supporting environment
- To offer children activities for physical, mental, emotional and social development
- To encourage children to exercise self-control and be accountable members of society
- A balance of independent, small, and large group activities that includes creative play, educational centers, and physical/motor development
- Trained and knowledgeable educators who provide developmentally appropriate experiences in accordance with the PA Learning Standards
- To provide a safe, comfortable, and fun environment to promote healthy social development

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Stepping Stones Children's Center School Age Program admits all children between the ages of five and eleven years without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, and/or ancestry. When the parent/guardian of a child identifies that a child has special needs, the Executive Director, School Age Director, Assistant School Age Director and the parent/guardian will meet to review the child's care requirements. Stepping Stones does not discriminate on the basis of special needs. The program accepts children with special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided for the child. Stepping Stones can not provide one on one care and all school age children must be able to use the restroom independently.

To help the program staff better understand the child's needs, the staff will ask the parent/guardian of a child with special needs to complete a "Special Care Plan" in conjunction with the child's health care provider(s). The program will attempt to accommodate children with special needs consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If the program is unable to accommodate the child's needs as defined by the child's health care provider(s) or the "Special Care Plan" without posing an undue burden as defined by federal law, the Executive Director will work with the parent or guardian to find a suitable environment for the child.

Enrollment

The following forms will be completed and submitted to Stepping Stones *prior* to the child's first day of attendance. The information in these forms will remain confidential and will be shared with other teachers ONLY as required to meet the needs of the child:

1. Registration Packet
2. A \$50.00 Annual Registration Fee (non refundable)
3. Emergency Contact/ Parental Consent Form
 - Please fill in **ALL SPACES, SIGN, and DATE**
4. Child Health Assessment
 - Health Assessment must be completed after a child's 5th birthday and be updated when they enter 6th grade.
5. Child Survey ("Getting to Know You")
6. Signed and dated agreement form
7. CACFP form

***A periodic review will be required of emergency contact forms and signed agreements every 6 months*

Tuition Policies

- Effective September 1st, 2021 automatic payments are the only form of accepted payment.
- A \$5 fee is assessed for each credit card payment. A \$35 fee will be assessed with any payments returned.
- **After the 10th of the month, if tuition has not been paid, childcare services may be withheld until payment is received.**
- Sibling Discount: A 10% discount on tuition will be applied to older sibling(s)
- Program expenses for the center are consistent even when a child is absent due to illness, vacation, etc., **therefore we cannot extend tuition credit or reschedule missed days.** To compensate for this fact, we build in a ½ day per month missed time factor by basing fees on a 4 week, 20 day month.
- A holding fee of \$150 per child may be applied to hold a spot in enrollment for a maximum of 3 months.
- A two-week notice of child withdrawal is required to suspend billing and receive a refund for any unused service.
- Extra days of care are available, space permitting, billed as an extra day rate.
- Variable Schedules will be billed at a rate of one day higher.
- There is a minimum enrollment of two days per week. You may enroll on a AS NEEDED basis. If enrolled for AS NEEDED, a space will not be held and attendance will need to be approved by the Site Director before attending. AS NEEDED rate will apply for anyone enrolled for AS NEEDED or a one day a week schedule
- For more information about ELRC childcare subsidy, please contact the numbers below
 - Allegheny County- 412-255-1603
 - Butler County- 724-285-9431

Program Closure Dates

Independence Day- 7/5/21	Winter Break 12/24/21+ 12/27/21+ 12/31/21
Labor Day- 9/6/21	Martin Luther King Jr 1/17/22
Columbus Day 10/11/21 (SV ONLY)	Spring Break 4/15/22
Thanksgiving 11/25/21 + 11/26/21	Memorial Day 5/30/22

Annual Family Open House

Families are encouraged to attend an annual Open House. The Open House is an opportunity to meet staff, tour the classroom, and interact with other Stepping Stones families. A copy of this handbook will also be distributed at this event. It is preferred that families will look through this book and ask any questions they may have in regards to its content. If families are unable to attend, then a handbook will be emailed to them. The parent handbook is available on request.

** This event has been suspended for the 2021-2022 school year due to COVID safety protocols**

Community Partnerships

The Site Director will maintain a working bulletin board with newsletters and community event postings.

Field trips and activities reflect the need for community involvement, including partnerships with nursing homes, police, fire safety, girl scouts, boy scouts, high school students, athletes and other community partners. Activities such as food drives, clothing drives, animal shelter drives, etc. are provided throughout the year by the Site Directors and School Age Director.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Arrival

- Families are welcomed to enter our programs at the appropriate opening time depending on their school district. We ask that families please refrain from arrival **prior** to our opening time, as we need this time to prepare for the day. Please be sure your child's teacher is aware that your child has arrived.

Parking Lot

All children **MUST** be supervised in the parking lot. Please do not leave your vehicle running or leave a child unattended in your vehicle. Please respect the speed limits, which are posted in the parking lot of each school. Please drive carefully and slowly for the safety of all of our children.

The DHS regulation states: **§ 3270.177. Supervision** (a) Children may not be left unattended in a vehicle. (b) Children shall be supervised during boarding and exiting vehicles by an adult who remains outside the vehicle.

Absences

Please notify the Site Director directly, if your child will be absent for the day. If you know that your child will not be attending, please let us know in advance whenever possible. Please notify Stepping Stones **AND** the School District directly.

Because program expenses for School Age Programs are consistent even when your child misses time due to illness, vacation, etc., we cannot extend tuition credit or allow “switching” of days to “use” tuition. To compensate for this fact, we build in a ½ day per month missed time factor by basing fees on a 4 week, 20 day month.

PICK UP PROCEDURES

Departure

Stepping Stones School Age Programs close at 6:30pm at **ALL** sites. When picking up your child, be sure to let your child’s teacher know that you are taking them. Once you arrive, you are responsible for your child. For your child’s safety, please watch that they do not run in the hallways, rooms, or parking lot.

Pine-Richland Families:

For children enrolled in the PM LEAP program that are not picked up by 3:30 will be charged for the afternoon program. Families who consistently pick up after 3:30 will be asked to update their enrollment option to LEAP and after school care.

Seneca Valley Families:

For children enrolled in the PM LEAP program, that are not riding the buss, that are not picked up by 3:10 will be charged for the afternoon program. Families who consistently pick up after 3:10 will be asked to update their enrollment option to LEAP and after school care.

Late Pick-Up Policy

All school age programs end promptly at 6:30pm. Stepping Stones staff are only scheduled and paid through the closing time of their program. We recognize that on occasion an emergency arises which may cause you to be late to pick up your child. In such an event, ***please call*** so that we can plan accordingly. In order to avoid additional programming fees, we must impose the following late policy whenever lateness is the routine rather than the exception:

If a child has not been picked up by the close of the program, a late fee of \$20.00 per half hour, per child (for families with sibling children) or fraction thereof, will be charged. This fee is to be paid BEFORE the child returns to the facility the following day. A parent who is late 3 times will receive a written notice requiring him/her to make a plan for picking up his/her child on time, and set a date to meet with the center's Executive Director to discuss this plan. If the parent is late again, he/she will be sent a termination warning. With the next lateness, the parent will be asked to make other arrangements for the care of his/her child.

CURRICULUM INFORMATION

Curriculum Overview

Stepping Stones Children's Center uses a homegrown creative curriculum. Daily lesson plans are developed based on Early Learning Standards. These lesson plans can be found posted in the classroom daily. Lesson plans are created to display a balance of play based learning and hands on education centers. Thematic units are used to explore different areas of math, science, STEM, language arts and creative expression. Each classroom is divided into learning centers to offer a wide range of learning opportunities. Lesson plans and accommodations are made to meet the needs of various ages within the program.

We strive to help children realize their individual potential within a positive, supportive and safe environment.

Gross motor experiences are an important part of a child's development and children are encouraged to explore the outdoor and develop their large motor skills on the playground. In the event of inclement weather, children will have the opportunity to use the gymnasium.

The after school program offers designated homework time to help assist children with the completion of school assignments.

LEAP CURRICULUM				
Literacy	Math	Science	Social Studies	Art
Phonics	Patterns	Life cycles	World Cultures	Mix Medium Projects
Letter Recognition	Shapes	Earth Science	Social Development	Dramatic Arts
Sight Words	Graphing	STEM	Economics	Poetry
Writing	Addition	Life Science	Historical Figures	Creative Expression
Rhyming/ Syllable	Subtraction	Physical Science	Languages	Colors
Reading	Number Recognition		Problem Solving	

Staff to Child Ratios

AGE OF GROUP

STAFF TO CHILD RATIO

Kindergarten	1:12
Older School Age (4th grade and up)	1:15
Mixed Group	1:12
Field Trip	1:8

Parent Information Binder

Each Program has a Parent Information Binder for you to read and keep current on program and organization happenings. In the Parent Information Binder, you will find newsletters, lesson plans, daily schedules, and articles of interest. In addition to basic programming information, you can also find information on our Licensing, Policies, and Child Development Resources all within our Parent and Licensing Binder.

Family/Staff Communication

Stepping Stones will promote communication between families and staff by using emails as well as informal conversations. Families are asked to email any important information so that all educators who work with the child can share the parent's communication. If any difficulties or differences arise, the following steps should be followed:

- A. Schedule a conference with your child's teacher.
- B. Schedule a conference with the School Age Director.
- C. Bring the issue to the attention of the Executive Director in writing.

Conferences/Child Evaluations/Portfolios

Conferences are offered twice a year and upon request to discuss children's progress, accomplishments, and any difficulties you may have at home or in the program. Educators will complete child observations twice a year. Staff will use Work Sampling evaluations to inform parents/guardians about their child's social/emotional, physical, and intellectual developmental progress. The written evaluations will become a part of the child's file at Stepping Stones. LEAP students will also have a quarterly assessment completed to align with the districts reporting period.

IEP/IFSP Written Plans

With family permission, Stepping Stone's teachers will participate in the implementation and development of IEP/IFSP. If an IEP requires one on one support, Stepping Stones is not responsible for providing that support but will work with the families to find agencies to support the needs of the children. Please refer to the Admissions Policy on page 10.

Transition Between Developmental Stages

The School Age Director has available resources to help your child transition from Pre-K to Kindergarten and the school age program to self-care. This information is available upon request by emailing schoolage@stepstonescc.org.

Suspension, Expulsion and Discipline Policy

School Age staff use positive guidance, redirection, and clear-cut limits that foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to respect others, be fair, respect property, and learn to be responsible for their own actions. Discipline involves teaching character and self-control. Stepping Stones will not use physical punishment or abusive language, as these approaches teach children to respond in the same manner.

We guide children in their development of building positive relationships and self-control with their peers and adults. Safety of all children and staff is our number one priority. Aggressive physical behavior toward staff and/or children is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Children will be taught to express their feelings in a healthy manner and will be rewarded for positive choices. Stepping Stones uses discipline that is consistent and developmentally appropriate for the child and not demeaning or belittling.

When challenging behaviors continue, Keystones STARS child care centers will request assistance from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). Families who have concerns about their child's development can still contact CONNECT Helpline at 1-800-692-7288 for information to connect to Early Intervention Services and Supports.

Behavior Contract

If a child continues to repeatedly exhibit disruptive and/or harmful behavior in the program, we will issue a Behavior Contract. This contract is not intended to remove the child from the program, but instead to create a plan to help the child have the opportunity to enjoy themselves in a safe and positive atmosphere while working on the modification of certain problem behaviors.

Items From Home

Children are responsible for their personal items and Stepping Stones is not responsible for any lost or stolen items from home. Cell phones are expressly prohibited. Children are permitted to bring personal items from home to the program. Children are required to first ask a staff person if the item they want to bring is appropriate. Electronics are not permitted in the program unless permission has been previously given from a staff member. Please make sure all items are clearly labeled, including clothing items.

School Delays/ Cancellations Emergency Closing Policy

On days that the start of school is delayed due to inclement weather, care will be provided in each elementary school from 6:30 am until the start of the school day. If a delay should turn into a cancellation, care will be available at each school until 6:30 pm. If there is a school cancellation before 6:30 am, care will be provided at Main Center for our Pine-Richland families and at Rowan and CVE for our Seneca Valley Families.

Every effort will be made to keep Stepping Stones Children's Center open. However, if the schools are closed and the conditions would become dangerous for traveling that Stepping Stones Children's Center would not be able to remain open, an announcement will be made via email from all sites.

In-Service Days and Holidays

On half-days, In-Service days, School Age child care will be provided at your districts designated location. The forms sent out by Stepping Stones will refer to these days as "All Care Days."

Pine Richland: On full-day In-Service days, care will be provided at Main Center from 6:30am to 6:30pm. Pre-registration forms will be distributed with more information regarding these all care days as needed.

Seneca Valley: On full-day In-Service days, care will be provided at both Rowan and CVE Elementary School from 6:30am to 6:30pm. Pre-registration forms will be distributed with more information regarding these all care days as needed.

Field Trips

A. Field Trips are carefully planned to assure a safe, healthy experience. Plans for field trips must include the following:

1. Obtain parental permission forms
2. Plan for one (1) to eight (8) adult to child ratio for School Age children
3. Transportation that meets the safety needs of the children

B. On field trips staff will take the following with them:

1. Parental permission forms.
2. Emergency information (for children and staff)
3. First aid kit
4. Plan for assigned children
5. Cell phone
6. Necessary medications
7. Emergency Medical Procedure
8. Daily Schedule

It is probable that on In-Service Days or Holidays, Stepping Stones School Age Program will offer field trips. Parents must fill out a permission slip. It is imperative that parents pre-register their child on field trip days because space is limited due to staffing and bus capacity. Therefore, registrations are accepted on a first come, first serve basis. Permission forms and information packets regarding these field trips will be distributed approximately two (2) weeks prior to the In-Service Day or Holiday.

When transportation does occur, Stepping Stones Children's Center utilizes school bus transportation.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

We encourage parents to visit anytime. Parents are free to call during program hours to give additional information or see how their children are doing. Parent involvement certainly enhances our School Age Programs, and we welcome your continued support. If you have a special talent or hobby that you would like to share, we welcome your visit. Please arrange a convenient date and time with your child's Site Director.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Parents are invited to serve on the Stepping Stones Board. The Board meets regularly once a month. If you are interested in serving, please call the Main Center at 724-625-2199 and ask to speak with the Executive Director.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Pre-enrollment Requirements

Each family is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information for their child(ren). This packet is to be returned to the School Age Director prior to the child's first day of attendance. All incoming kindergartners, sixth graders and new students are required to have an updated Health Assessment form filled out by a licensed medical professional in their file. The Health Assessment must be completed and returned within the first 30 days of enrollment.

Children with Severe Allergies and Special Medical Conditions

If your child has an allergy or special medical condition, please inform your Site Director of the nature and extent of the allergy or medical condition and what course of action should be followed in the event of an emergency situation. A Special Care Plan will be provided to you to more fully inform us of your child's situation. Parents must provide any medication/Epi-Pen that is needed for a child in the program. Parents will also be asked to fill out a medication log for any medications that are present on site.

Illness Prevention

Both parents and educators want to keep children healthy. In spite of everyone's efforts, children do get sick. Often people who spread disease do not look or feel sick. Parents and child care programs share the responsibility for maintaining health and preventing the spread of contagious diseases. By including illness-prevention practices in daily routines, adults can limit the spread of infections. Staff members are required to clean the program space with bleach water or another recognized sanitizing solution as well as tables before and after administering foods. As a way to prevent the spread of illness, all staff and children are required to wash their hands upon arrival to the program. If a communicable disease is present within the program, a sign will be posted to inform parents of the disease. Signs and symptoms of the disease, incubation period and any other information helpful to preventing the further spread of the disease will be

on this posting. Any communicable illness is tracked and reviewed monthly as a way to note patterns and create any further action plan to prevent the spread of disease. We use the reference guide that is dedicated to the health of all children entitled Caring for Our Children for our Education Programs.

Medical Exclusion Guidelines

Children will be excluded from the program if:

1. The child's illness prevents the child from participating in activities that the facility routinely offers for well children or mildly ill children.
2. The illness requires more care than the staff is able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group.
3. Keeping the child in care poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

When your child becomes ill at a School Age Care Program, we will remove him/her from the activity of the group and create a comfortable space for him/her to rest. If your child is in extreme discomfort and cannot participate in any activity, we will contact you to pick up your child immediately. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact the emergency numbers listed on your Emergency Contact Form.

In general, children are not permitted in the program with evidence of:

- A temperature equal to or greater than 100 degrees F, axillary (underarm) or 101 degrees F, aural (in the ear).
- One or more episodes of vomiting.
- One or more episodes of diarrhea.
- The contagious stage of any communicable disease.
- Obvious symptoms of a communicable illness such as chicken pox, head lice, conjunctivitis (pink eye) etc.
- Behavior indicating pain or distress.
- Severe colds with fever, productive cough or significant sneezing and nasal drainage.

Communicable Diseases

The Site Director of your child's program must be informed of any child who has a communicable disease. Parents are asked to notify the Site Director if a child with a communicable disease has been at Stepping Stones within a one-week period preceding the diagnosis of the disease. The School Age Director will then notify the families of all other children who were in contact with the sick child.

Dispensing of Medication

Stepping Stones staff will administer medication only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent. Medications will be kept in a locked box out of the reach of children. Whenever possible, for the well being of the child, the first does of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

- A) For prescription medications, parents will provide staff with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name of the medication, the date the prescription was filled, the name of the physician who wrote the prescription, the medication's expiration date, and administration, storage and disposal instructions. For over-the-counter medications, parents will provide the medication in a child-resistant container. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names and will have specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer.
- B) Instructions for the dosage, frequency, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the child care staff in writing (by a signed note or a prescription label).
- C) Staff will maintain a medication log. It will record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent, amount, the time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of medication. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take medication will be noted in this log.

Emergency Care Procedures

For your child's safety and protection, all Stepping Stones Staff are certified in Pediatric First Aid and Pediatric CPR. In the event of an accident that requires a need for medical attention, we will proceed as follows:

For immediate medical treatment, a staff member will call 911 and request emergency assistance. If necessary, your child will be transported to the nearest emergency center by the dispatched ambulance. Parents will be contacted immediately. If parents are unable to be reached, we will contact the emergency numbers on your child's Emergency Contact Form.

If a less serious incident occurs, the staff will administer basic first aid on site. Parents will receive an Incident Report stating the details of the injury.

Fire/Emergency Drills

On a monthly basis, all children and staff participate in Fire Drills. Teachers take time to prepare the children for what will happen during a fire drill, how to react, and why they are important. Twice a year, we conduct Emergency Drills. Our staff are trained in how to act in various types of emergencies. LEAP Programs will also participate in District Fire Drills during school hours.

Emergency Operations Plan

Our Emergency Operations Plan provides for responses to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

A) Immediate Evacuation: Students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc.

B) In-Place Sheltering: Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.

C) Evacuation: Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to an alternate location. Once the children are assembled at the alternate safe location, parents will be contacted.

Hance: 1st - Main Center (712 Warrendale Rd, Gibsonia)
2nd- Richland

Richland: 1st - Main Center
2nd – Eden Hall

Wexford: 1st - Main Center
2nd - Richland

Eden Hall: 1st - Main Center
2nd - Richland

Haine: 1st – Main Center
2nd - Rowan

Rowan: 1st - Main Center
2nd - Haine

Evans City: 1st – Main Center
2nd - CVE

CVE: 1st – Main Center
2nd - Evan City

D) Modified Operation: May include cancellation, postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

Incident/Accident Reports

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident (scraped knee, small bumps etc.) during the course of the day, a staff member will administer first aid and complete an Injury Report. The report will indicate the date, time, location of the incident, and what happened. Upon the parent's arrival for pick up, he/she will be asked to look over the Injury Report and sign it. A copy of the injury report is available upon request. Should an injury result in follow up care (emergency room, Med Express etc.), Stepping Stones needs to be **immediately** notified. It is a DHS regulation to report these incidents that require a medical follow-up within twenty-four (24) hours.

Meals

Breakfast is provided through your child's school district. If you would like your child to have breakfast during the morning session, you will need to follow the school district's procedures. In the event of an in-service day, snow day, or holiday in which Stepping Stones is providing all day care, Stepping Stones will provide breakfast. LEAP students have the opportunity to purchase lunch through the school cafeteria. The parent/guardian is responsible for setting up a lunch account with the school district. On days where Stepping Stones provides full day care, parents must provide a lunch.

Afternoon snack is provided by Stepping Stones for all children enrolled in the after school program. Snack is served upon arrival of the after school program. Stepping Stones Children's Center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program sponsored by the USDA to serve healthy breakfasts and snacks to your children. Meals served here must meet nutrition requirements established by the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program. Good nutrition today means a stronger tomorrow!

All meals served to children under the Child and Adult Care Food Program are served at no separate charge regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. There is no discrimination in admission policy, meal service, or the use of facilities.

Photographs

No outside agency or individual will be allowed to photograph your child without your consent. The staff reserve the right to take photographs of the children for education/curricular purposes without specific consent. Parents will be asked to give consent for photographs during the enrollment process.

Staff Identification Badges

As part of Stepping Stones Security measures, all staff are provided with a Photo Identification Badge.

Cell Phone Policy

As part of our policy to provide a safe environment for your children, Stepping Stones follows a No Cell Phone Policy for the students. If you feel that you would like to have contact with your child during program hours, parents are invited to call the program's cell phone. Please see Program Phone Numbers in this handbook for your appropriate program's number.

COVID-19

Policies regarding COVID-19 are ongoing and being constantly updated. Stepping Stones will align our COVID-19 health and safety plan to CDC, DHS, PA Health Department and district guideline. A detailed Health and Safety Plan will be sent upon enrollment and redistributed as guidelines are updated.

RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS

Parents of children in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are at Stepping Stones Children's Center, as provided by law.

- A)** No child will be released without the presence or permission of the custodial parent/legal guardian.
- B)** Any authorized person who is not recognized by the staff will be required to provide photo identification such as a driver's license, work or school ID before the child is released.
- C)** IF your child is to be picked up by someone not listed on the Emergency Contact Form; you must call the Site Director with the name of the person, brief description, and approximate time of arrival. We will not release the child to any unauthorized person without your prior notification.
- D)** Stepping Stones Site Director(s) will notify the police if an unauthorized person seeks custody of a child.

HANDLING PERSONS WHO APPEAR TO BE IMPAIRED

An impaired condition specifically relates to alcohol, mind-altering chemicals or other medical conditions that render a person unable to operate a motor vehicle and thereby endanger the safety of a child who would be transported by the impaired person.

If a parent/guardian or designated person appears to be unable to safely transport the child, the facility personnel will ask the parent/guardian or designated person to arrange for alternate transportation. If the person is unwilling to provide such alternate transportation, the matter will be referred to the proper authorities.

COURT ORDERS

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (i.e. Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Stepping Stones Children's Center must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. In the absence of a court order on file, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their

child as stipulated by law. **Stepping Stones Children’s Center cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by the request of another, regardless of the reason.**

CONFIDENTIALITY

Within Stepping Stones Children’s Center, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees who have a “need to know”. Confidential and sensitive information about staff, other parents and /or children will not be shared with parents, as we strive to protect everyone’s right to privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and other health related information of anyone associated with Stepping Stones Children's Center. You may encounter children in our School Age Programs who have special needs or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. yelling, hitting, and spitting). Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. Employees of Stepping Stones Children's Center are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

Stepping Stones Children's Center takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the agency. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but to all children, families, and employees associated with Stepping Stones. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential or pressures employees or parents for information, which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of Stepping Stones Children's Center are considered mandated reporters under this law. The employees of Stepping Stones Children's Center are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behaviors, or conditions prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at Stepping Stones Children's Center take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

STAFF EMPLOYMENT BY FAMILIES

Stepping Stones Children Center does not condone or recommend hiring teachers for babysitting, nannying, mother's helper, etc. If a client chooses to employ a Stepping Stones staff member anyway, Stepping Stone holds no liability or responsibility to this employment contract. A waiver must be signed by both parties prior to any outside employment arrangement.

PARENT/GUARDIANS CODE OF CONDUCT

Stepping Stones Children's Center requires the parents of enrolled children, at all times, to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of Stepping Stones Children's Center is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of Stepping Stones Children's Center, but is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the site. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents who do not adhere to the Parent Code of Conduct will be considered in violation of these policies and appropriate action will be determined based on the severity of the misconduct.

Swearing/Cursing

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on agency property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At **NO TIME** shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

Threatening of Employees, Children, Other Parents or Adults

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today's society, Stepping Stones Children's Center cannot afford to sit idly by while threats are made. All threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Parents must be in control of and responsible for their behavior at all times.

Physical/Verbal Punishment of Your Child or Other Children

While Stepping Stones Children's Center does not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the childcare facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their children. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the

Site Director and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parents' child behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, that parent should direct their concern to the Site Director and/or School Age Coordinator.

Furthermore, it is extremely inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or director's attention.

Smoking

For the health of all Stepping Stones Children's Center employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited in the Site and anywhere in view of the children. Parents who are smoking in their cars must properly dispose (no littering) of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

Confrontational Interactions with Employees, other Parents or Associates

While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of Stepping Stones Children's Center or the parents of other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

DISMISSAL

Stepping Stones Children's Center reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause.

Parents will be refunded any unused tuition within 30 days of the dismissal. An agency check will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal.

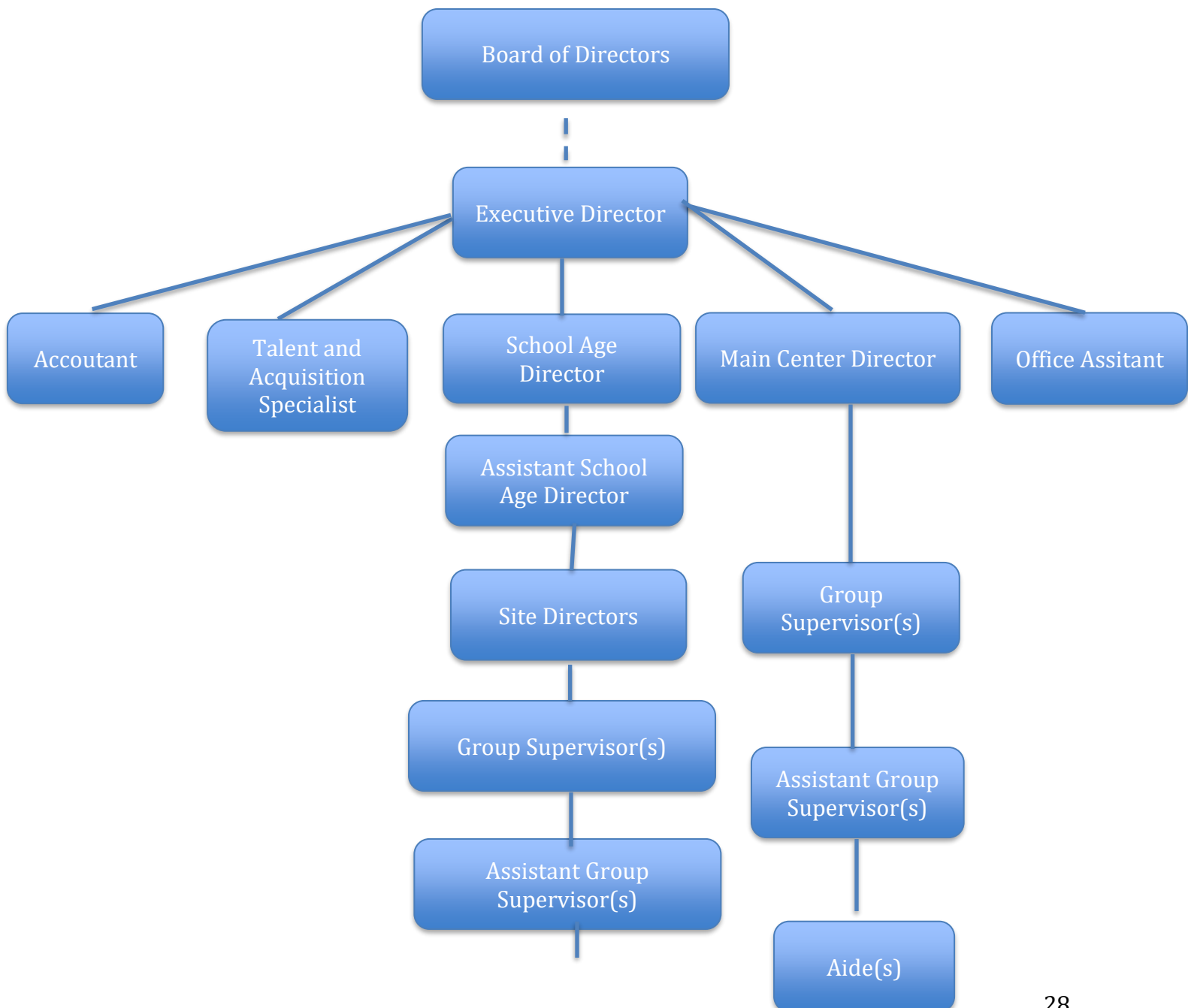
The School Age Director or designee will assist the parent in gathering any belongings of the child and are required to leave the property in a calm and respectful manner immediately.

A dismissed child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the Executive Director if they wish to return to the property. Appointments are made at the discretion of the Executive Director and are not a right of the dismissed child or parent.

Childcare services may be terminated if any of the following conditions exist:

- A)** The child's behavior prevents the child from participating in program activities with other children on a daily basis.
- B)** The child's condition requires more care (1:1 Staff-Child ratio) than staff members are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group.
- C)** The costs of providing a safe, enjoyable, and supportive environment for the child with special needs exhausts the center's resources.
- D)** After the 10th of the month, if tuition has not been paid, childcare services cannot be provided until payment is received or payment arrangements are made with the Executive Director.
- E)** The parents/guardians have violated the Parents Code of Conduct

Stepping Stones Children's Center, INC. Organizational Chart



Aide(s)

**Stepping Stones Children’s Center, INC.
Release of Information**

For our new families who are transferring their child from another center, please complete the attached “Release of Information” permission slip so that Stepping Stones Children's Center may contact the child’s previous school and or agency. This is especially helpful for families who may have completed a special care plan, or who feel that discussion between your child’s previous school and Stepping Stones would benefit the interest of the child through this transition.



Stepping Stones Children’s Center, INC.
712 Warrendale Road, Gibsonia, PA 15044
724-625-2199

Release of Information

I _____, give Stepping Stones Children’s Center and
Parent/Guardian Name
it’s employees permission to share information with _____
School/Agency
regarding my child(ren)_____. It is my
Child(ren) Name(s)

understanding that any information shared with said school or agency is in the best interest of my child(ren) to ensure the highest quality of care is provided.

Parent/Guardian

Date

Facility Director

Date