

WCPSS TUITION SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Tuition school-care programs must have adequate planning and implementation to ensure quality time for children in a safe, stimulating environment. Today many parents need supervision of children during work hours when children are not in school. Parents seek programs that not only provide supervision but programs that are well structured and planned for the child's development... social, physical, and academic enhancement.

The North Carolina Division of Child Development in the NC Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for establishing state standards and policies for children in child care. Standards are also adapted for children in child care programs operated by NC public schools. The Child Care Handbook has sections that help prepare schools with school-age children in child care to meet safety regulations and standards and become licensed. Schools with licensed programs may accept Child Care Subsidy vouchers. WCPSS does not require programs to be licensed, but close adherence to the DCD Guidelines ensures that programs are operating safely and effectively for children.

Key Elements for the Child

- A healthy living atmosphere that creates a warm, trusting relationship among the children and between the child and his/her teacher
- Opportunities for decision-making experiences that promote self-discipline
- An environment that promotes a positive self-concept
- Social experiences that encourage children to get along with others while recognizing different values and attitudes of others
- Opportunities for expressing ideas and emotions
- Opportunities which will develop an individual's creativity
- Opportunities for academic enrichment

Key Elements for the Parent

- Satisfaction that his or her children have been left in a safe, healthy, happy and stimulating environment.
- A positive and open relationship between parent and staff that promotes positive interactions concerning children.
- An environment that supports parents having productive relationships with their children.

Each program should review these key elements and determine how the program activities, physical environment and the staff/student relationships will further these objectives. It is important for the entire staff to do lesson planning together and to discuss the types of activities that will best meet these elements.

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Daily Schedule

All programs must post a Daily Schedule that will be available for easy reference by parents and caregivers. A Daily Schedule is a routine, planned sequence of events that occurs every day.

A typical daily schedule will depend largely on the age group of the majority of the children. The staff will need to determine what works best for the children in their particular program. The schedule should offer some routine and consistency yet still be interesting, varied and challenging for the children. A sample schedule is found in the section entitled Curriculum Ideas. Here are some ideas to consider when making up a schedule of daily activities.

- If there is enough staff, try to schedule some indoor and outdoor activities at the same time. This lessens the number of children who are all in one room at the same time.
- Post the schedule daily/weekly for staff, children and parents to see what activities are planned for the day.
- Keep the schedule varied enough so that children and staff don't get bored with the routine.
- Schedule time for clean-up activities, but make clean-up fun and part of the learning experience.
- Schedule bathroom and water break times for different age groups at different times. Increase the frequency of water break times during hot weather or when activities require physical exertion.
- Let children know in advance what the schedule is for the day. Children work best when they know the routine and what to expect. When there is a change in the schedule let everyone know what the change is and why it was made.
- Keep transition time between activities brief and efficient. Many problems begin during transition times when children are waiting to start the next activity.
- Decrease the time that students spend waiting to line up. Use a procedure that gets students in small groups ready to go on to the next activity.
- Have all materials, equipment and supplies ready in advance of the activity.
- Give students time signals when the activity is almost over so they can start preparing to clean up.
- Use student helpers whenever possible in demonstrating activities, carrying equipment or helping to set up a game.
- Notice when children are losing interest in an activity or the attention span is starting to decrease. It may be time to bring out a different type of activity.

Lesson/Activity Plans

Lesson/Activity Plans should be simple and easy to follow. Lesson plans should be done on a weekly basis and revised as needed. They tell what children will do on a given day, at a given time. Opportunities must be provided for school age children to participate in the planning and implementation of activities.

Grouping

Generally there should be no more than two grade-levels in any grouping of children. The best grouping is K-1, 2-3, and 4-5. Children should not be grouped in any way that would embarrass or create safety concerns for the child. By state standards, group sizes shall be limited to no more than 25 children per adult. An adult must supervise student assistants, under age 18, when working with children. All children must be adequately supervised all the time.

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Program Activities

The program should offer structured as well as unstructured experiences to the children. Activities should be developed and planned around the interests and needs of the children. They should also be planned so they take advantage of staff interests, abilities and enthusiasm.

The number of hours that a school program operates will determine the number of activities that must be available to children daily, i.e., three a day; if the program operates for three or less hours.

Activities should be developmentally appropriate for the different age groups. Some general guidelines for planned activities are:

- Programs may organize part of their schedules around activity centers for supplies, games and equipment in order that a number of activities may be offered on an ongoing basis.
- Include time for indoor and outdoor activities in the After-School Program.
- Change activities throughout the year. Certain activities such as drawing, playing ball and board games should always be available.
- Activities should encourage cooperative and group teamwork rather than competition.
- Every child should experience success and enjoyment.
- Include some activities that can be done alone as well as in groups.
- Allow children to help with planning activities. Encourage older children to act as buddies or peer helpers to the younger children. Allow children to play in large or small groups, alone or with a few friends.
- Plan some activities that are child centered as well as some activities that are teacher directed. Plan a balance of quiet and active play.
- Plan some special events throughout the year. Themes may be used for a period of several days or weeks. Holidays or other school-wide activities are special times when activities may be planned for the Before- and After-school programs.
- Allow Children some rest and relaxation time from the busy routine of the school day.
- Involve parents and volunteers to share their hobbies or other areas of expertise.
- Explore the grounds surrounding the school and the community in which the school is located.
- Older children need opportunities to relax before starting homework. A quiet area away from the others is helpful.

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Activity Areas

Recent legislation has broadened the categories that reflect activity practices of school age children. As you design the activity schedule incorporate these options as appropriate.

- Career development activities;
- Community awareness activities;
- Cultural activities;
- Games and manipulatives;
- Hands-on academic enrichment including but not limited to language, math, science, social studies, or foreign language;
- Homework with assistance available as needed from center personnel;
- Reading activities;
- Sand and water play;
- Social skills, life skills or problem solving activities; or
- Technology skill-building activities.

Physical Environment

The physical environment will be limited to some extent by the facilities available to the program, the age groups involved, the types of activities planned, and the materials used in the activities. Minimum space requirements must be met. **Indoor space requires 25 square feet per child. Outdoor space requires 75 square feet per child.** The following are some guidelines to consider when setting up the physical environment.

- The space should be warm, homelike, well organized, and reflect the children's interests and abilities. Children's work should be proudly displayed.
- There are quiet places for homework, naps, rest time, reading, and privacy.
- There are well-defined areas for various activities such as board games, centers, art work, etc. that are away from noisy activity areas.
- Specialty areas can be easily arranged for and cleaned up after messy activities.
- If the program is housed in one large room, boundaries mark certain special areas for small groups to lessen the noise level.
- The space is organized for traffic flow so one group does not disturb another.
- The furnishings and equipment are the right size for the children. There is different equipment depending on the age group of the children.
- Bathrooms and water fountains are easily accessible to the children.

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- During program hours, staff is required to keep the area tables, toys/game pieces clean and sanitized. A sanitizing solution can be made by mixing a tablespoon of liquid household chlorine bleach with one gallon of water and prepared fresh daily. The solution should not be so strong that the smell of chlorine is apparent. It is to be sprayed on the intended surface and allowed to air dry. This sanitizing solution should be kept out of reach of children and safely locked away. WCPSS sanitizing solution which has been approved for use in the cafeteria can also be used in lieu of the mixed, Clorox and water, sanitizing solution .
- There is adequate storage space so children have easy access to supplies and games and can put materials away with little supervision.
- The outdoor space is safely divided into quiet and active play areas.
- There are clearly marked boundaries. Children are visible to the staff from any location.
- The playground equipment is in good repair and is safe for use by all age groups.
- There are sufficient games, toys, art supplies and equipment for use by the children.

Snacks

Snacks may be purchased through Child Nutritional Services or at a store. A snack must meet requirements of Alliance for a Healthier Generation guidelines. Visit www.healthiergeneration.org for a variety of choices for healthy snacks.

Snacks are not necessary in before-school programs.

Toys, Games and Recreational Equipment

There should be a variety of toys, games and recreational equipment suitable for all age levels. It is recommended that the toys and games be brought out on an alternating schedule so children won't get bored with them so quickly. A suggested list of toys and games is shown below.

Group Games

Scrabble
Double Trouble
Perfection
Life
Risk
Monopoly
Clue
Battle Ship
Connect Four
Puzzle

Creative Play

Dolls and Dollhouses
Dress up clothing
Action figurines
Etch-A-Sketch
Puppets

Sporting Equipment

Kickballs
Nerf Footballs
Intermediate size basketballs
Hula Hoops

Cooperative Play

Wooden train set
Lincoln Logs
Legos in a bucket
Wooden Blocks

Active Recreation

Bowling Game
Nerf Ping Pong
Nerf Table Hockey

Art Materials

Watercolor markers
Safety scissors
glue
Paints and Brushes
Nature Materials
Construction paper
Newspapers

Old magazines (pictures)
Play-Dough
Fingerpaints
Popsicle sticks

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Jump ropes
Nerf frisbees
Water play
Sand buckets/shovels

Fabric paints
Modeling clay
Clean junk & Recyclables
Textile and Scrap fabrics

Videos and Video Games
G-rated cartoons & videos*
Exercise videos and records/tapes
Computer games
Hand-held computer games

Books
Library books
Creative and Dramatic Plays
Student authored books
Big Books (primary children)

* All videos must be approved in advance by the media coordinator of the school or the principal.
The listing above is only a partial listing. Consult the art, physical education, music, computer and drama teachers in the school for more suggestions.

Enrichment Activities

Survey the community to determine if there are parents or staff willing to come in to provide enrichment activities. Some of these programs may require additional fees and if so parents will need to be informed of the cost. Types of enrichment programs that are sometimes available for a fee depending on location include dance teachers, piano teachers, ballet teachers, gymnastic classes, modeling classes and baton classes. Outside individuals wanting to use the school facility to provide a program in conjunction with the after school program will need to complete an Application for Facilities Use form and be approved by the principal.

Other enrichment activities which may be provided by the after school program at little or no additional cost include parent and community volunteers who are willing to demonstrate a hobby, talk about their careers or work with students on a special project such as gardening, woodworking or animal care.

Field Trips

Typically, the before and after school program(s) do not include field trips.