

Kearney Early Education Center

2021-22 Family Handbook



Be Safe, Be Kind and Make Good Choices!

Location:
150 W State Route 92
Kearney, MO 64060

Program Contact Information:

Acorn Patch and Forest Friends:

Mitch Masker, Principal

902 S. Jefferson

Kearney, MO 64060

Phone: 628-4113 Fax: 628-4132

Puppy Pound and Parents as Teachers:

Holly Wilmes, Director of Childcare and Early Learning

150 W State Route 92

Kearney, MO 64060

Phone: 816-628-4650

Additional Special Education or At Risk Questions:

Dr. Heather Guilkey, Director of Special Programs

150 W State Route 92

Kearney, MO 64060

Phone: 816-628-2653 ex. 24803

Early Education email: eecoffice@ksdr1.net

Mission and Vision of the Kearney Early Education Center

Mission: To care for and provide a foundation for children's future.

Vision: We provide an encouraging, compassionate, respectful learning environment for children and their families.

KEEC Programs

KEEC houses three programs: KEEC *Preschool-Acorn Patch & Forest Friends, Parents as Teachers, and Puppy Pound Kearney School District Employee Childcare.*

Kearney Early Childhood Programs

The Acorn Patch (early childhood special education program)

This program is for children ages 3-5 with developmental delays who have the chance to reach their potential in the important early years of childhood, giving them a jump-start on the rest of their education. This program is a no -cost program for students that are eligible as defined by the state of Missouri.

Forest Friends

A preschool for children and families who meet state criteria, financial guidelines based on the National School Lunch Program, as well as peer model students when space is available.

Puppy Pound

Puppy Pound is for children of KSD employees as well as for employees who have guardianship or legal custody of other children.

Parents As Teachers (PAT)

Parents as Teachers is a home-based early childhood program that provides education to parents/guardians for prenatal - kindergarten. The program provides home visits, developmental screening, resource information and family events. Parent educators are here to support you in your parenting journey.

Center Orientation and Tours

Center orientation occurs based on the needs of the family. Families who are enrolled prior to the start of the school year will receive their orientation at open house. Employee families who are considering Puppy Pound childcare may schedule a tour with the director by calling 816-628-4116.

Enrollment Procedures

Families who have concerns about their child's development or are interested in the Forest Friends program will need to complete the following:

1. The first step for preschool admission is to attend a DIAL 4 screening through the Parents as Teachers program. Call 816-628-4116 to schedule a screening.
2. Attend and complete the screening and ALL screening paperwork.
3. The early childhood team reviews screening results and determines if further testing is warranted. If there is a developmental concern you will be contacted by the district Process Coordinator a week after your child's initial screening. If further testing is warranted it will be scheduled at that time.
4. If your family meets the free or reduced income guidelines, your child will be added to the Forest Friends preschool waitlist for the following school year. If you would like your child to be considered for the peer model program, we will add them to a waitlist for the following school year. Once an eligibility determination has been made you will be notified. This will happen by the end of June the preceding school year.

Acorn Patch: A screening and evaluation process determines eligibility and the extent of student services. An individualized educational program (IEP) is developed if a child meets the state eligibility criteria. To be eligible

for early childhood special education, a child must demonstrate a significant delay in one or more of the following areas: cognition/adaptive behavior, speech, language, social/emotional/behavioral functioning, fine motor skills, and/or gross motor skills.

Forest Friends: Students are selected through the district screening process and must meet other criteria to qualify for this program. Enrollment takes place prior to the start of the school year. This is a one year program leading up to kindergarten.

Puppy Pound: Is for current KSD employees. Enrollment begins in the spring and once a room is full, a waitlist will be created. The district may provide care for enrolled teen parents if space allows. To enroll, families will need to complete an online enrollment form, complete all the required licensing documents and provide a deposit to hold their spot.

Program Operation

Hours of Operation

Forest Friends: 8:40 am - 3:25 pm

Acorn Patch: Open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday

Morning Session 8:40 am - 11:40 am

Afternoon Session 12:25 pm - 3:25 pm

Puppy Pound: 6:45 am - 5:00 pm

* Puppy Pound Calendar will be provided

Training days for teachers- The 1st Thursday of each month, Puppy Pound will close @ 4pm to provide professional development training for our Puppy Pound teachers.

Please be sure and have your child picked up and in your care by 5pm. There will be a \$5.00 per minute charge after that time.

Alternative Pick Up Plans

If someone other than a parent is picking up, the individual must be on your emergency contact list in the enrollment packet and they must show a driver's license or picture ID at the time of pick-up. The classroom teacher also needs an email from one of the parents indicating who will be picking up and that we have permission to release your child to the individual. We need this communication from you by 10:40 AM for the AM session and 1:55 for the PM session.

Drop off

Puppy Pound: Please sign in and select your child's lunch on the tablet located outside the classroom. Let us know if there are any changes in their day's activities. (Leaving early, didn't sleep well, anything that might affect their day).

Forest Friends/Acorn Patch: Your child will enter the building through the playground entrance at arrival. If your child is arriving after the school day has begun, you will need to stop at the front desk to sign your child in. Your child will then be escorted to his/her classroom.

Pick Up

Puppy Pound: Please sign your child out on the tablet located outside the classroom. Be sure to take the time to visit with your child's teacher and inquire about your child's day, however plan accordingly to make sure you don't keep staff past 5pm. We love sharing about your child's accomplishments. Please collect items from your child's cubby and basket.

Forest Friends/Acorn Patch: Your child will be released from the playground entrance at the end of their school day. If you are picking your child up before the end of the school day, please stop at the front desk to check your child out. The administrative assistant will go to the classroom to get your child and bring them to you at the front desk.

Fee information (Puppy Pound only)

Tuition

Only Puppy Pound has tuition due. Tuition is paid September through May and is automatically withdrawn from Employees paychecks. Tuition prices are based on the child's age as of August 1st of the new school year and will continue until the next year.

Under 2 years old	Monthly cost \$670.00	*Deposit \$335.00
Two year old	Monthly cost \$615.00	*Deposit \$307.00
Three- Pre K(5)	Monthly cost \$565.00	*Deposit \$282.00

*Deposits are due no later than May 25th, are non-refundable and cover the cost of August tuition. Deposits are paid by check only. Checks are paid to the order of the Kearney School District and turned in at Central Office.

State subsidy may be an option if the program has openings.

Daily Routines

Classroom Assignments

Classes are determined by birth dates, except for infants and one year old classes. Once a child's classroom has been determined the child will remain in the room for the entire school year. Exceptions may be made, however developing relationships with their teacher is extremely important to a child's well being and mental health. Transition can be difficult if a child has made a strong attachment to their caregiver.

Rest or Quiet Time for Full Day Programs (Forest Friends and Puppy Pound)

KEEC provides a quiet rest or naptime for full day children during the day. Each classroom's daily schedule is posted

on the parent/family bulletin board. Each child has his or her own crib, mat or cot. Many children will fall asleep during this time. Teaching teams encourage resting using calming and quieting techniques (e.g., soft music, dimming lights, and back rubs). Each child has his or her own special routine for relaxing. A labeled favorite blanket or toy sent from home may help children (older than one year) to rest and relax. Written parent/guardian permission must be given for any child under two years of age to rest on a mat or futon. Infants sleep according to their own schedule to promote self regulation.

Diapering

Staff are trained in proper diapering techniques that are posted at the changing areas in each infant/toddler classroom. Universal Precautions are used. These precautions, which guard against disease, require a change of disposable gloves, washing of child and caregiver hands, and sanitation of the area before and after the changing of each child.

Potty/Toilet Training Policy

Staff will work with the child and family to provide guidance in toilet training or potty learning. When children develop an awareness of when they are dry and when they are wet or soiled and show an interest in using the toilet, those children may sit on the toilet when other children do. Hands will always be washed at these times. When children experience success in using the toilet and understand the connection between body functions and the toilet, they will gradually use the toilet on their own. If a child understands and is capable but is not willing, then the child is not completely ready to learn how to use the toilet and staff will work with the family to determine when the child is ready.

Parent - Teacher Communication Chain

If you have a question or concern involving your student or the activities relating to school, we ask that you follow this communication chain. It is helpful when leaving messages or emailing us that you include your student's first and last name and a brief message about the issue. This allows us to be more prepared for the conversation when it occurs and saves both of us time in the long run.

If the issue or question involves your student and classroom situations such as homework, assignments, actions in the room taken by the teacher, etc. please contact the teacher first. You can do this by email, in writing, or over the phone. Please allow the teacher 24 hours to respond to your request. The teacher often has only one planning period in a day and may have already had that period for the day before you make contact. Also during this period, they could have a meeting, papers to copy, papers to grade, tests to prepare, lesson plans to finalize or change, etc. They may not be able to communicate with you immediately, so please be patient and they will get back to you.

If the issue or question involves the functioning of the building, a discipline issue occurring in the office, or if you have already contacted the teacher and feel that you did not get satisfactory results, please contact the principal. This, too, can be done by email, phone or in writing. Please do not expect a return response until the end of the school day, as this is when the administrative staff has the free time to respond to phone messages and emails. We will do our best to get back with you the same day the message is left, but if we cannot reach you or are unable to get that done on the same day, you will be contacted the following school day.

Curriculum

The Kearney Early Education Center curriculum is based on a variety of resources designed to address each child's development needs. One of the components is the *Project Construct curriculum* which is approved by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Through "hands-on, minds on experiences", children in our Project Construct classrooms attain deep understandings in the core content areas while learning to work collaboratively with others and to be life-long problem solvers, critical thinkers and innovators. Project Construct offers a flexible framework for using children's interest and curiosity about their world to lead to learning. It allows teachers to integrate their knowledge of each child, their interests and theories, as well as community and family resources into an emergent curriculum.

Individualization based on interest, strengths and needs:

Individualization is a process of planning and implementing learning experiences that are responsive to each child's interests, strengths, and needs. Teachers reflect on their observations of each child and then plan the most effective ways to support each child's learning and development. When learning experiences are tailored to children's interests, they are more engaging and meaningful to children. Because children may vary in their developmental progressions, it is also important that the curriculum supports teachers in planning learning experiences that are responsive to individual children's strengths and needs.

Dress Guideline

1. Preschool is filled with activities and experiments that may be messy. Please dress your child in informal, comfortable clothing that can be managed easily. Pants that can be easily pulled up and down by the child will promote independence.
2. Athletic shoes keep little toes safe during trike riding, scooter riding and while playing on playground equipment. Please no cowboy boots, flip flop sandals or high-heeled shoes.
3. Please send an extra set of clothing to be kept in your child's backpack.
4. Please put names on all coats, hats, gloves, extra clothing and school bags.

Health and Safety

Illness of a Student

All of our policies and procedures are developed with the goal of providing a safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive setting for young children. Providing a safe and healthy environment requires establishing policies and procedures for handling childhood illness. When a child becomes seriously ill or hurt at school, parents are notified immediately. If the parent cannot be located, the emergency number is called. Illness is defined as having a temperature of 100° or above, vomiting, diarrhea or one of the items listed below. Please make arrangements with relatives, friends, neighbors, or a sitter to pick up your child when he/she is ill at school. It is always a good idea to have a back-up plan for sick childcare for days when children must be kept home from school.

Your child is to stay at home or may be sent home while at school if there is:

1. Fever over one hundred degrees Fahrenheit (100°F) by mouth or ninety-nine degrees Fahrenheit (99°F) under the arm.
2. Severe coughing-if the child gets red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched croup or whooping sounds after coughing.
3. Difficult or rapid breathing (especially important in infants under six (6) months);
4. Yellowish skin or eyes.
5. Pinkeye—tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, followed by swelling or discharge of pus.
6. Unusual spots or rashes.
7. Sore throat or trouble swallowing.
8. An infected skin patch(es)—crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of the skin.
9. Unusually dark, tea-colored urine.
10. Grey or white stool..
11. Headache and stiff neck.
12. Vomiting more than once.

13. Severe itching of the body or scalp, or scratching of the scalp. These may be symptoms of lice or scabies.
14. A child must be symptom free for twenty- four (24) hours before returning to school.
15. Unusual behaviors will be monitored closely and parent(s) will be contacted if other symptoms develop. These behaviors include, but shall not be limited to:
 - Cranky or less active behavior than usual
 - Crying more than usual
 - Feeling general discomfort or seeming unwell
 - Loss of appetite
 - Unable to participate in daily activities

Also, the child may not be brought to KEEC if he or she is taking an antibiotic prescribed within the last 24 hours – children must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.

Children Sent Home for Illness:

Children sent home from KEEC due to illness shall not return to school the following day. A child who is feeling ill needs to be in a quiet place where he/she can rest and have lots of attention and tender loving care. If children develop a fever while at school they will be isolated and cared for in the Nurse's office or a quiet space until the parent or emergency contact person can pick them up.

Children may return to school 24 hours after the disappearance of all symptoms, including the disappearance of fever, fever-reducing medicine free. Children returning with any of the previous symptoms or illness will be excluded from the center immediately. The decision is at the discretion of the staff.

Medication

Medications will be administered in accordance with individual state child care licensing regulations. In the event that your child needs to take medication at school, a medication form must be filled out. The district nurse will provide all medication services.

Food

No food should be brought into the center unless your child is an infant or a special diet is required. If your child is eating and has not finished a food item when he/she enters the building, you must stay with your child until they finish it or discard it.

Allergies

We strive to provide a safe environment for all students, including those with life threatening food allergies, to promote understanding of their needs to the wider school community, and provide guidelines that outline prevention strategies and treatment protocols that allow staff to respond to individual circumstances and provide necessary emergency treatment. Management of student allergies will be through a team approach, (e.g. parent or guardian, building administrator, nurse and classroom teacher).

Food Allergy Guidelines

The School District has issued Food Allergy Guidelines *applicable for food brought into the classroom or instructional areas*. The guidelines outline specific requirements that must be complied with in order for food to be brought safely into the classroom. The guidelines provide clear and concise procedures in this area, and all faculty and administration are aware of the guidelines.

Food brought into the classroom must be prepackaged foods and/or foods prepared by Southwest Food Services. **No homemade items will be allowed.** ALL foods/treats must be prepackaged, store bought items with a nutritional

analysis present on the packaging. The presence of this information will help us to avoid giving an allergen to a student with a known food allergy.

We are also requiring that the prepackaged foods with the nutritional analysis be tree nut and peanut free snacks (*tree nuts include nuts such as walnuts, pecans and coconuts*). Of those students with a food allergy in the district, the majority are allergic to nuts and peanut butter items. These students' allergies are considered serious to life-threatening allergies. Avoidance to these items is the safest.

In addition to the listing of any nut products in the item's nutritional label, the product cannot be manufactured or processed in a facility that also manufactures or processes nut products due to the risk of cross-contamination.

Party Information

School holiday celebrations are scheduled two times during the school year. Please refer to the section on District Guidelines on Food Allergies. Please check the calendar for exact dates of the celebrations.

Birthday treats must also be pre-packaged and either store purchased or ordered through the Southwest Food personnel in your building. Please notify the classroom teacher one day before bringing them.

Safe Sleep Practice

Infants sleep according to their needs and the individual plans prepared by you, in cooperation with your child's teachers. All center staff have been trained in Safe Sleep practices. Center staff will let you know about the required bedding linens and give you information on our Safe Sleep policy. In keeping with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, all infants will be placed on their backs to sleep unless a documented medical condition requires alternate sleeping positions. All families will sign off on our Safe Sleep policy and procedures.

Child Abuse and Neglect policies

Mandated Reporting:

As professionals in contact with young children and their families, we at KEEC are required by law to help the Division of Family Services (DFS) become aware of children who may be abused or neglected. According to the law, public or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors, as well as day care/child care workers, are mandated reporters. Thus, it is the policy of the KEEC to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to DFS immediately by telephone and to follow up in writing within 24 hours the same information as reported by telephone. Our school will offer full cooperation of its staff during the investigation of the reported incident. If you suspect child abuse or neglect, call the toll-free hotline at 1-800-392-3738.

Guidance and Discipline

The foundations of self regulation begin at birth when adults interact with babies in ways that teach them to feel safe, to feel loved and to know that their needs will be met. These early interactions with parents, guardians and caregivers establish the foundation to develop the child's capacity to wait, give, trust, love, and care for others. Child behavior is a form of communication. Our goal is to teach children to become conscious of hurtful behavior patterns and find respectful ways to get their needs met. We teach these skills through a positive approach built upon empathetic and loving relationships.

At KEEC, we use Conscious Discipline, a social emotional curricular approach. This approach may look different than the discipline you may have seen in school. It is all about connections.

We focus on:

- Teaching children the social-emotional and communication skills necessary to control themselves, problem solve, build self-esteem and develop pro-social skills Creating a School Family that builds connections between families and schools, teachers, teachers and children, and children.

- Constructing routines, rituals and structures that leave coercion, force, fear and external rewards behind, and encourage self motivation, helpfulness, problem-solving and connections. Conscious Discipline®
- Conscious Discipline asks adults to:
 - See misbehavior as a call for help instead of disrespect
 - See conflict as a teaching opportunity rather than a disruption to learning
 - See children as capable of self-regulation instead of needing to be controlled
 - See connection as the most powerful motivating force for achievement
 - Understand that social connections are the basis for problem-solving
 - Understand that what you focus on, you get more of

KEEC does not use the following as a form of discipline:

- Withhold, deny or force food or rest
- Punish children for toileting accidents
- Use corporal or harsh punishments, including: pinching, shaking, spanking, punching, biting, kicking, rough handling, hair pulling, humiliation or fear-based
- Use separation or time out
- Use restraints, meaning the use of physical force or other means to restrict the child's freedom or movement

Guidance for Families:

- You are your child's first and most important teacher. Research has shown that parent involvement goes hand in hand with children's success in school. When significant and repetitive behaviors that raise safety concerns arise it will be required that you are part of the process. These may be:
 - Weekly/monthly meetings with teachers and staff
 - Positive Behavior Support Plans
 - Two way communication forms
 - Support from our early childhood specialist team

School Closure Information

Every effort is made to hold classes on scheduled school days in the Kearney School District. Sometimes, however, weather conditions do not allow for the safe transportation of students to or from school. Therefore, the district makes every effort to cancel school in a timely manner during inclement weather and inform both parents and patrons. During inclement weather, early school dismissal will be announced via School Messenger and on the district website. Local radio and television stations will also be notified. Please have a PRE-ARRANGED PLACE for your child to go in case school is unexpectedly dismissed and you are not at home. Make sure your family knows the plan.

Acorn Patch - Late start and early dismissal days there will be no Acorn Patch classes.

Forest Friends Preschool- Will follow the inclement weather policies for the elementary schools. Two hour late arrival time will be 10:40 and early dismissal will be at 1:25 for Forest Friends Preschool.

Puppy Pound- Late start opening time is 8:45 and early dismissal due to inclement weather is 2:30.

Confidential Information

Information regarding KEEC children and families is kept confidential. Within the program, information is shared on a need to know basis with professionals who provide child and family services and to ensure the safety of children enrolled in the program. Information is shared with outside agencies/providers only with the appropriate authorization.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over eighteen years of age certain rights with respect to educational records. These rights include:

The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the appropriate school official a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

The right to request the amendment of the student's education record(s) that the parent or eligible student believes is/are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school official, clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for the amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of right to a hearing.

The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes the disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility.

The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Officer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202- 4605.

Notice of Nondiscrimination

The Board of Education believes in the right of every student to receive equal opportunities in all educational programs and activities conducted by the school district. The Board also believes in the right of every qualified individual to accept fair and equal treatment both as applicants for employment and as employees. It is the policy of the Board to accord equal consideration and impartial treatment regardless of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, socio economic status, marital status, sex, age, handicapping conditions or organizational memberships. This policy will prevail in all matters concerning the staff, the students, the public, the educational programs and services of the district and individuals with whom the Board does business. The Board has designated the KSD Superintendent to act as the district's nondiscrimination compliance coordinator.

Any person with a comment or concern may contact the coordinator at the Kearney R-1 Board of Education Office, 150 W State Route 92, Kearney, Missouri 64060. The telephone number is (816)-628-4116. No person shall suffer reprisals as a result of having initiated or presented a grievance.

Parents/Student Rights in Identification, Evaluation, and Placement Procedures

Special Services

Students with disabilities are entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education. These rights are ensured under state law, federal law, and District Policy. Parents or teachers may refer to the principal those students who demonstrate learning and other problems. The school administrator and a school support team will make recommendations to the classroom teacher for alternative intervention strategies prior to referral for a special education evaluation. Placement in special education programs is based on evaluation results, the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and parental consent. The student's parent/guardian has access to the results of the evaluation and may participate in the development of the IEP.

Parents/Guardians maintain the right to inspect all information which is subject to collection and to appeal the accuracy of such information. Services are provided to students who meet eligibility criteria in the following categories: autism, deaf/blindness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment and deafness, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment/blindness and developmental delay. Parents and students are advised of their rights, including the right to an impartial due process hearing if disagreements between the parent and the school cannot otherwise be resolved. Questions concerning services for students with disabilities may be directed to the Principal, Counselors, or the District Special Services Office (816-628-2653).

Grievance and Problem Solving Process

Families should feel free to discuss any school related issue or concern with their teacher. If an issue can not be resolved at that level among the parties involved, parents are encouraged to take the concern to the directors in charge of the programs (see front cover for appropriate personnel).