



PROJECT THRIVE PRESCHOOL & ACE ACADEMY FAMILY HANDBOOK



WELCOME

Welcome to The Arc family, where for over 25 years, we have been deeply committed to enriching the lives of children in the south Miami-Dade community through high-quality, individualized early intervention services. Founded in 1953 by a group of dedicated parents advocating for children with special needs, The Arc has since grown into one of the largest advocacy organizations in the United States.

Originally established to address the rights and scarce programs for children with developmental delays and disabilities, The Arc has expanded its mission significantly. Today, we proudly operate three convenient locations in Miami Gardens, Kendall and Florida City, serving approximately 1,000 children from birth to age 22. Our programs not only focus on educational and therapeutic services but also emphasize inclusivity, where children of all abilities learn and play together.

As part of our ongoing commitment to families, we continually seek new grants and funding sources to support the cost of care and education. These efforts ensure that families receive the necessary resources and that our dedicated staff have the opportunities to provide the best possible support to the children we serve.

At The Arc, we believe in nurturing each child's potential and creating a supportive community where every child can thrive. We invite you to join us in our journey of empowerment and advocacy, as we continue to make a positive difference in the lives of children and families in our community.

DIRECTORY

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL		
14100 Palmetto Frontage Rd, Suite 200 Miami Lakes, FL 33016		Main Phone #: (305) 759-8500 Before/After Hours #: (305) 754-8186 Fax #: (305) 754-9223
Mr. Gabriel Parra	Executive Director	(305) 759-8500
Mrs. Laura Roberts	Children and Youth Director	(305) 759-8500
Mr. Zach Johnson	Coordinator of Children and Youth	(305) 759-8500

MIAMI GARDENS		
ACE Academy 3450 NW 199 th St Miami Gardens, FL 33056		Main Phone #: 305) 623-9631 Fax #: (305) 675-3764
Ms. Dana Diffin	Site Director/ACE Academy Principal	(305) 623-9631

KENDALL		
Project Thrive Preschool Cottage # 6 & 7 11025 S.W. 84 th Street Miami, FL 33173		Main Phone Cottage 6: (305) 279-3440 Main Phone Cottage 7: (305) 279-4141 Fax #: (305)-675-6276
ACE Academy 11025 S.S. 84 th Street Cottage #10 Miami, FL 33173		Main Phone (305) 279-3064 Fax Number: (305) 279-2922
Ms. Irma Alvarez	Regional Director	305-279-4141
Ms. Dana Diffin	ACE Academy Principal	(305) 623-9631
Ms. Silvia Vargas	Arc Project Thrive Assistant Director	305-279-4141
Ms. Veronica Bethencourt	ACE Academy Assistant Principal	305-279-3064
Ms. Jessica Ayala	Service Coordinator	305-279-4141

FLORIDA CITY		
Project Thrive Preschool 756 W. Palm Florida City, FL 33034	Building A Phone (305) 246-3530 Fax #: (305) 246-4585 Building B Phone (305) 246-9291	
ACE Academy 303 W. Palm Florida City, FL 33034	Main Phone 786) 650-2030 Fax Number: (786) 410-5401	
ACE Academy 616 W. Palm Drive Florida City, FL 33034	Phone: (305) 242-9299 Fax #: (305) 242-9926	
ACE Academy 712 SW Krome Terrace Homestead, FL 33030	Phone: (305) 246-4933 Fax #: (305) 246-4935	
Ms. Maria Barros	Regional Director	Phone: (305) 926 - 7915
Ms. Lisandra Milian	Assistant Director	Phone: (305) 246 - 3530
Mareilis Rojas	Building 303 Principal	Phone: (786) 650 - 2030
Mareilis Rojas	Building 616 Principal	Phone: (305) 242 - 9929
Mirania Gonzalez Brito	Building 712 Principal	Phone: (305) 245 - 3598
Cira Nieves	Service Coordinator	Phone: (305) 246 - 3530
Nadjya Rodriguez	Assistant Service Coordinator	Phone: (305) 246 - 3530
Scarleth Figueroa	ACE Academy Registrar	Phone: (786) 650 - 2030
Jeannette Arzate	Assistant ACE Academy Registrar	Phone: (786) 650 - 2030

PHILOSOPHY

The foundation of The Arc's Children and Youth philosophy revolves around a few key principles. Firstly, we recognize the paramount importance of the family in a student's life, striving to involve them actively in education and therapy. Secondly, we firmly believe in the inherent capacity of all children, regardless of their developmental stage, to learn and evolve into more productive individuals. Thirdly, we advocate for active learning and meaningful interaction with both people and the environment as pivotal to the learning process.









ACE Academy and Arc of South Florida enroll children without regard to race, color, gender, familial status, religion, ancestry, national origin or disability to its programs. Furthermore we have in place standards, policies, and practices necessary to provide services in a manner that respects the diverse worth of the individual and protects and preserves the dignity of people of diverse abilities, cultures, classes, races, religions, sexual orientation, and ethnic backgrounds.

OUR MISSION & VISION

All of ARC programs offer a pioneering educational experience tailored to students with disabilities from Birth through 22 years old. With a fusion of contemporary social, educational, and therapeutic philosophies, our qualified and compassionate staff provide a comprehensive curriculum that caters to the holistic development of each individual. Our friendly and nurturing learning environment ensures that every student's social, educational, and therapeutic needs are met with care and attention. At ARC, we are committed to fostering a supportive atmosphere where every student can flourish.

LISTING OF YOUTH PROGRAMS

Please note that each service varies by location. To determine what service is provided at each location, please consult with the Principals in Miami Gardens, Kendall, and Florida City.

- **1. ACE Academy School** (A Sandor Wiener School of Opportunity) (Ages 5-22)
ACE Academy is a private school offering innovative learning opportunities for students with disabilities, PreK-8th/12th grade (varies by location), combining current social, educational and therapeutic philosophies and curricula. Scholarships accepted: Step-Up for Students with Disabilities and Inclusion Programs, Sandor Wiener Tuition Assistance Fund for eligible families.
- **2. Youth After School and Summer Services** (Ages 5-22)
The Children's Trust has been partly funding The Arc's inclusive afterschool and summer services since 2004. Services provided include after school care and full day camps for Winter break, Spring Break and summer camp. Services are available to children ages 5-10 years old.
- **3. Early Childhood Summer Camp (EEI) (Ages 0-5)**
The Children's Trust partly funds The Arc's summer camp for young children with disabilities 6 weeks-5 years old. Camp activities provide fun developmentally appropriate early childhood learning opportunities for children. Here they can build friendships, as they play and learn together.
- **4. Positive Parenting Program workshops**
Funded by the Children's Trust, The Arc provides parenting workshops in a series of 5 group sessions and 3 individual phone sessions to give parents the skills to raise confident, healthy children, and to build stronger family relationships. Parents learn to prevent problems and to manage misbehavior.
- **5. Birth-to-Two (B-2)**
The Birth to Two program provides an intensive educational curriculum along with therapies for children aged 1-3 years with identified delays in their development, and/or established conditions of a moderate to severe nature. Services funded through MDCPS include individualized instruction in inclusive classrooms, focusing on development and learning goals using the High Scope Curriculum.
- **6. Voluntary PreKindergarten (VPK)**

VPK's goal is to ensure all children are intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially ready to enter school and ready to learn. The Arc's VPK program with High Scope Curriculum is part of the state-funded VPK Program which sets standards and provides the necessary resources to ensure that every class funded, offers a high-quality learning environment.


7. **Subsidized Child Care (Ages 0-8)** 

This program provides financial assistance for student care to families with low incomes, through support of The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe. The Arc accepts the subsidy and provides subsidized services in inclusive classrooms using High Scope Curriculum for children 0-8yrs.

8. **Private Pay Early Childhood Education (0-5 years)**

Families may choose to pay privately for student care provided by Project Thrive, if they are not eligible for individual programs. These children participate in the same quality educational program and benefit from the small student:teacher ratios, highly qualified staff, High Scope Curriculum and individualized instruction offered in stimulating and inclusive classroom environments.

ARC SCHOOLS ACCREDITATION AND LICENSINGS

Kendall Project Thrive has been accredited by NAEYC  since 2002. Child care centers, preschools, kindergartens, and before/after care programs are eligible to seek NAEYC accreditation. The heart of NAEYC accreditation focuses on the child's experience. The process carefully considers all aspects of a program including health and safety, staffing, staff qualifications, curriculum, and the physical environment.

All programs at our Kendall and Florida City Locations are licensed by the State of Florida's Department of Children and Families. The purpose of the program is to ensure a healthy and safe environment for the children in child-care settings and to improve the quality of their care through regulation and consultation. The department ensures that licensing requirements are met through on-going inspections of child-care facilities and homes, thus preventing the continued operation of substandard child-care programs.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The ARC believes that the family is the most important factor in a student's life. As your child's first teacher, you play a big part in how well your son or daughter does in school. Because of this, we welcome your involvement in your student's education at our school. Our staff also aims to help students and families ease the transition to the new school setting. We understand that students' and families' needs vary in this area and we aim to accommodate these as individual families require.

For family members, In the Arc's children's programs, including ACE Academy, families can schedule meetings with teachers and administration as needed.

Other ways to be involved

ACE Academy provides a monthly Parent & Family meeting, to meet with families. This group offers information, peer support, friendship, and man-power for many family events at the school. We encourage you to become a part of these activities.

We have special events, celebrations and field trips throughout the year for families where we love your participation. This allows for great family involvement and opportunities for community public awareness and advocacy for your student's school program.

Individual Education Plan (EP) Updates

Individual Education Plans (EP's) from MDCPS are a requirement for applying for Scholarships. Renewing the EP's once every three years by visiting your child's home school, helps to update your student's progress and goals achieved, plus the services they need. It also allows for additional assistive technology equipment to be used in schools funded under Federal IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) grants.

Volunteering and Donations.

We are a non-profit school and rely on funding from outside sources. We have occasional fund raising events and appreciate your support. We also welcome parent volunteers for a variety of tasks, from classroom and office assistance to school projects such as landscaping and painting the buildings. Please let us know what you can do to help your student's school.

ACE Academy needs a number of types of supplies to help the classroom and school function. Office and classroom supplies are very welcome. Please see the class supply lists that are frequently given out or speak directly with teachers and administrators.

ENROLLMENT

Prior to enrollment a conference with the parent or legal guardian and the child is required to acquaint them with the facility, staff, and schedule for the school. During this visit, the parent or legal guardian will meet with either the admissions coordinator or the social worker for a personal interview and an opportunity to review the Family Handbook and complete necessary enrollment paperwork. The Arc Enrollment Packet must be completed prior to any child beginning in the program.

The Enrollment Packet includes basic information about the child and family, releases of information to and from The Arc, consent forms, USDA food program forms, and a request for family participation in the school. The Arc is a private not-for-profit program. Payment for our services may be made directly by the family or by one or more of our partners on the child's behalf:

- The Florida Early Steps Program
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools
- The Children's Trust
- The Metro-Dade Child Development Services Subsidized Program
- The Voluntary Prekindergarten Program

When enrolling a child in The Arc under one or more of these programs there may be additional program specific admissions eligibility criteria and additional enrollment paperwork requirements.

DAILY SCHEDULE

ARC programs run Monday to Friday. We follow the Miami-Dade County Public School calendar, and therefore close the school for most MDCPS holidays, school vacations, teacher workdays and emergency situations. However alternate programming may be provided on these days through afterschool and summer services or private pay programming, detailed later in this handbook. Please check with administrators at your location. Families will receive a monthly calendar with more specific information about days of programming.

Daily schedules are posted inside each classroom. Each classroom has a slightly different schedule which may vary according to the time of year, special events, and student needs. However, the day will have a balance of activities that follow best practice including: academic instruction, teacher-led large group and small group activities, social and life skills instruction, indoor and outdoor student directed play, eating, resting, and personal hygiene routines.

Therapy schedules are provided to eligible students during the school day. If you would like to observe a session, please contact the school to arrange a time and date with the therapist.

ARRIVAL and DEPARTURE

Ace Academy arrival/departure times will vary per location. Please check with your local campus for exact times. When a child arrives late it disrupts the class in progress, particularly the staff who must stop interacting with the children to speak with the family member who drops off the late child. There are important activities that occur in the morning and that are part of the structured routine, which late children would miss. In addition, every morning The Arc program must report each child's daily attendance to the agencies that are funding the child's services. Should children be chronically late, family members will be invited to a meeting to explore options to solve the problem.

Arc Project Thrive B-2 school programs begin promptly at **9:00 am**. Parents must drop off their child at the center between **8:45 am** and **9:00 am**. This window of time facilitates family staff interaction and exchange of information. When a child arrives late it disrupts the class in progress, particularly the staff who must stop interacting with the children to speak with the family member who drops off the late child. There are important activities that occur in the morning and that are part of the structured routine, which late children would miss. In addition, every morning The Arc program must report each child's daily attendance to the agencies that are funding the child's services. Should children be chronically late, family members will be invited to a meeting to explore options to solve the problem. Children who are registered in our before-care program may be dropped off as early as 7:30 am.

Arc Project Thrive departure time between **2:15 pm** and **2:30 pm** allows for family staff interaction about the day and exchange of information as needed. B-2 and Private pay children must be picked up by **2:30 pm** if they are not in the after-care program. If children are not in the after-care program and family will be late on a particular day, a call to the center is necessary. Children will go to after-care that day and families will be charged the daily after-care rate. Without notification we will call the emergency contacts and attempt to make pick-up arrangements.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is very important. Students are expected to be in class at the scheduled start of each school day. Repeated late arrivals cause a major disruption to the whole class's

instruction and result in lost learning time for all students including the late student. Repeated late arrivals and unexplained absences after 3 days, will result in meetings with School Administrators and possible withdrawal.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is vitally important as consistency in education is linked with benefits to children's learning and development. Children are expected to attend daily unless ill. If your student's attendance is low due to illness, we will meet with you to explore different program options.

As a private school, ACE Academy has attendance requirements that meet Florida Department of Education Regulations for Private schools (Rule 6A-1.09512). School is open for 180 school days and students must attend for a minimum of 170 days. Families of students with repeated absences will receive notification of their absences and warning of possible withdrawal should absences continue. Unexplained absences after 3 days, will result in meetings with School Administrators and possible withdrawal. If student absences are greater than 10 days throughout the school year, families will be required to meet with School Administrators and discuss the situation and possible withdrawal.

The Arc has a specialized developmental program funded primarily by Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the Early Steps Program, Early Learning Coalition and After School with The Children's Trust. These agencies all have an interest in each child's attendance as they are funding and supporting the program.

Frequent absences may prevent openings becoming available for other students in need of services. ACE Academy and Project Thrive waiting lists are kept to invite waiting students into the school program to fill the openings.

F.T.E. (Full Time Equivalent) for Project Thrive Birth – Two (B-2) children only

F.T.E. is a term for two very important funding periods for the year. These periods occur approximately in the second and third weeks of February and October. During this time period The Arc receives funding in advance for the services to the children based on the child's attendance. Children MUST receive their education and therapy services at least once during the F.T.E. period. Home and hospital visits can be made if necessary. If children are not seen during the F.T.E. period, they will have to exit Project Thrive. Please do not plan vacation for the entire F.T.E. period. If you have any questions, please contact the administration at your child's school.

CURRICULUM and EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Curriculum refers to systematic procedures for organizing educational activities. At The Arc we use the High/Scope and Frog Street curriculum for Prek and Kindergarten aged students. For our ACE Academy programs grade K-12 McGraw Hill curriculum is used (versions/levels will vary per location)

HIGH/SCOPE

High/Scope has been used successfully with children from infancy through kindergarten age. At times the curriculum must be adapted to accommodate children who have various impairments.

How do children learn in a High/Scope “Active Learning” setting?

High/Scope believes that children learn best by pursuing their personal interest goals, settings that encourage choices, plus materials and activities that go on throughout the day. As children are allowed to pursue their choices and plans, children explore and ask questions, learn to solve problems, and interact with classmates and adults building relationships. In this kind of environment, children naturally engage in (key experiences) activities that foster developmental skills and abilities.

High/Scope has identified 58 key experiences/indicators in child development in the preschool years and a wide range of strategies to promote them. Key experiences/indicators are grouped into categories: creative representation, language and literacy, initiative and social relations, movement and music, classification, seriation, number, and space.

What does a setting with High/Scope look like?

The classroom and materials are carefully selected and arranged to promote active learning. The classroom is divided into “interest areas” organized around specific kinds of play. A class might include an area for block play, art activities, house play, manipulatives, computer, books, and sand and water play. In the areas the materials are organized and labeled so children can get them out easily and put them away independently—as much as possible. The organization and labeling in the classroom provides pre-reading building blocks to our children.

How is the day organized in a High/Scope classroom?

Teachers and aides give children a consistent routine that enables children to gain a sense of control over the events that go on, and children learn to anticipate what is next. An important part of the daily routine also includes times for small and large group experiences and time for outside play.

How do adults interact with children in this setting?

High/Scope teachers and caregivers should participate as partners in children’s activities rather than relate to children primarily as managers or supervisors. High/Scope emphasizes positive interaction strategy of sharing control with children, focusing on their strengths, forming a relationship and supporting their play ideas, while adopting problem-solving approaches to social conflict.

How is assessment handled with High/Scope?

Teaching staff make daily observations of the children’s interaction, behavior, and accomplishments, to evaluate and plan for the child’s developmental progress. Teaching staff should discuss these notes during their daily team planning sessions and create activities that will promote developmental growth. Over several months of key observation and anecdotal notes in the six categories of development, the teacher then uses these notes to summarize progress for the purposes of sharing children’s activities and behaviors with family members.

High/Scope Areas of Development

<u>Preschool</u>	<u>Infants & Toddlers</u>
Initiativeexpressing choices, engaging in complex play.....	Sense of Self
Social Relationsrelating to adults, making friends.....	Social Relations
Creative Representationmaking, building, pretending.....	Creative Representation
Music & Movementexhibiting body coordination.....	Movement
Logic & Mathematics sorting, counting.....	Exploration & Logic
	space & time understanding
Language & Literacyinterest in books.....	Communication & Language
	give and take turn taking, interest in rhymes, beginning reading and writing

How does a High/Scope teaching staff teach math and reading skills?

They do not directly teach math and reading and other academic skills through sequenced activities, workbooks, or tests. Instead, the teaching staff provides experiences and materials that help children develop language and logic abilities that are the foundation for later academic learning. For example, to encourage a child to begin to read, you must provide a print-rich environment with opportunities throughout the day for children to listen to stories, books, and other print materials—and to work with writing tools and materials. To promote logical thinking you must provide materials and opportunities for children to use their beginning skills in counting, comparing numbers, shapes, sizes, and colors. All the while the teaching staff is using language, literacy, and recognition to help the children recognize and support the learning opportunities in these important pre-academic areas.

FROG STREET

The Frog Street Pre-K curriculum is a comprehensive, dual-language program designed to meet the needs of diverse learners while supporting developmental learning domains. The preschool curriculum celebrates the joy of learning as children travel down the road to success while meeting the unique needs of preschoolers and provides intentional instruction in key areas of development.

McGRAW HILL

McGraw Hill is research-backed pedagogy, personalized digital tools, and engaging curriculum that empowers teachers to help their students find their own success. Through high-quality, trusted content developed with world-class authors and flexible tools to meet the needs of different teaching and learning styles – digital platforms adapt to help meet learners where they are, and advance with them as they progress toward their goals.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is a broader term than "testing," and includes other ways of finding out what students know and can do. This is often based on real demonstrations of skill in the classroom. Assessment should lead to better decisions in the classroom, such as what activity to do next, what teaching point is more appropriate, or how to organize instruction. It answers questions like, "Is Joe ready for the next step, or does he need more practice at this level?" Assessments, linked with standards, give parents and teachers information about whether a student is making appropriate progress.

ACE Academy's teachers complete student assessments at the start of the school year. Quarterly report cards inform families of progress made throughout the year. **In Arc Project Thrive**, The Arc's teachers complete children's assessments in all the areas of development in the early weeks after enrolling. These areas include talking and communicating, moving, thinking and problem solving, living skills (eating/dressing etc) and socializing with others.

Ongoing and more informal class observations of students are completed daily by all class staff, and provide a "snapshot" of what each student can do. With all assessments, teachers learn students' current knowledge and needs, and use this information to plan class activities where students can practice and develop skills. Assessments are again completed at the school year's end.

In order to keep families informed, we share assessment information with you so that you too can see the progress of your student, and play a part in deciding your priorities and preferences for your student's learning goals. Scheduled parent/teacher conferences and informal meetings are arranged upon request.

Formal assessments prior to enrollment for **B-2 early intervention children** usually include the Ages and Stages Questionnaires and the Battelle Developmental Inventory 2 (BDI2). The Ages and Stages Questionnaire includes 11 individual questionnaires for age intervals 4,6,8,12,16,18,20,24,30,36,and 48 months. Developmental areas cover communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving and personal/social skills. Evaluations are completed by the Early Steps team, which includes the Developmental Specialist, family members and Therapists. The Battelle Developmental Inventory also includes all developmental areas for young children and is completed by the Early Steps team. Upon enrollment at The Arc, children are assessed by The Arc teachers and/or therapists within two weeks. Staff use the DPIYC #2 tool-(Developmental Programming for Infants and Young Children) which includes activities in the areas of speech/language, gross motor, fine motor, cognitive, social/emotional and self-help. Speech/language therapists also use the Reel-3, the Rossetti, and the PLS-4 depending on the appropriateness for the child.

Formal assessments for **typical and VPK children** are also completed within two weeks of enrollment. The DPIYC #2 or #5 (Developmental Programming for Infants and Young Children) includes activities in the areas of speech/language, gross motor, fine motor, cognitive, social/emotional and self-help. This is completed by the classroom teacher.

These initial formal assessments allow staff to know the current functioning levels of all children entering the program. In this way the Multidisciplinary-team and/or classroom teaching team can plan appropriate goals to address. With these goals, classroom curriculum activities can then be planned towards providing opportunities where those skills can be practiced and developed.

Goal boards posted in classrooms provide handy visual “at-a-glance” reminders of all children’s goals. The goal boards aid classroom staff in including opportunities for children’s individual goal practice throughout the day and in observing skills the children are working on.

All children receive quarterly assessments with the DPIYC. These indicate progress towards stated goals and point to new areas to be addressed in the classroom. Quarterly reports indicate whether skills are “working on”, “emerging” or “mastered”. Families are provided with copies of the quarterly reports in order to keep them informed and involved in their child’s education. This family involvement is a major focus of The Arc’s philosophy.

Informal assessment of all children occurs on a daily basis using the High/Scope Child Observation Record (COR). This strength-based record of key experiences/indicators, in the form of Key Experiences Notes for infants/toddlers and preschoolers, guides the teachers in observing children’s behaviors as they naturally occur during the day. Teachers write brief anecdotes based on their observations. This active learning and interaction with people and objects around them are key to The Arc’s philosophy regarding how children learn.

COR Family Reports become the basis for biannual teacher/family conferences. Reports summarize the skills children have learned in the form of anecdotes describing exactly what children said or did in the classroom. This “family friendly” report gives no age or developmental levels, yet paints an accurate picture for families of what their child can do.

THERAPY SERVICES

In-house therapy is provided (e.g. Occupational, Physical, and Speech therapy). If you are transferring services to The Arc of South Florida, evaluations from outside therapists will need to be provided.

Therapy evaluations by Speech/Language, Occupational and/or Physical Therapists are completed for those children with developmental delays who receive that service. Therapy evaluations help guide the ongoing Team goals for the classroom.

Insurances accepted are CMS Title 19 (Medicaid) and Title 21 (Kid Care), Amerihealth Caritas (formerly known as Prestige) and Full Medicaid. Sunshine MMA is only accepted if your child is in the B2 program. Please contact the Therapy Coordinator, Suzie Orta Rios for more information.

Please inform the Therapy Coordinator (Suzie Orta Rios) if your child has secondary insurance we are providers for. We will need copies of the insurance card (front and back) with the date of birth of the parent the insurance is under.

If you would like to request a meeting to discuss any therapy information, please allow for a 24 hour response time.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Computer learning games and activities are used in classrooms to extend learning within the classroom. Specialized and adapted computer programs further learning of counting, early literacy and language development. Smart Boards and mini laptops may be used to extend learning as their activities link with curriculum activities.

A television and DVD's are available on site for staff professional development and family educational activities. Their use in the classroom is limited to occasions where programming is supported by the curriculum.

Families are encouraged to keep their student's IDEA status eligible by updating EP's every three years at your child's home school, as this increases the amount of educational technology available to students in the school.

DOCUMENTATION OF AUTHORIZED CAREGIVERS

The Primary Service Coordinator, School Registrar or school administration will maintain files with written authorization by the student's parent or legal guardian of the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of individuals whom the parent or legal guardian have approved to care for the student, to pick up from school, and to take out of the facility on trips.

Telephone authorization to release a student to someone who does not usually pick up the student will only be accepted with prior written authorization from the custodial parent or legal guardian for such an exceptional release. No student will be released without the presence or permission of the custodial parent or legal guardian.

Any authorized person who is not recognized by the staff will be required to provide photo ID such as a driver's license, work or school ID before the student is released. ARC staff will notify police if an unauthorized person seeks custody of the student.

SIGN IN AND OUT PROCEDURE

(Please note this procedure is for Project Thrive Only)

Caregiving adults who bring the child to, or remove the child from, the facility will sign children in and out of the facility. All parents / guardians **must** sign their child in and out of the center, with a full signature and time, each day as required by the Department of Children and Families, our accreditation standards, and program policies.

Staff will verify the parents' signature in and out with the staff initial. When children are absent, staff will sign their initials and mark "A" for absent, leaving the signature section open.

Each classroom will have their own Sign In/Out Log with one monthly sheet for each child clearly separated and labeled in order for continuity of children's safety, attendance and whereabouts of all children.

HANDLING PERSONS WHO MAY POSE A SAFETY RISK

A person who may pose a safety risk includes strangers as well as abusive parents or legal guardians and any adults who cannot take the student safely from the facility. The student will not be released to anyone who cannot safely care for the student.

ARC staff will notify police and call **911** to manage adults under the apparent influence of drugs/alcohol or an individual posing a safety risk. Staff will contact the emergency contact to make arrangements for the student's transport to a place of safety. If no one is available to care for the student, staff will contact student protective services for guidance.

REPORTING STUDENT ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All observations or suspicions of student abuse or neglect will immediately be reported to the student protective services agency no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The School Principal or Site Director must be informed immediately of the suspected abuse or neglect.

Reporters will follow the directions of the student protective service agency regarding completion of written reports. If the parent or legal guardian is suspected of abuse, the School Principal or Site Director will follow the directions of the student protective agency regarding notification of the parent or legal guardian. Reporters of suspected student abuse will not be discharged for making the report unless it is proven that a false report was knowingly made.

HEALTH POLICY

Regular attendance is very important. If your student is sick and cannot come to school, please call and inform the school office. The teacher and/or administrator should be notified of absences of a more serious or lengthy matter. There will be some instances in which we will require a doctor's note before your student may return to school:

- ❖ absences of 5 or more days
- ❖ any medical condition that ACE Academy/Project Thrive believes requires a medical release

Any absence requires a written parental note brought when the student returns to school explaining the circumstances of the absence for our information and attendance records.

In order to promote the health and well-being of our students we ask that you not send your student to school with any of the following conditions:

- ❖ a known communicable disease such as chicken pox or whooping cough
- ❖ severe coughing
- ❖ difficult or rapid breathing
- ❖ diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool in a 24 hour period)
- ❖ vomiting
- ❖ conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- ❖ fever of more than 100 degrees for 24 hours
- ❖ untreated skin patches or rashes
- ❖ yellow or green nasal discharge (along with one or more other symptom)
- ❖ stiff neck
- ❖ unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool and yellowish skin or eyes
- ❖ any other unusual symptom of illness that has not been treated by a doctor

In any of these cases contact your student's doctor and keep your student at home until the symptoms are no longer present. After having a fever, a student should be kept home for at least 24 hours without fever.

Students may at times be excluded from school if:

- the teacher or administrator believes the student has symptoms of illness
- there is a change in the student's condition while at school
- any symptoms of communicable illness are still present

Thank you for helping us to reduce the spread of illness at our school.

MEDICATION AND IMMUNIZATIONS

We ask parents to adjust student medication schedules so medications are given at home whenever possible. However, with proper permission forms we can administer medication at school. For prescription medications the school needs a copy of the prescription, instructions on how to give the medication, and a signed permission form. These forms are required for all medications and health procedures including aerosol treatments, catheterization, tube-feeding, allergy Epipens, and seizure medication.

Any prescribed medication brought into the facility by the parent, legal guardian, or responsible relative of a child must be dated, and must be kept in the original container. The container must be labeled by a pharmacist with:

- ❖ The child's first and last names;
- ❖ The date the prescription was filled;

- ❖ The name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription, the medication's expiration date;
- ❖ The manufacturer's instructions or prescription label with specific, legible instructions for administration, storage, and disposal;
- ❖ The name and strength of the medication.

Over-the-counter medications will be kept in the original container as sold by the manufacturer, labeled by the parent, with the child's name and specific instructions given by the child's health professional for administration.

All medications, refrigerated or unrefrigerated, will have child-resistant caps, will be kept in an organized fashion, will be stored away from food at the proper temperature, and will be inaccessible to children. Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration.

All children attending the program must have immunizations up to date. Whenever your student visits the doctor and has immunizations please bring these records to school so we can update our files. Children without proper immunizations may be excluded from school.

INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS

The health and safety of your student is of prime importance to us at ARC. However, rare occasions, accidents or incidents may occur. When this is the case, ACE Academy follows a consistent procedure.

1. The student and/or staff member is treated on the spot. Emergency services will be called depending on the severity of the incident.
2. The incident is reported immediately to the school supervisor, who completes the accident/incident report with input from the staff member witnessing the incident.
3. The school supervisor notifies the student's parents. The parent will review and sign the accident/incident report.
4. The school supervisor sends a copy of the report to The Arc's Children and Youth Program Director within 24 hours.
5. All Accident/Incident reports are kept in binders in locked locations in the Principal's office.
6. Accident/Incidents that occur in our **Children's Trust** programs (Youth AfterSchool & Summer camp), Early Education Intervention (EEI) summer camp and Positive Parenting Program (PPP) of a significant/serious nature must be reported to the program's Contract Officer at The Children's Trust within 3 days by the Arc administration. (Other funding sources will be notified where necessary.)
7. The Children and Youth Program Director will also provide The Children's Trust's program Contract Officer with written notification of any legal action which is filed as a result of such an injury within 7 working days.
8. Schools will send YD and EEI monthly logs of numbers of incidents requiring both site only care and ER care to the main office during the first week of each new month.

9. The Accident/Incident Log will be reviewed by the school director and, if needed, the health consultant, monthly, to identify hazards for corrective action.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

One of the most important goals for young children is to gain control of their own behavior. Effective discipline begins early in life and helps prevent problems as the student grows older.

ARC staff use Positive Behavior Support which helps to understand why the student has challenging behaviors and then teaches new skills to replace the challenging behaviors. Positive Behavior Support is different from traditional behavior modification in four ways:

- ❖ it focuses on positive individualized strategies that are respectful of the student
- ❖ individualized interventions are based on an understanding of the student, their communication and unique situation,
- ❖ strategies focus on helping the student gain access to new environments, have positive social interactions, develop friendships and learn new communication skills so they can explore their world and learn successfully and
- ❖ never uses physical punishment.

With a variety of resources from the Peace Education Foundation, MDCPS, Conscious Discipline, and Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence, staff plan ahead to prevent problems, encourage appropriate behavior by teaching specific social and behavioral skills, give consistent clear rules, use positive guidance, redirect, and involve children in problem solving (when possible) to encourage the student's own ability to regulate their own emotions and behaviors. These strategies include:

- ❖ Interactions that are characterized by supportive responses
- ❖ Adults who model the appropriate behavior they want the children to have
- ❖ Adults who redirect or distract children from potential problems
- ❖ Adults who recognize and accept typical behaviors of children with special needs
- ❖ As a last resort, children may be moved from an activity but are always supervised nearby
- ❖ Adults follow a consistent pattern of responses to children's behavior

SUSPENSION, EXPULSION AND OTHER EXCLUSIONARY MEASURES

While the goal of the policy of *Behavior Management Through Positive Behavior Support* is to address any challenging behaviors a child may demonstrate and to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures, children's welfare and safety is our priority. ARC reserves the right to request the withdrawal of any child:

1. whose enrollment presents a serious continual safety threat to the child, other children, and staff; and/or
2. who it is determined would benefit from a more appropriate placement.

The program will assist families in locating alternative services and placement that will meet the child's needs more appropriately. This policy complies with federal and state civil rights laws.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All students have the right to learn, and no student has the right to disrupt the learning activities of others. Students must follow the school Code of Conduct before, during and after school. The Code is in effect inside school buildings, on school grounds, at school-related activities, on field trips, and in transportation buses and vans.

ACE Academy is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where students may receive and teachers may deliver quality educational services without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, teachers, administrators, parents and school visitors is essential to achieving this goal. Disrespectful profanity and intimidation or destruction of property by students or family members will not be tolerated and will result in meetings with School Administrators and possible withdrawal.

School expectations are that children will

1. **Be Safe** and will:

- ❖ Obey the rules of the school and laws of the community.
- ❖ Choose peer groups that demonstrate safe, respectful and responsible behavior.
- ❖ Solve problems peacefully.

2. **Be Respectful** and will:

- ❖ Be respectful to all adults and peers.
- ❖ Listen to and follow the directions of school staff.
- ❖ Be respectful toward property and take care of school materials.

- ❖ Demonstrate positive social skills and use polite words.
- ❖ Consider the feelings of others.
- ❖ Resolve conflicts in a positive manner.

3. Be Responsible and will:

- ❖ Bring or request needed materials.
- ❖ Tell the truth.
- ❖ Ask before borrowing and stay out of others' property.
- ❖ Complete own work on time.

STUDENTS' FOOD / SNACKS

ARC supports families in their decisions regarding their student's food and eating needs. Before any student enters an ARC facility, the staff will obtain a written history of any special nutrition/feeding needs the student has to develop or modify individual feeding plans if needed. Disciplines related to special nutrition needs, including nursing, speech, and occupational and physical therapy, will participate when needed.

Reasons for modification of the student's diet or special feeding techniques may be related to allergies, food idiosyncrasies, and medical special needs. Written instructions from the student's parent or legal guardian **and** the student's health care provider (Pediatrician, Pediatrician's Assistant, Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner or Registered Dietitian) will be provided in the student's record and carried out accordingly. Dietary modifications will be recorded.

These written instructions must identify:

- a) The student's special needs;
- b) Any dietary restrictions based on the special needs;
- c) Any foods to be omitted from the diet and any foods to be substituted;
- d) Limitations of life activities;
- e) Any other pertinent special needs information.

Arc's Kendall program has a catered food program for families who prefer it. Cost information is available through the center administration staff. Center staff can puree foods to necessary consistency. The food is nutritionally balanced and healthy. A national team of nutritionists has carefully determined the menus and portion sizes.

Meals and snacks may also be sent from home, but may not be reheated. Hot food should be heated at home and sent in an insulated container. All containers, cups, bottles etc. must be labeled with the child's full name.

Arc's Florida City program is participating in the Child Care Food Nutrition Program (CCFNP). Each day we will be serving breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks to the children. The food is nutritionally balanced and healthy. A national team of nutritionists has carefully determined the menus and portion sizes.

Substitutions from home or from the CCFNP Food Program are possible for children with allergies—provided they have written documentation from the child's Pediatrician, Pediatrician's Assistant, Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner or Registered Dietitian. Differing texture needs can also be accommodated with this written note. Please do not send any food or snacks to the school, as they are not allowed per the CCFNP Food Program rules.

Breastfeeding

The Arc encourages mothers (including employees) to visit and breastfeed in the morning, during the day and at the end of the school day. There is a quiet comfortable place available for mothers to feed their babies or express their milk. Mothers are also welcome to breastfeed while visiting in the classroom if they wish. A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed breast milk and you should provide your own containers, clearly labeled with name and date. We will work with you and your schedule to plan your baby's feeding times. Please share what you want our center to do if you will be late and your baby is hungry, or the supply of breast milk is gone.

UNIFORMS, CLOTHING AND SUPPLIES

ACE Academy has a uniform policy. This uniform program is to help us promote safety, easily identify our students, instill pride, respect and to keep costs to a minimum. Tops can be Red, Light Blue, or Gray polo shirts with the ACE logo and bottoms are khaki, black or navy blue shorts, skirts, skorts or trousers. Shirts with logos may be purchased at local uniform stores. Please contact your school location for available stores near your school.

Children in our Project Thrive Preschool may attend school in clothing that is comfortable and washable.

ALL Children must wear closed toe shoes for safety in all school activities.

Students learn by doing and many of the activities we do at ACE Academy involve getting messy! It is important to have a change of clothes available at school. Please label all of your student's personal belongings. We ask that you send the following supplies to school and we will send reminders as supplies are needed.

- Change of clothing in a plastic bag
- A backpack or bag for your student's personal items
- Diapers, wipes and diaper cream if applicable (weekly or monthly supply)

Please remember that the public school system, state and local government, The Arc, and charitable organizations and community donations support our educational services. There is a large gap between funds coming in and the costs of our intensive educational and therapeutic program. While there is little cost to families for the program, there are many other supplies that are needed for the classroom and the school to function properly. Families are asked to help the school find community support and donations for the following types of supplies.

Classroom

Batteries—AA, C, and D's
Kleenex type tissues
Paper towels

Office/Art

Copy Paper, white-out, hi-liters
scotch tape, envelopes, glue
construction paper
non-toxic paint, etc...

We will send occasional notices of which supplies would be most helpful. We need and appreciate your support.

PAYMENTS

Step Up and Unique Abilities Scholarship payments are made throughout the year at various intervals. Parents must approve the payments directly in the parent Step-Up portal. Payments will then be sent directly to The Arc of South Florida from their scholarship accounts. We do not accept cash payments. Please use checks, money orders, ACH, etc to pay for fees/activities (e.g. Field Trips).

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation services are only provided in Florida City at this time.

Transportation is not automatically included in the ARC programs for B2, Step Up, or Unique Abilities scholarships. However, limited transportation may be available for eligible families under special circumstances. Families should discuss their transportation needs with School Administrators.

Students enrolled in The Arc's after-school program, funded by The Children's Trust, are eligible for transportation from their area schools to The Arc's Youth Afterschool. Please note, this does not include transportation to the students' homes after the program ends.

Please be aware that a fee for transportation services may be introduced at any time based on funding availability. If Arc vehicles are unable to operate due to weather or mechanical issues, parents will need to arrange transportation for their children. The Arc will provide as much advance notice as possible. Staff members are not permitted to transport children in their personal vehicles.

FIELD TRIPS

ACE Academy organizes field trips to various destinations, maintaining the same appropriate student-to-staff ratio as in the classroom. All field trips are planned and approved ahead of time, and you will receive written notice in advance regarding any upcoming trips. Written parental permission is required for your student to participate, and in some cases, parental attendance may also be necessary. While field trips may be partially funded, parents may be asked to contribute to the cost of the trip for their student.

If a student is not able to attend a field trip due to illness or behavior, because it raises an issue of safety, this will be communicated to families in order for other options to be discussed.

AVAILABLE PROGRAMS FOR NON-SCHOOL DAYS AND BEFORE/AFTER CARE

All ARC Programs follow the Miami-Dade County Public Schools calendar, and therefore closes the school for most MDCPS holidays, school vacations, teacher workdays and emergency situations.

For young children aged up to 4 years, The Arc offers a private pay **before and after care** program. The cost of before care and after care is based on a flat rate for the program for regular attendees. Please see your child's school for information regarding the payment amounts, schedules, and late fees for this program. For those families that may need the use of before and/or after care for an emergency situation, the fee will be based on an hourly rate.

The Arc has Children's Trust openings for **Summer camp** for children 0-5 years with a disability or special need offered at Kendall and Florida City locations. Summer camp includes activities, early literacy, fitness, peacemaking social skills, music, art & craft, meals, and field trips. Information about the Summer camp program's availability, service dates, registration deadlines and fees are provided in the Spring prior to Summer.

For children aged 5-22 years, The Arc has limited Children's Trust openings for Youth **AfterSchool** (YD) services at some Arc locations. Activities include homework help, literacy and reading support, peacemaking social skills, fitness and snack. We follow a Miami-Dade County Public Schools calendar, and therefore close the afterschool program for most holidays, school vacations, teacher workdays and emergency situations. Children enrolled in the YD AfterSchool program and have paid the registration fees are also eligible for the **Winter and Spring break camps** at no extra costs. Information about these programs' availability, service dates, registration deadlines and fees are provided throughout the year.

The Arc has Children's Trust openings for an inclusive **Summer camp** for children 5-22 years offered at Miami Gardens, Kendall and Florida City locations. Summer camp includes activities, literacy, fitness and swimming, peacemaking social skills, music, art & craft, meals, and field trips. Information about Summer camp program availability, service dates, registration deadlines and fees are provided in spring.

Late Pick Up Policy:

Any child that is not picked up by the required program closing time will be charged per minute until pick up. Please check with the site for late pick up costs. When children are not picked up by 1 hour after program closing time, and neither parents nor authorized adults can be contacted, The Arc staff members are required to contact DCF as per DCF requirements. At no time are staff permitted to transport children in their own vehicles.

TRANSITION AND REFERRALS

At The Arc, we understand that leaving a place of familiarity can be difficult for both children and their families. As a result, we aim to ease that transition with referrals when the time comes for children to age out of our programs.

Services after the Birth through Two Children (B-2)

Children transition during the school year in which they turn 3 before September 1st, as they will no longer receive services through Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). However they may be eligible for Part B of IDEA. This permits them to remain in the (B-2) Program and receive services through MDCPS Exceptional Student Education (ESE) until the end of the current school year.

Your multi-disciplinary team at The Arc, including Miami-Dade County Public Schools will work with your family to determine the best program for your child for the following year based on: eligibility, team recommendations, classroom appropriateness and parents' preferences. Meetings allow transition plans to be developed, additional testing to be completed if needed, and families to make informed decisions regarding the best educational program for their child. Many children go on to M-DCPS Pre-K ESE programs, (305) 271-5701, others go to programs in the community, to local preschools, or are cared for by family members at home.

Services after Private Pay and Subsidized care aged birth – 3 years.

As children near the end of their 3rd year, staff members discuss with families the options for preschool and child care after they leave The Arc's program. Choices include: Private pay preschool, other private community child-care centers, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Head Start, or Charter Schools. The Arc will guide families with information regarding how to apply for these programs.

Services after Voluntary Prekindergarten Children aged 4-5 years.

As children near the end of their VPK year, staff members discuss the options for kindergarten with families. Although most families will choose their local public school in their neighborhood, choices also include private schools and charter schools in the area. Families are responsible for coordinating kindergarten registration for their children. (MDCPS - (305) 995-1000)

Early Discovery Partnership

This partnership provides Developmental, Speech/Language, Occupational and Behavioral Intervention therapies to children ages 0-5 years identified as possibly benefiting from these services but who do not qualify for services through Early Steps or FDLRS. (305) 243-4617

Ace Academy

Ace Academy is a private school managed by The Arc for PreK 3 through high school students. Campuses in Miami Gardens, Kendall and Florida City are available for community children and graduates of The Arc's early childhood programs (Miami Gardens: (305) 623-9631; Kendall: (305) 279-3064; Florida City: (786) 650-2030).

YOUNG CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

CHILDREN 0-3

1. OBSERVATION
by families, teachers, therapists, Doctors to identify possible delays

2. CALL EARLY STEPS PROGRAM
to complete a phone intake
Sth: (786) 268-2611/Nth: (305) 243-5600

3. FAMILIES RECEIVE EARLY STEPS LETTER
with appointment and Service Coordinator name

4. FIRST CONTACT APPOINTMENT
for information, family history & consents
at home, center or Early Steps center

5. EVALUATION FOR ELIGIBILITY
Possible areas may include hearing, vision, speech and language, social, psychological

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERRALS
at Family Service Plan team meeting

CHILDREN 0-5

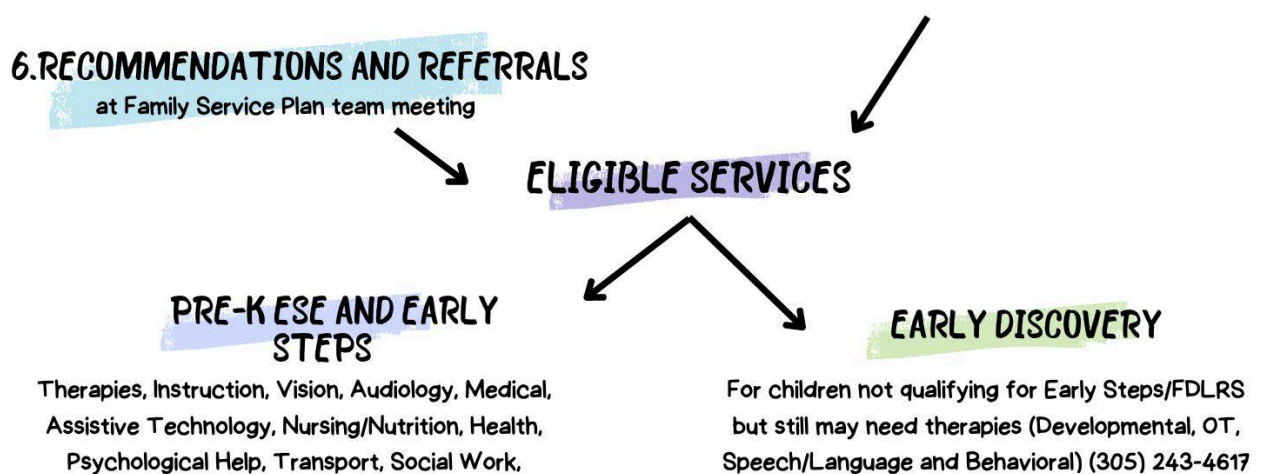
1. OBSERVATION
by families, teachers, therapists, Doctors to identify possible delays

2. CALL FDLRS
to receive a referral package
FDLRS Child Find: (305) 274-3501

3. FAMILIES CONTACTED BY PREK REGION STAFF
for hearing/vision screening. Families can bring private screenings to PreK Team

4. EVALUATION FOR ELIGIBILITY
Possible areas may include, speech & language, social, psychological

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERRALS
at Individual Education Plan team meeting



TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

ACE Academy staff meet all Florida Department of Education requirements for teacher qualifications. We require our *Lead Teachers* to hold an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education, Special Education or related field and 3-5 years of previous teaching experience with school aged children. We require our *Special Education Lead Teachers* to hold a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, Special Education, or related field and 3-5 years of previous teaching experience with school aged children.

REPORTING MISCONDUCT

All employees and administrators have an obligation to report misconduct by instructional personnel and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student. Examples of misconduct include obscene language, drug and alcohol use, disparaging comments, prejudice or bigotry, sexual innuendo, cheating or testing violations, physical aggression, and accepting or offering favors.

Reports of misconduct of employees may be made to:

- Laura Roberts, Director of Children & Youth Programs at 759-8500 ext.149 or LRoberts@arcsofla.org
- Gabriel Parra, Executive Director/CEO at 305-759-8500 ext. 102 or GHparra@arcsofla.org

Reports of misconduct committed by administrators should be made to:

- Liliana Martorella, Director of Human Resources: at LilianaL@arcsofla.org or 305-759-8500 ext. 136.
- Paul Sweeney, Chair, Board of Directors, The Arc of South Florida at psweeney@bellsouth.net

Legally sufficient allegations of misconduct by Florida certified educators will be reported to the Office of Professional Practices Services.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PLAN

Although we aim to make your student and your whole family's time with ACE Academy as positive as possible, we do recognize that there may be times when families will have issues or concerns that need addressing. For this reason, The Arc has created a plan for a successful resolution.

1. For classroom, therapy, or student services issues
please see the classroom teacher



2. If your concerns have not been resolved at this level,
please contact the School administrative staff:

Please refer to the directory for the administrative staff for your child's school



If your concerns have not been resolved at this level,
please contact The Arc of S. Florida Director of Children & Youth:

Mrs. Laura Roberts
(305) 759-8500 ext. 149



If your concerns have not been resolved at this level,
please contact The Arc of S. Florida Executive Director

Mr. Gabriel Parra
(305) 759-8500 ext. 102

PARENT RIGHTS

HIPAA law- the rights of confidentiality of records, and the ADA American Disabilities Act are all adhered to in all of THE ARC centers and sponsored programs.

The summary of due process under the provisions of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Part C-IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act is below.

Parents have the right to:

1. be advised of their rights under federal law.
2. receive written notice within a reasonable time with respect to the identification, evaluation, and placement of their child, and an explanation in the language they speak and understand best.
3. have evaluation, educational, and placement decisions based on a variety of information sources, and by persons who know the child and who are knowledgeable about the evaluation data and placement options.
4. provide written consent before their child may be evaluated or placed in a program.
5. request another evaluation by qualified providers at public expense if they do not agree with the evaluation provided. However, the District also has a right to a hearing to show that its evaluation was appropriate.
6. receive, upon your request, all the records pertaining to their child.
7. request an impartial hearing and be told where no/low cost legal help is available.
8. Additionally, interpreter and translation services are available upon request. For personal meetings, Spanish interpreters are available at all times. Advance notice is required for interpreters for other languages including American Sign Language. All notices sent home to families are provided in both English and Spanish.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS AND INFORMATION

Confidentiality of the records of children and families means that ACE Academy and The Arc staff will not disclose material in the records without the written consent of parents (with legal custody) or legal guardians for children. All staff, both paid and volunteer, at the time of hire must read The Arc's confidentiality policy and sign in writing their understanding and agreement to abide by it. Failure to maintain confidentiality is a serious breach of responsibility and cause for immediate dismissal.

The student's file and all other information concerning the student and family, compiled by ACE Academy, are stored in a locked cabinet or locked office and will be accessible only to the parent or legal guardian, The ACE and Arc staff and our partners on a need to know basis. Information will not be made available to anyone, by any means, without the expressed written consent of the parent or legal guardian. Children's files are kept in a locked cabinet and access is restricted. Anyone who does review a student's file will sign the log kept by administration staff. Likewise, staff will not disclose or discuss personal information regarding children and their relatives with any unauthorized person. Confidential information will be seen by and discussed only with staff members who need the information in order to provide services. Caregivers will not discuss confidential information about families in the presence of others in the facility.

The Arc and ACE Academy administration is authorized to make decisions about the sharing of confidential information. The student's central file shall not be a public record and no part of it shall be released except: The file may be released to physicians, attorneys, and government agencies having need of the file to aid the student as designated by the parent or legal guardian. The file shall be produced in response to a subpoena or released to persons authorized by order of court excluding matters privileged by other provisions of law.

The file or any part thereof may be disclosed to all qualified researchers, a staff member of the facility, or an employee of the department when the administrator of the facility or the secretary of the department deems it necessary for the treatment of the student, maintenance of adequate records, compilation of treatment data, or evaluation of programs.

Information from the files may be used for statistical and research purposes if the information is abstracted in such a way as to protect the identity of individuals.

The content of these written procedures for protecting the confidentiality of medical and social information is consistent with federal, state, and local guidelines and regulations, including HIPAA. Confidential medical information pertinent to safe care of the student will be provided to facilities within the guidelines of state or local public health regulations. However, under all circumstances, confidentiality about the student's medical condition and the family's status will be preserved unless such information is released at the written request of the family, except in cases where abuse or neglect is a concern. In such cases, state laws and regulations apply.

The parent or legal guardian of the student shall be supplied with a copy of the student's central file upon request. Requiring written releases ensures confidentiality. The Arc and ACE Academy has a written release of information both to and from our program contained in the Enrollment Packet which is to be used when a release of information is required.

RECEIPT OF FAMILY HANDBOOK

By signing below, I acknowledge receipt of ARC Family Handbook.

Student's Name

Family Member / Guardian Name

Family Member / Guardian Signature

Date

ARC Witness Name

ARC Witness Signature

Date