

# Hillcrest Children's Center

900 Hollywood Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
Phone: (907) 272-9924  
Fax: (907) 272-9923  
Tax ID: 92-0040360  
[www.hillcrestchildrenscenter.net](http://www.hillcrestchildrenscenter.net)  
[hillcrest@gci.net](mailto:hillcrest@gci.net)



# Parent Policy

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Hillcrest Children's Center, Inc.

## **Mission Statement**

Hillcrest Children's Center provides quality care for every child in an environment that focus on developing a foundation for a lifelong love of learning and respect for self and others. Hillcrest is a non-profit, parent-cooperative that believes quality care comes from a partnership between the home and school.

## **Program Philosophy**

Hillcrest's approach to program development is based on the following essential belief:

Children are cared for in a loving, safe environment surrounded by positive interactions where they develop feelings of self-esteem based on individual strengths and accomplishments. Learning is best achieved through play and activities that are designed to offer experiences in a variety of situations geared to the developmental needs of the child.

## **Organization Structure**

Conveniently located close to downtown, Hillcrest Children's Center, Inc. is, located on Government Hill, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Anchorage. Hillcrest Children's Center has provided the Alaska community with quality care since 1968. Hillcrest Day Care Center, Incorporated was established as a parent-owned, non-profit corporation dedicated to community service through its early childhood development and educational programs. In May 1994, the name was changed to Hillcrest Children's Center. Hillcrest is a tax-exempt organization as defined in section 501(c)(3) of the tax code. Accordingly, all donations to Hillcrest are tax deductible. The Executive Director (Director) is employed by the Board. The Director has the authority to hire staff, and handle the daily operation of the Center. With that, the Director oversees and performs those activities in the execution of the purposes and policies of the Center. All employees report directly to the Director.

## **Board of Directors**

Every parent is invited and welcomed at the Board of Directors (Board) meetings. The Board works in cooperation with Hillcrest's Director to ensure that Hillcrest continues to deliver quality care and education, while also operating in accordance with sound business practices. All parents are strongly encouraged to participate in setting policy and direction for Hillcrest.

## **Physical Facility**

Hillcrest owns the building in which the center operates. The physical facility complies with the building code of the Municipality of Anchorage. As required, the Board authorizes upgrades to the facility to maintain its quality and ensure the safety of our children. Example improvements include:

- 1987 Upgrade the Center's electrical system and roof insulation
- 1988 Repainting interior of the building; Project to renovate and modernize the kitchen facilities to comply with new municipal code requirements  
Replacement of worn floor coverings throughout the building
- 1989 Replacement of the Center's old storage shed with a new, enlarged unit
- 1995 Repaint exterior of the building
- 1996 Replacement of coverings throughout the building
- 1997 Installment of new playground equipment
- 2005 Roof was replaced. Siding and new windows were installed on the Preschool section of the building
- 2006 Parent and Staff volunteerism has activated labor friendly renovations in all restrooms in the building. Also, the stripping of all linoleum to refurbish floors in the building
- 2007 Kitchen remodel

Many projects were funded through loan programs and grants. Parents have contributed significantly through fundraising activities, and other in-kind contribution. One such example is the Roof/Preschool Project. Parent volunteers completed a significant amount toward this project, including the removal of roofing, siding, windows, and provided the clean up for the debris. Parents also worked together over several months on fundraising opportunities to help support the project financially.

## Program Policies

The policies of Hillcrest help us to ensuring the safety of all the children. There are positives and negatives to any care setting. In large group care children may be exposed to more than in smaller group care, i.e. illnesses and behaviors. It is Hillcrest responsibility to provide preventative measures and implement appropriate measures when such incidents occur. In addition to the policies below are practices that Hillcrest utilizes to ensure the best experience for each child.

- Staff set boundaries and rules for children in every classroom that meets the children's developmental level; such as be respectful, be a team player, use walking feet, use gentle touches and so on
- Hillcrest utilizes a staffing pattern that minimizes staff transition and meets or exceeds Municipality Regulations to provide consistent expectations for children and adequate supervision
- Staff are provided training on topics such as developmental appropriate practices, developmental appropriate behaviors of children, building positive relationships with families and addressing challenging behaviors
- Hillcrest strives to maintain clear communication between staff, and with families regarding each child's development
- Hillcrest seeks outside resources and support to constantly improve the quality of care provided, such as environmental evaluation, training, and well as to address issues of concern regarding children and families

## Behavior Guidance Practices

It is Hillcrest Children's Center policy to foster and help develop age appropriate patterns of behavior that encourage constructive relationships and increase the ability for children to deal with everyday life (and its frustrations).

When a child requires discipline, Hillcrest caregivers are trained to implement developmentally appropriate behavior strategies, which include redirection, guidance in conflict resolution, positive reinforcement, and the setting of realistic expectations with clean and consistent limits.

"Time-Out" is limited to situations where the child is being unsafe to himself or others, and/or gravely disrespectful to staff or peers. Children may only be put in a time-out for 1 minute per age of the child. In the event that the child's behavior is deemed out of control, the child is taken to the Director's office for a change of environment, allowed to calm down and re-group before returning to his/her classroom. It is at the discretion of the Director whether or not the situation deems suitable for a call to the parents.

**Corporal punishment is strictly prohibited at Hillcrest Children's Center.**

## Child Abuse Reporting

Alaska State Statutes and Anchorage Child Care Center Regulations require that licensed child care providers report all incidents of suspected or actual abuse and neglect of children regardless of whether they occur in or are related to the facility. This facility is therefore obligated by law to report such incidents within 24 hours to the Child Protection Office of Children's Services (Alaska Department of Health and Social Services), at 269-4000.

Centers are required to notify the Municipal Child and Adult Care Licensing Office of incidents which allege a child was abused or neglected when the center is responsible for the child. Municipal Child and Adult Care Licensing Office: 343-4758 or 343-6536

## Clothing

We encourage the children to dress for play and comfort as the seasons change. Children should arrive at Hillcrest in clean, comfortable clothing suitable for a variety of activities. Our program is based on play and exploration your child WILL get dirty!! Children will have the opportunity for outdoor play twice a day weather permitting. Throughout the year, Hillcrest's staff will remind parents of the need to supply appropriate seasonal clothing for outdoor activities (e.g. break-up boots, snow pants, mittens, etc.). All items should be clearly **labeled** with the child's name. It is required that you bring at least one set of extra, **labeled** clothes for your child in case of a spill or accident. We have some extra clothes but they may not be in the correct size or gender. If your child comes home in Hillcrest clothes please wash the clothes and return them in one week.

Parents of toddlers and infants must also provide diapers, wet wipes (if baby requires a specific brand) and diaper ointment as needed. **Label** all items with child's name. (Bags or boxes of diapers need only to have the child's name on the outside, no need to label each diaper)

\*Please Note: Wet and soiled clothing may not, under state health regulations, be laundered or unnecessarily handled by staff members. The soiled clothing is bagged and labeled for delivery to the parent when the child is picked up from the center.

### **Drop Off and Pick Up**

Children must be accompanied by their responsible adult into Hillcrest every morning and signed-in to their classroom upon arrival. This is for protection in case of a fire or other emergency.

All children must be picked up and signed-out by an adult listed on the Emergency Child Record. In cases of emergency, parents may call Hillcrest and give verbal approval of an alternative individual. However, this is strongly discouraged. Anyone not recognized by sight will be asked for a picture ID. Please alert the office prior to the time that anyone out of the ordinary is to pick-up your child. This is in addition to them being on the Emergency Child Record. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the office and make changes on this form whenever necessary. This form must be updated quarterly. Parents involved in a custody agreement must furnish Hillcrest with a legal copy of that agreement. Without the court document, Hillcrest cannot refuse the other parent access to the child.

Hillcrest reserves the right to not allow any individual onto Hillcrest property for drop-off or pick-up if they have created a problem.

### **Electronic Media Use**

Hillcrest's children engage in a variety of daily activities and parents can find a schedule is posted in each classroom. Typical activities include music, art, exploratory math and science, circle time, and free choice play. Enrichment activities in all subject areas are presented to the children in a hands-on, discovery approach, at various developmental levels of learning. Hillcrest does not rely on movies and/or television media to entertain or educate our children. However, this educational tool does have its place in the curriculum on a limited basis, no more than 1 1/2 hours in a 24 hour period.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

In any event our building is not safe to re-enter, Hillcrest Children's Center has designated the following, in order of designation, as their safe zone. Attempts will be made to reach all parents as quickly as possible to notify them of the situation. Lighthouse Christian Fellowship (629 Hollywood Drive) – Calvary Baptist Church, (401 E. Manor)

#### **Fire**

In the event that the fire alarm goes off, we evacuate the building as fast as possible. We are required to practice a fire drill at least once a month. This includes the winter (this is why we require children to have adequate cover for their feet). We do not take time to dress children in the winter or rainy season as we are trying to model the correct reactions to fire alarms, which are to evacuate the building and go to the "safe" spot where they are to meet their families or classmates.

#### **Earthquake**

Hillcrest keeps emergency supplies on hand for us in the event of a major earthquake. If our building is unsafe we will set up a shelter in the safest place we can on our playground. Parents will be expected to make every attempt possible to pick up children as soon as possible. If you know you will not be able to get here for your child please let us know if possible who will be coming for your child. If a parent/authorized adult has not arrived within two hours we will attempt to reach your emergency contact (please be sure to update your emergency cards whenever your contacts change).

### **Enrollment**

Hillcrest is licensed to care for 69 full-time children from the ages of 6 weeks thru 12 years. All prospective parents are requested to meet with the Director for a personal interview and tour of the facility. Parents will be provided with a registration form to complete and a copy of these policies for

review. There is a \$50 non-refundable enrollment fee (per child). This payment, however, will be applied to your child's annual registration fee, upon enrollment. The child will be enrolled or added to Hillcrest's waitlist upon receipt of the completed registration form. Current Hillcrest families will be given priority, and a waiver of the wait list fee. The Annual Registration Fee is prorated quarterly, and will be collected upon notification that a space is available for your child.

Hillcrest does not have a drop-in policy. However, parents can make advance arrangements with the Director for a daily enrollment. Daily enrollments are pre-paid at the daily rate, per child, per day.

**The following records must be on file before a child will be admitted to Hillcrest Children's Center, Inc.** It is the sole responsibility of the parent to get these documents to the Director and to keep all information current. Failure to keep these records current may result in the child's dismissal from Hillcrest.

### **Services Contract**

#### **Emergency Record Card** (updated Quarterly)

- Current home and work telephone numbers and addresses;
- Name and telephone number of the child's physician;
- Name and telephone number of at least three emergency contacts, to be filled out on the emergency record card.
- List of all adults allowed to be pick up the child
- This card must be updated quarterly by initialing on back of card.

#### **Current Immunization Records** (Provide updates each time immunizations are given)

Under state law Hillcrest must have evidence that the child's **immunizations are current**. Hillcrest will accept children who have a medical or religious exemption from immunization on forms approved by the State of Alaska. Evidence of exemption from immunization shall include one of the following: (1) A statement signed by a medical professional licensed in this state as a doctor of medicine (M.D.), doctor of osteopathy (D.O.), physician assistant, or advanced nurse practitioner, stating immunizations would, in the individual's professional opinion, be injurious to the health of the child or members of the child's family or household; or (2) An affidavit signed by the child's parent or guardian, affirming immunization conflicts with the tenets and practices of the church or religious denomination of which the parent or guardian is a member.

**Annual Physical** examination dated within the last 12 months. (Updated yearly)

Current childcare assistance authorization, if applicable

#### **Plan of Care**, if applicable

While every child has special needs, some are more apparent than others. Hillcrest works with families and specialists to meet the individual needs of each child enrolled in our programs. For a child who has been identified as not functioning according to age-appropriate expectations in the areas of affective, cognitive, communicative, perceptual, motor, physical or social development Hillcrest is committed to working with the families and specialists to help ensure that child's success. The Director will create a Plan of Care with the families to be implemented by the teachers so that the child may receive the required help, program adjustments, or related services on a regular basis in order to function in an adaptive manner.

### **Concerns**

It is Hillcrest's responsibility to provide a safe, nurturing group care experience for families that reflects our values of parent involvement, quality, acceptance, diversity and family environment. It is essential to have relationships based on mutual trust with families. If we feel that any of these are compromised the Administrator has the responsibility to make decisions that ensure that improvements are made. Hillcrest has a strong belief that parents need to act first and foremost to find a care situation that meets their family's needs, especially in having their child in a place where they trust in their child's ability to be safe and develop appropriately. When families have concerns or questions about Hillcrest we ask they speak with the teachers, lead and/or administrator to express their concern and seek resolution as soon as the concern is realized. When families do not agree with the policies, procedures or practices of

Hillcrest, especially when related to their child's safety or development it is their responsibility to find other care arrangements.

### **Confidentiality**

Staff will not communicate information about a child to anyone not on the Emergency Child Record. While staff are always willing to discuss your child with you, we ask that families do not inquire about another child. Hillcrest strives to be a safe and accepting environment for all families. We ask that families refrain from holding conversations or make comments about others at Hillcrest that would not support a safe and accepting environment.

### **Field Trips**

Hillcrest may include trips for children who are three years and older. Where possible, these trips are related to the current enrichment themes. Participation in all field trips is subject to written parental permission and the approval of the Municipality of Anchorage Child/Adult Care Licensing Department. Prior to the trip parents will be provided with an opportunity to view the plans, goals and objectives of the trip and decline consent for their child's participation. Alternate care and appropriate activities will be available at Hillcrest for children not participating in field trips.

### **Hours of Operation**

Hillcrest is open Monday through Friday, from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The Center **closes** in observance of the following scheduled holidays:

New Year's Day	Thanksgiving Day
President's Day	Friday following Thanksgiving
Memorial Day	Christmas Day
Independence Day	Labor Day

If a holiday falls on a weekend, either the Friday before or the Monday after, Hillcrest will be closed in observance of the holiday. Occasionally, the Board will close the Center to accommodate special needs (e.g., facilities maintenance, education seminars or workshops for the staff, etc.). When this occurs, parents will be notified in advance to make alternative child care arrangements.

The Center usually closes for In-Service days through-out the year. These days are used to conduct training for the staff. Closure of the Center is approved by the Board of Directors. Families who are on a part-time enrollment can not attend another day of the week if we are closed on their regularly attending days without following the procedures outlined in the Enrollment section.

### **Insurance**

Hillcrest maintains property, liability and Worker's Compensation insurance coverage. Hillcrest does not provide transportation to and from the Center. The method of transportation used for field trips is determined by the age and size of the group involved. When feasible, public transportation is used. For larger groups, a school bus may be rented.

### **Licensing Agency**

Hillcrest Children's Center, Inc. is a licensed childcare facility and falls under the authority of the Municipality of Anchorage, Department of Health and Social Service, Child/Adult Care office. This agency is located at 825 L. Street, Third Floor, Anchorage, AK 99519-6650. The telephone number is: 343-4758 or 343-6730. For more information visit [www.muni.org/healthssd/child.cfm](http://www.muni.org/healthssd/child.cfm)

The licensing agency monitors and conducts extensive annual reviews for compliance with Anchorage Municipal Codes governing Hillcrest Children's Center for annual renewal. The agency is also responsible for investigating complaints and coordinating Fire Prevention. Municipal Child Care Codes may be found at [www.muni.org/health1/index.cfm](http://www.muni.org/health1/index.cfm)

Hillcrest's records with the child adult care licensing department are available for review by contacting the Department of Health and Human Services, Child/Adult Care Unit, P.O. Box 196650, Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650 or the Municipality of Anchorage's website: <http://hhs.muni.org/childcare/>.

## Meals

Two meals and two snacks are provided daily. The menu is prepared by the Hillcrest's cook. Each week's menu is posted in the entrance and all meals meet state and municipal standards for nutrition and follow the guidelines set by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Our cook is dedicated to creating meals that are not only nutritious, but satisfying and appealing to the children.

Parents are required to discuss any child's special dietary needs with the Cook and Executive Director; as well notify the staff of any allergies or dietary restrictions, and make sure that the information is stated clearly on the emergency card in the office. Parents must provide any special foods that may be required.

Parents of infants are offered the choice of Hillcrest providing formula and baby food or providing these items for themselves. Please note Hillcrest will not supply special formula and baby food. Currently Hillcrest offers Kirkland Brand formula and a competitive accredited brand of baby cereal. Parents desiring a specific brand of baby food or formula will need to bring it to the center for baby.

## Nondiscrimination Policy

Hillcrest Children's Center does not discriminate in the registering of children due to race, religion, color, creed, economic status, national origin, physical and mental handicap.

## Notification of Program and Policy Changes

As a parent co-operative Hillcrest presents any significant program or policy changes to the parent board for review at the regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The results of these discussions and subsequent changes are posted on the parent information boards, updated in E-mail news, sent home in flyers and written in the newsletter.

## Nursing Mothers

Mothers who are nursing are welcome to drop by anytime. Hillcrest will attempt to provide a quiet, private, comfortable spot for nursing. PLEASE NOTE: Mother's who are nursing are encouraged to introduce a bottle (filled with breast milk) to the infant PRIOR to enrollment at Hillcrest. It is Hillcrest's policy that if baby is nursing, and baby has not learned to drink from a bottle, mother must make arrangements to come to the center to nurse baby as needed. In the event that mother cannot make it to the center to feed baby, and baby will not take breast milk from a bottle (or cup if 4 months or older) caregivers are instructed to call the emergency contact to have baby picked up from the Center. Hillcrest is mandated by the State of Alaska ensure that baby is getting the state mandated amount of milk required for infants under our care. If nursing mother chooses to skip the bottle, (4 months of age or older, according CACFP regulations) it is mandatory that the infant has learned to receive milk from a cup, or at the very least has had some experience with it. It is expected that parents are continuing to work through this learning process at home; helping to keep feedings consistent between home and center feedings. Again, ensuring that if mother cannot make it to the center to nurse baby, Hillcrest can ensure that baby gets the required amount of milk daily. In the event that baby is not receptive to the bottle or the cup (if old enough), mother will be called after 15 minutes of crying if baby is hungry. Mother is expected to get to the center within 25 minutes thereafter to nurse baby. **It is Hillcrest policy that infants are fed on demand whether bottle-fed or nursed. It is our goal to keep your baby happy.**

## Outdoor play

Hillcrest values the importance of outdoor play. The children play outdoors each day, weather permitting. It is very important that children come to the center with the appropriate outdoor clothing. Expect a call requesting appropriate clothing to be brought in if there is none here.

It is expected that if children are well enough to be in the center they are well enough to play outside (unless a child's physician has written a note requesting that the child stay indoors; and the note states that the child is not contagious to others.)

The playgrounds are equipped with a variety of equipment, as well as having large open spaces for free play. When outdoor play is not permitted due to weather or other safety concerns, suitable indoor activities will be offered to provide opportunity for gross motor skill development and access to fresh air.

It is Hillcrest policy that in winter weather, children younger than 15 months go outside for brief periods each day when the temperature is above 15 degrees. Children 15 months and older go outside each day when the temperature is above 10 degrees Fahrenheit. Close attention is given to wind chill factors.

In addition, children will not play outdoors during icy conditions, anytime the Department of Health issues air quality advisories, or anytime that the health or safety of children could be jeopardized by (including but not limited to): roaming animals, fires, police presence, earthquakes, and volcanic activity affecting the community.

### **Parent's Night Out**

In addition to our regular program, Hillcrest occasionally may offer a "Parent's Night Out" on a Saturday from 5:00p.m. – 11:00 p.m. Scheduled Parent's Night Out will be posted along with the sign up sheet on the Director's door. Only current Hillcrest families with no outstanding balance qualify. Rates will be posted, pre-payment and a minimum fee may be required. The "Parent's Night Out" Program includes: developmentally appropriate activities, a nutritious snack (meets nutritional guidelines set by the CACFP), opportunity for rest as needed ran by Hillcrest Staff.

### **Parent Participation**

At the January 2007 Board Meeting, the parents voted and approved a measure to request each family to donate a minimum of 20 hours per year at the Center. As a parent-directed, family style cooperative, volunteer time is very important. In addition, our in-kind contributions have historically helped acquire various grant opportunities. Attending the Parent Board is not considered volunteer time, but a responsibility of the parents whose children attend Hillcrest.

There are a variety of ways to volunteer your time and talents to the Center. The opportunities available at Hillcrest are only limited by what we know. There are long term projects, and one-time events. There are opportunities to lead a project, and others to perform a single task. There are work projects, Bi-annual clean up, fundraising, special events planning, grant writing, etc. Please share with the Board your talents and interests by attending the monthly Board Meetings.

Parents are encouraged to observe and participate in their child(ren)'s activities. Special family activities are held several times a year that provide wonderful opportunities to get to know your child's teachers and socialize with other families. If you or any family member wants to further involve themselves in the classroom or participate more than 8 hours a month please speak with the Director about meeting certain Municipality Licensing requirements.

A newsletter with a calendar of events is sent home with your child at least quarterly. An email of events ("E-News") is normally a recap of the Parent Board, and other information for parents between newsletters. Please note, these are prepared and distributed by parent volunteers. As such, there may be deviation from these standard practices. There are alternative methods to receiving information such as:

Check your child's folder in his/her room daily for communication from teacher and/or director;

Entry Way – parent information available on bulletin board and/or white board

Ask to schedule a meeting with your child's Lead Teacher and/or the Director

### **Visiting Policy**

Hillcrest Children's Center has an open door policy, which means that parents are free to visit their children's classroom at any time. As a parent co-operative, Hillcrest invites, and strongly encourages parents, as well as other family members, to visit the center and participate in activities. If other family members are visiting without the accompaniment of parents, it is a requirement that they sign in at the office so that staff can account for everyone in the building. If parents have concerns they are encouraged to call the center and check on their child throughout the day.

### **Parking Policy**

Hillcrest has a drop-off area at the front of the building. Due to the limit of the number of vehicles that may be in this area, please park in one of the parking spaces if you anticipate being in the building longer than 5-10 minutes. All vehicles in the front of the building may not be left running and should be locked when you come in to drop-off or pick-up your child(ren). Hillcrest is not responsible for items lost or stolen from vehicles, parking lot or facility.

## **Pets**

From time-to-time, Hillcrest allows pets on site for learning and nurturing opportunities in the classroom. At this time, the Bunny room has fish. Upon enrollment, an emergency card is on file and states any allergy a child has. Teachers and Caregivers are studious about checking emergency cards for such information before making a decision to have a class pet. **\*NOTE: It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the center immediately if your child develops an allergy to anything. (Food, pet, or otherwise)**

## **Personal Belongings**

Please make sure your child's clothing and belongings are clearly **labeled** with first name and last initial. All staff members work diligently to keep track of each child's belongings, however, there are times items are misplaced.

With the exception of naptime stuffed animals or soft toys, and "show and tell", Hillcrest discourages children from bringing their own toys. Any items brought to Hillcrest should be clearly labeled with the child's name. Hillcrest is not responsible for the loss or damage of items brought from home. Any item deemed by staff to be unsafe or unsuitable will be returned to the parents with instructions stating that it is not to be brought to the Center again. Children are not allowed to bring toy weapons of any kind to the Center.

## **Photographs**

Staff takes pictures or videos of program activities for programmatic purposes, news releases, brochures, reports, etc. Hillcrest also maintains a Facebook page where pictures and information about programs are posted frequently. If you would like to not have your child's pictures used in any manner than in the classroom please let the office know in writing.

## **Smoking**

In accordance with Anchorage Municipality law and Hillcrest Children's Center's intent to provide a safe and healthful environment; smoking in the work place, playground area, or within 20 feet of openings into the interior space is not permitted at any time.

## **Supervision of Children**

Children will receive responsible supervision appropriate to their age, developmental needs, and activity at all times. Children are supervised at all times, even when they are sleeping. Caregivers are in the same room or group area, in close proximity, focusing on children, and able to directly see, hear and quickly respond to children.

Hillcrest maintains excellent staff/children ratios and as finances permit employs more teachers and/or caregivers than is required by the municipality. Municipality regulations require a minimum ratio of:

8wks – 11 months or walking	1:4
12-18 months	1:5
19-35 months	1:6
3-5 years	1:10

Staff/children ratios are maintained at all times including outside play and field trips.

There are five child-centered rooms at Hillcrest, each addressing a different level of development. Although they are approximate age groupings, it is important to note that age alone does not determine a child's room assignment. Your child(ren) will be assigned to one of five different classrooms: non-mobile infants, mobile infants, pre-toddlers, toddlers, or preschool. **Placement of your child(ren) is based on age and development. The Director considers input from parents, teachers, and space availability in making placement decisions.**

At present writing of this manual, Hillcrest is proud to state that it is very fortunate to have high staff loyalty, resulting in exceptionally low staff turnover. Hillcrest honors and respects higher education. All staff members are encouraged to continue their education in Early Childhood Development, and when monies are available, Hillcrest will help pay a percentage of cost for specific classes, in so much as they meet Municipality standards for early childhood education.

All staff, regardless of educational ambitions, are required to attend at least 24 hours of staff development training in early childhood education each year. Training topics include: CPR/First Aid, early childhood development, guidance and discipline strategies and techniques, communication skills & play as an essential educational tool. Other topics and concepts are addressed as needs permit during the course of the year.

### **Volunteer and Substitute Caregivers**

Hillcrest Children's Center limits the use of volunteer and substitute caregivers as it relates to direct interaction with children. Volunteer and substitute caregivers are held to the same requirements of any teacher or caregiver at Hillcrest. (e.g. Interested Persons Report, fingerprint cards, etc.)

### **Termination of Services**

Hillcrest reserves the right to terminate services at any time it is decided that placement at Hillcrest is not in best interest of either the registering family and/or Hillcrest. Dismissal may occur if an adult uses threatening communications or conduct towards any participant, staff member or others associated with Hillcrest that creates an unsafe or hostile work environment. Registering parents/adults must follow the policies described in this handbook; include attending conferences, payment of child care fees and late charges.

### **Tuition**

The Board of Directors establishes Hillcrest's tuition rates. The proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1 is presented, discussed, and adopted at the June board meeting. Tuition rates for the next fiscal year are determined at this time. Parents are given minimum of 30 days notice of any tuition rate changes. Current rates are outlined in Appendix A.

For first time enrollees, the month in which enrollment begins will be prorated for the number of days attended in that month.

### **Part-time slots**

A limited number of part-time slots are available on a space available basis only. **A child attending Hillcrest part-time is subject to losing his/her slot to an approved full time enrollment applicant.** The affected parent will be given two weeks notice to either enroll their child to full time attendance status or make other child care arrangements. Three regularly scheduled days or less, per week, is considered part-time, otherwise it is considered full-time enrollment. Parents may opt to share full-time slots; however, part-time rates will still be in effect. The benefit to sharing part-time slots under a full-time slot is the ability to maintain part-time, should a full-time applicant apply for enrollment.

Families must commit to a set weekly schedule to enroll as Part-time and are not allowed to switch days. If a family needs to occasionally add a day they must present the Daily Enrollment Request form at least one week in advance and await approval. At the time approval is given the daily rate needs to be paid for each child attending the additional day. Multi-child discount does not apply towards Daily Enrollments.

### **Multi-child discount**

A 10% discount is applied to the child with the lowest rate in a family of two or more children enrolled at the Center.

### **Annual Registration Fee**

An annual registration fee of \$125.00 is due September 1 and prorated quarterly for initial enrollment. This fee is prorated if date of enrollment occurs in:

Sept. – Nov. = \$125  
Dec. – Feb. = \$94  
March – May = \$63  
June – Aug. = \$31

### **Payment Terms**

Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. A late payment fee of \$25.00 will be applied if payment is received after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, unless otherwise agreed **in writing** between parent and the Director. Hillcrest will accept cash, check or credit card. Credit Care payments will be accepted the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month for the entire monthly balance or for late payment.

Parents behind in their payments are encouraged to discuss their situation with the Director and make arrangements in order to bring their account current, or risk the possibility of their outstanding balance being turned over to a collection agency.

One reminder letter will be issued if a parent neglects to pay their bill on time. Children will not be able to attend Hillcrest after the last day of the month in which payment is due unless a payment plan has been submitted, approved, and signed by the Director. If there is no payment or break of payment plan past due accounts will be sent to collections and care will be terminated.

Hillcrest accepts children whose tuition is paid through child care assistance contracts. However, parents are responsible for the difference between Hillcrest rates and what the State of Alaska will pay. Parents are also responsible for the co-pay listed clearly on the child care assistance authorization form and to provide all the necessary paperwork in advance. Hillcrest will also notify child care assistance of past due accounts which may limit access to further assistance.

### **Late Fees**

**Parents are charged \$1.00 per minute per child for any child remaining after 6:30 p.m.** Parents are requested to contact Hillcrest as soon as possible. It costs Hillcrest money in overtime when your child is picked up late as we have to pay for two staff to stay later than their assigned hours.

**Exception to this rule:** If a board meeting runs late and your child is in the care of staff during the meeting, you will not be charged the additional fee. We encourage every parent to attend the board meetings!

### **Leave**

There are situations which occasionally arise due to family emergencies and/or vacations requiring children to be away from the center for more than one week. Hillcrest does not give refunds for days a child is away from the center. *Hillcrest does not hold spots open.* However, a parent can make arrangements with the Director to pay 50% the monthly rate for up to two months leave to reserve a spot. If a parent chooses to pull their child for the summer months, it is suggested that he/she check back with the Director frequently to see if spaces are filling up. It is the parent's risk to take whether or not tuition is paid to hold their child's spot or to wait and see if space is available when they would like to return.

### **Withdrawal**

Parents are required to give Hillcrest at least (2) two weeks notice prior to termination of enrollment. If notice is not given, parents will be charged the full monthly tuition.

### **Tax Information**

Keep your monthly statement for your records. Registering parents/adults are responsible for records of child care payments. Hillcrest does not provide year-end statements for tax return purposes. Hillcrest's Tax I.D. number is 92-0040360. There is a charge of \$20 for tax information inquiries and requires all requests submitted in writing. Allow up to two weeks for processing of request.

### **Weather Closures**

In the event of severe weather conditions, please be aware Hillcrest does not follow the Anchorage School District closings for Anchorage. In addition, Hillcrest will not be listed on the television or radio announced closings. If the weather is questionable, please call Hillcrest to be advised. If Hillcrest closes due to severe weather, the center will be closed for the entire day. In the event weather becomes severe enough to close the center after children have arrived, staff will phone parents and remain on duty until all children are picked up by a parent or authorized person. In the event of incremental weather and staff is unable to make it, Hillcrest will accept children on a first come, first served basis as ratio allows.

### **Wellness Policy**

The wellness of all children and staff at Hillcrest is a priority. Teachers maintain sanitary practices throughout the day to minimize the spread of illness, yet illness is a part of childhood. If a child becomes ill while at Hillcrest, the child will be removed from contact with the other children and placed under continuous supervision of a staff member. Parents are notified and expected to pick up their child within the hour. In the event the parent cannot be reached, numbers on the emergency card will be called in order to locate a responsible adult to pick up the child. It is in the best interest of all the children in the

center that children who are sick be taken home as soon as possible as to not infect others. It is the responsibility of parents to notify Hillcrest whenever a child will not be in attendance.

### **Medication**

Hillcrest staff may dispense medication to a child if and only if the following requirements are met:

#### **Prescription medication**

Prescription medication must be in the original container with the prescription label that includes the child's name; name of the medication, dosage, and dosage intervals, name of prescribing physician, date the prescription was filled, and date the prescription expires. No prescription medicine will be administered after an expiration date.

#### **Non-prescription medication**

Parents are required to give written permission for the use of topical products, which are non-prescription items applied externally, such as diaper ointments, insect repellents, sunscreens, lip balm, and skin creams (AMC 16.55.310 A) Medication must be in the original container. Non-prescription medications – such as: (Tylenol, Sudafed, cough syrup, etc.) can only be given for four consecutive days without a written notice from a physician. Non-prescription medications can only be administered in accordance with the directions on the bottle without written direction from a physician. (If the bottle says age 2yrs and over or consult physician we are unable to give the medication to a child under 24 months). Staff will only administer medication per medication instructions. Parent must provide daily authorization for Hillcrest Staff to administer non-prescription medicine.

#### **Non-prescription topical products**

Non-prescription topical products include: sunscreen, diaper ointment, insect repellent, etc. A one-time parent permission slip (good for up to one year) must be signed and dated by the parent.

#### **Notification of Injuries**

In the event of an injury, a staff member will apply first aid (i.e. ice, wash cuts) and fill out an accident form. The accident form will be given to the parents when they pick up the child that day. If the child's injuries are significant enough that he/she cannot play or participate in group activities, then the child's parents are contacted and requested to pick up the child as soon as possible. In the event the staff is unable to reach parents, other names on the emergency contact card will be called in order to successfully reach the parent(s).

In the event of a life-threatening emergency, Hillcrest procedures require that the paramedics be called first to administer necessary aid and to transport the child to an emergency care facility. The child's parents or designated contact persons are notified next.

Upon the child's enrollment, parents are required to sign a release authorizing Hillcrest to act in the child's best interest, granting permission to contact a doctor, nurse, hospital or other qualified health care provider to administer emergency treatment as necessary.

## Appendix A: Example Daily Schedules and Activities

### Little and Big Butterflies

All infant schedules are designed to meet the needs of the individual child. Infants are fed, diapered, hugged and cuddled on demand. On demand is defined as follows: nurturing care given as needed, whenever needed, and however much needed at any given time during the infant's day.

Positive verbal communication and interaction occurs is an essential part of the day. Caregivers promote early literacy and language development through the use of nursery rhymes, music and lots of general day-to-day conversation with the little ones. Caregivers realize the need for special positive talk time during diaper changes, cuddle times and floor time play. This classroom goes outside through-out the year as the individual infants schedule allows.

### Blue Jays

Circle Time is a used to engage toddlers in story time activities. The teacher may start and stop a single story many times as little engage in touching the pictures, questioning what they see, and verbalizing reactions to the story. Successful language development and healthy literacy development occur best in family-like reading situations. Those not ready to attend are free to play and interact with the educational toys, or relax on the "softy pillows" in their play environment. Children are always allowed to explore books off the shelves, softy toys from the snuggle area or any other quiet toy that does not interrupt those listening at Circle Time. Caregiver other than the teacher is sitting on the floor with the children scaffolding their language development with positive face to face to feedback that encourages positive language development.

Diaper checks and changes as needed. It is Hillcrest policy that toilet training be initiated by child and guided by caregivers. Until that time diaper checks and changes will be done as needed. Children will wash their hands after every potty break. Water is offered to children often throughout the day. Brain research has it that water has been proven to enhance learning potential, along with all the other health benefits for the body.

### Bunnies and Bunnies 2

Both classrooms follow the same schedule with the Project Time meeting the interests and developmental level of the children. Hillcrest teachers and caregivers follow a DAP (Developmentally Appropriate Practices) curriculum which encourages learning through the use of child directed activities that allow freedom in choice and discovery in the world around them. Concepts are introduced through hands on approaches to learning. Thematic units and the use of The Creative Curriculum are resources teachers use in their planning. Many other resources are drawn upon as teachers attend in-services and workshops to stay current with best practices in early childhood education. For much of the day, children explore learning through concepts rather than a concrete set of objectives, allowing curiosity to spark learning for all ages at many different levels of development.

Diaper checks and changes as needed. It is Hillcrest policy that toilet training be initiated by child and guided by caregivers. Until that time diaper checks and changes will be done as needed. Children will wash their hands after every potty break.

7:00 **Greetings and Free Play:**

8:00 Breakfast

9:00 Circle Time and Project Time

10:00 **Snack.**

10:30 Outdoor Enrichment Activities or Indoor Music and Movement

12:00 **Lunch**

12:30 **Naptime**

\*Note: Children that wake up before 3:00 participate in quiet activities with caregivers until all other children are awake

3:00 Afternoon Snack

4:00 **Project time:** Materials used include but are not limited to: paint, play dough, large crayons, glue, string, large buttons, ribbon, pretty rocks, egg cartons, pipe cleaners. Projects are centered around age appropriate skill building, interest levels and curiosity in learning.

## Pre-School

Hillcrest strongly believes that children are likely to adopt a life long love of learning if allowed to explore their learning environment through play. Preschool teachers are trained in child-centered strategies to support children when they are **developmentally ready** to begin working a bit more formally towards academic readiness skills (typically occurring in the second half of the preschool year for the 5 year old). Children, regardless of age, are provided fun and challenging enrichment activities that are geared toward their individual interests.

The Preschool Teacher will meet with parents as needed or desired for a formal conference. A conference is an excellent opportunity to discuss the progress your child has made.

7:00 Greetings and **Free Choice**

8:00 Breakfast

9:00 Circle Time: Concepts relating to: social skills, literacy, number sense and science fun are introduced daily through the use of read aloud, flannel boards, songs, finger plays, drama, foreign language fun and child imitated questioning strategies that the teacher scaffolds daily to enhance individual learning potential.

9:15 Free Choice Centers

11:00 Outdoor Enrichment Activities

12:00 **Lunch**

1:00 **NAPTIME** (Non-sleeper rest until 2:30, at which time they are free to participate in a quiet activity until all others are awake.)

3:00 Afternoon Snack

4:45 Project Time

5:00 **Free Choice Play** (inside or out)

“Children need time to solve problems on their own and opportunities to engage in extended play”,  
Kathleen Cranley Gallagher

## Appendix B Tuition Schedule

Tuition Schedule  
Effective November 2008

Age	Time	Rate
Infants	Full Time	\$895
	Part Time	\$600
Toddlers	Full Time	\$860
	Part Time	\$575
Preschool	Full Time	\$835
	Part Time	\$560
Daily	Daily Rate	\$50
Annual Registration Fee	Due in September	\$125.
Late Fees	Late Payment	\$25.
	Late Pick Up	\$1/min

## Appendix C: MUNICIPALITY PARENTS' GUIDE TO LICENSED CHILD CARE

Choosing care for your child is a significant decision.

When you entrust the care of your child to another person, you are making an important decision. Visit, ask questions and carefully compare several programs. Licensed care includes child care and educational homes and centers. Your choice depends on what you want and need for your child.

Licensing is a key to quality child care.

It promotes good care by setting basic standards. Before a center or home is granted a child care license, it must meet health, safety, and program requirements (see summary on back of this sheet.). A Child and Adult Care Specialist from the Municipality of Anchorage visits and inspects the facility and investigates complaints. The goal of licensing is to prevent risks to children; however, licensing cannot guarantee that a facility meets all requirements at all times.

You as an informed parent are a key to quality child care.

Parents are responsible for choosing and monitoring their child's care. Licensors visit one to four times a year, but you visit each time you take your child. Visit unexpectedly sometimes or in the middle of the day. Keep an eye on the quality of care. What do you see when you visit? Is the environment safe? Are caregivers capable and nurturing? How many children are present? Are meals nutritious? Are activities appropriate? Watch how your infant responds to the program and listen to what your child says. You are the person best able to decide whether child care meets your standards for safety, health, and quality.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's care.

**Discuss concerns with your caregiver. Talk to the caregiver if you observe health or safety problems or if you feel the program needs improvement. If you are still concerned, or if you believe children may be in danger or a standard is violated, contact the local Licensing office. The Licensing office will investigate your complaint. Address and phone of the local licensing office:**

Municipality of Anchorage  
 Child/Adult Care Program  
 825 L Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
 P. O. Box 196650  
 Anchorage, AK 99519-6650  
 (907) 343-4758

### HOW MANY CHILDREN MAY BE IN CARE?

<b><i>Licensed Child Care Homes</i></b>	<b><i>Licensed Child Care Centers</i></b>
(Children under the age of 12, including children related to caregivers) No more than 8 children total No more than 6 children total if only one door exit. No more than 3 children under 30 months No more than 2 non-walking children At least 1 adult caregiver No more than 5 children in nighttime care (including provider's own children) (10 PM – 6 AM) Children who live in the household under the age of 12 count in the total	9 or more children 1 caregiver for every 4 infants (6 weeks thru 11 months) 1 caregiver for every 5 toddlers (12 thru 18 months) 1 caregiver for every 6 toddlers (19 thru 35 months) 1 caregiver for every 10 children (3 thru 12 years) At least 2 adults on premises

## Summary of Child Care Licensing Requirements within the Municipality of Anchorage

### PARENTS

- Are responsible for selecting safe, appropriate care for their child
- Are responsible for monitoring their child's care
- Provide current emergency information and immunization records for their child
- Are encouraged to visit their child anytime the child is in care
- Receive written child care policies

### LICENSING

- Child care license is required if more than 4 children (not related to caregivers) are in care
- License must be renewed prior to expiration (annually or biennially)
- Facility (including building, staff and program) is evaluated before a license is issued and is periodically monitored thereafter
- Complaints are investigated
- Licensing files are open to public review

### CAREGIVERS

- Are required to care for children in a safe, healthy way
- May not have physical, health, mental health, or behavior problems that might be a risk to children
- May not have domestic violence or substance abuse problems that might be a risk to children
- Complete child care training each year
- Persons 16 and older have a criminal background check including submitting fingerprint cards
- Caregivers meet early childhood training requirements

### SAFETY

- Children are always supervised by an adult
- Caregivers know the whereabouts of children at all times
- Caregiver(s) with First Aid and CPR training are present
- Facility is free of hazards, inside and out
- Gates are required at accessible stairways if children under 36 months are in care.
- Medicine and poisons are stored safely
- Electric outlets have child proof cover caps if children under age 5 are in care
- Emergency information is kept for each child and is reviewed and updated quarterly

### HEALTH

- Facility meets sanitation and safety standards
- Meals and snacks are nutritious
- Children are immunized or exemptions are on file
- Parents are notified if their child is exposed to a contagious or communicable disease
- If it chooses, a child care home may care for mildly ill children
- Facility may not care for a seriously ill child unless a medical provider approves attendance
- Drinking water is safe
- Smoking is not allowed
- Medicine is given only with parent permission
- Food preparation and handling are sanitary

### EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Furniture and equipment are safe and durable
- Infant walkers are not allowed
- Toys are adequate and varied
- Children have storage space for their belongings
- Children under 5 years have a cot/mat/ bed
- Infants must sleep in a safe crib or playpen without materials that would increase the risk of suffocation

## PROGRAM

Promotes children's healthy development

Includes quiet and active, group and individual, indoor and outdoor activities

TV and video are limited to children's programs and limited to no more than 1&1/2 hours in a 24 hour period

High risk activities are not allowed

Parent permission is required for moderate risk activities (for example, field trips)

Program includes minimum of 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity for every 3 hours the child is in care between 7 am and 7pm

## BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Is positive, and never cruel, humiliating, or damaging to the child

Sets realistic expectations and clear, consistent limits

Is not related to eating, napping, toileting, or removing from other children for more than 10 minutes

No corporal punishment is allowed (Corporal punishment means "the infliction of bodily pain as a penalty for a disapproved behavior. It includes shaking, spanking, delivering a blow with a part of the body or an object, slapping, pinching, pulling or any other action that seeks to induce pain.")

## FIRE SAFETY

Facility meets fire safety standards

**Emergency evacuation plan is practiced monthly and documented**