



## **Parent Handbook 2010/2011**

**Gretna Public Schools Foundation**

**11717 South 216<sup>th</sup> Street**

**Gretna, NE 68028**

**Office: 402-332-3265**

**Tanya Gifford, Program Director 306-3749**

## Welcome

Dear Parents & Guardians,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome your family to the Gretna Kids Connection program. The purpose of Kids Connection is to provide before and/or after school child care in a familiar setting that offers planned activities, quality care, and excellent supervision while still having fun.

This program is convenient in location and competitive in pricing. Each site meets Nebraska Department of Health and Human Service standards for child care centers as well as meeting inspection requirements from the Fire Marshall and County Health Department.

The program attends to the educational and nutritional needs of each child. A morning breakfast and after school snack are served at no additional cost. Activities are all planned ahead of time by the Site Director. These activities vary in attempt to provide a fun child care experience. Supervised childcare will include large muscle activities supplemented with fine motor skill activities such as arts, crafts, computer time, & table games. Children will also have the opportunity to complete school assignments, have free choice time, and outdoor play.

This family policy manual outlines what you may expect from the Kids Connection Program and what Kids Connection expects from you in return. We hope it will be helpful and we welcome your suggestions for future policy updates. If questions arise that aren't covered in the manual, please feel free to speak to your Site Director or Program Director.

We hope that your family's partnership with the Gretna Kids Connection will be an enriching & rewarding experience.

Welcome to Gretna Kids Connection!

Sincerely,

Tanya Gifford  
Gretna Kids Connection Program Director

The Gretna Public Schools Foundation was established in October of 1990 to enhance the school's educational quality for the benefit of students and residents of the Gretna School District.

The Foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization whose purpose is to be the connecting link between those who wish to give of their resources for the betterment of our schools and the children of the community who would be the beneficiaries of that generosity.

The Foundation is guided by a Board of Directors. Each year the foundations awards thousands of dollars in grants to teachers, scholarships to students and faculty, funding for the Gretna Early Education Center & Gretna Kids Connection, and recognizes excellence in teaching and service to the schools. Programs supported by the Foundation can be as numerous and varied as the mind can imagine.

The Gretna Public Schools Foundation is a tax-exempt organization legally separate from the Gretna Public Schools.

Contact Information:

Gretna Schools Foundation	11717 So 216 <sup>th</sup> St.	332-3265
Tanya Gifford, Program Dir.	Thomas Elementary	306-3749
Thomas Elementary Laurie Foley, Site Director	11221 Northridge Dr.	332-5149
Gretna Elementary Angela Barton, Site Director	801 South St.	332-0781
Palisades Elementary Jessica White, Site Director	16820 Chutney Dr.	895-3387

## **2010-2011 KIDS CONNECTION CALENDAR**

**August 19, 2010 – First day of school**

**September 6, 2010 - Closed - Labor Day**

**October 22, 2010 - No School Kids Connection Open**

**November 5, 2010 – No School Kids Connection Open**

**November 25-26, 2010 - Closed for Thanksgiving Break**

**December 22-23, 2010 – No School Kids Connection Open**

**December 24 , 2010 - Closed for Holiday Break**

**December 27, 2010 – December 30, 2010 – Kids Connection Open  
(sites will be closed on Dec. 31 in observance of New Years Day)**

**January 17, 2011 – No School Kids Connection Open**

**February 21, 2011 – No School Kids Connection Open**

**March 25, 2011 – No School Kids Connection Open**

**April 21-22 & 25-26 – No School Kids Connection Open  
We will close at 4:00p.m. on April 22nd**

**May 25, 2011 – Last day of school**

**May 26 - May 30, 2011 – Sites Closed**

**May 31, 2011 – Summer Session begins**

**July 4, 2011 – Closed for Independence Day**

**On days when there is no school we will operate the Palisades & Thomas locations only. It is the discretion of the Superintendent & the Kids Connection Program Director to be open on snow days and which locations will provide childcare.**

**Tuition will be deducted the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month.**

## Program Information

**LICENSING:** Kids Connection is a childcare program licensed by the State of Nebraska through Nebraska Health and Human Services. Kids Connection sites are visited throughout the year by our Licensing Resource Specialist to maintain our licensing compliance with the State of Nebraska. The school-age child to adult ratio is 15:1. Kids Connection occupies the gym, commons area, library, and computer lab at each location.

Nothing is more important than a dedicated, experienced, and well-trained staff. Staff members are selected for their experience, training, and personal commitment to the needs of children. A background check is completed through the Child and Adult Protective Service Registry for all staff of the Gretna Public Schools Foundation Kids Connection program. All Kids Connection employees are required to have documented annual in-service training, and at least two employees at each site are required to have CPR and first aid certification.

**CHILDREN SERVED:** The Gretna Public Schools Foundation Kids Connection program does not discriminate in our admission policies based on race, sex, religion, place of national origin, or physical or mental abilities. Childcare is provided for children ages Kindergarten - 5th grade. During regular school days, children are only able to use the Kids Connection site where their child is registered for school.

Kids Connection provides care only for children who are: toilet trained; have age-appropriate eating, dressing, and hygiene skills; able to abide by the rules of the program as outlined in the Family Policy Manual; and are able to function effectively in a setting with one adult for each 15 children.

It is mandatory that parents list on the registration form *at the time of registration* if their child has any special needs or accommodations. Failure to comply with this request at the time of registration will result in removal from the Kids Connection program. All information listed will remain confidential; but it is for the safety and well being of your child that we request such information, so that appropriate and adequate care can be given to best serve your child's needs.

**HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION:** Kids Connection is a year round program that operates during regular school days, non-school days, snow days, and has a full day summer program. However, Kids Connection is closed on all major holidays. Please check the annual calendar listed in the previous section for a complete listing of days Kids Connection is closed.

**Gretna Public Schools Foundation Office:** The Gretna Public Schools Foundation office is open Monday-Friday from the hours of 8:00am-4:30pm. The Foundation office is closed on all major holidays.

**Kids Connection Sites (Regular School Days):** Sites are open Monday – Friday from 6:30 am – 8:30 am, and after school from 3:00 pm –6:00 pm.

**Kids Connection Sites (Consolidation Days/Snow Days):** Designated sites are open on consolidation days from 6:30 A.M. until 6:00 P.M.

**HOLIDAYS:** Kids Connection will be closed for the 8 following holidays:

New Years Day  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving  
Friday following Thanksgiving  
Christmas Eve  
Christmas Day

If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Kids Connection will either be closed the Friday preceding the holiday, or the Monday following the holiday.

**ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES FOR NEW FAMILIES:** In order to initially register in the Kids Connection program the following information must be completed and submitted to the Foundation office prior to your child's first day in the program:

- Complete the registration form
- Submit a current and complete copy of your child's immunization record
- Complete the "Tuition Express Agreement Form" and attach a voided check
- Pay the non-refundable registration fee of \$35.00 per child

At the time of registration families will be provided with a family policy manual, a current fee schedule, and any other necessary paperwork. Once the above paperwork is complete, it will then be added to the database and forwarded to the Site Director at your child's site.

**ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES FOR CURRENT FAMILIES IN THE KIDS CONNECTION PROGRAM:** Re-registration is held each year in the spring for current families wanting to register for summer and the up-coming school year. Registration is held at each individual Kids Connection site. Families who are currently in the Kids Connection program always have priority if they are registered by the registration deadline each year. Siblings who will be entering Kindergarten in the fall are also given priority for the up-coming school year. In order for siblings to receive priority, they must be registered with the child currently attending Kids Connection during the re-registration period. Priority is still given if the current child will be attending middle school for the up-coming school year. Families who do not register by the deadline will be forfeiting their spot in the Kids Connection program. If they want to re-register back into the program; they must contact the Gretna Public Schools Foundation office. In order for them to re-register, the site must have open positions, and they will be required to register as a new family.

**REGISTRATION FEE:** A non-refundable registration fee must be paid at the time of the initial registration into the program, and again annually. The initial fee is \$35.00 per family, and each subsequent annual registration is \$35.00 per family. If you remove your child from the Kids Connection Program at anytime, and want to register them back into the program a \$35.00 registration fee per family will be collected at that time.

**ENROLLMENT CATEGORIES:** Families have three choices of enrollment categories from which to choose. Tuition charges depend upon the enrollment category they choose, along with the number of children they enroll. Due to the fact that we are licensed by the State of Nebraska, space is limited, based on our license capacity for each Kids Connection site. Families will be given the option to place their child on the Kids Connection waiting list, in the event the position they are requesting is full. *Your tuition is determined by the enrollment category that you register your child/children for. Tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance, or the number of days between deduction dates.*

**Full Time** – Reserves a space each morning and afternoon

**AM Only** – Reserves a space each morning

**PM Only** – Reserves a space each afternoon

**Summer** – Fulltime (5 days) or Part-time (3 days)

**TUITION:** The Gretna Public Schools Foundation automatically deducts tuition from either a checking or savings account. Charges are only deducted on the first and third Fridays of the month. Charges for non-school days and snow days will be added to the regular tuition that is automatically deducted from your account. Directors will complete billing statements for families who register for consolidation days, and for those who attend snow days. Billing statements will reflect the days children were registered for, amount owed, and the date the deduction will occur. Tuition is based on the enrollment category that each family has registered for, and is due regardless of the child's actual attendance. Please review the enclosed fee schedule for the current tuition rates.

The Gretna Public Schools Foundation has the capability to withdraw funds out of two separate accounts. In divorce situations, the Foundation is able to split the amounts by the necessary percentage as outlined in the divorce decree. Failure of both paying parties to adhere to the conditions as stated in their divorce decree may result in termination of one or both of the accounts, and reallocation of financial responsibilities or termination from the Kids Connection program. An account will be terminated if the Gretna Public Schools Foundation receives three returned payments for a given account during one school year. Should one account no longer be valid, or if the account were terminated, 100% of the tuition would then be withdrawn from the other account. Notification will be sent to the paying party assuming 100% of the tuition detailing adjustments made regarding the other account. The Foundation will continue to withdraw 100% of the tuition out of the other account until further updated information is provided to the Gretna Public Schools Foundation office. This also applies to all other two paying parties. Failure to submit payment for all tuition and associated fees accrued on an account will result in termination of the account and the balance being turned over to collections. Terminated accounts are subject to be reviewed for reauthorization by the Gretna Public Schools Foundation the school year following the termination and all determinations made regarding all accounts are at the discretion of the Gretna Public Schools Foundation.

**HOW IS MY TUITION DEDUCTION AMOUNT DETERMINED?** Each enrollment category has an annual amount. The annual amount is then divided into 18 equal deductions. The first deduction for the school year will be on the third Friday in the month of August. The last deduction of the school year will occur on the third Friday in May. There will be no deduction taken on the third Friday in December. All other months throughout the school year will have two deductions, regardless if the Kids Connection program is closed or school is not in session. Deductions occur on the first and third Friday of the month. If for any reason the first or third Friday would occur on a holiday, the deduction would draft out of your account on the following Monday. Please review the enclosed fee schedule for the deduction dates. Please remember that deduction amounts will differ if consolidation days or snow days are added to your regular tuition/deduction amount.

**TUITION EXPRESS:** Through Tuition Express the Gretna Public Schools Foundation Kids Connection program automatically deducts the tuition from either a checking or savings account. This is a more secure way to pay your child's account rather than writing a check. Tuition Express also incorporates additional security procedures, utilizing 128-bit encryption. After registering in the Kids Connection program, Site Directors provide each family with their unique Tuition Express ID number. Families who continually use the program from year to year will have the same Tuition Express ID number. With this number and the last four digits of the account that the tuition is deducted from, families have the capability to register their account through Tuition Express. By doing this, you can receive emails and reminders when tuition is debited, as well as print monthly receipts. The Tuition Express system can only hold three months worth of account information, and only payments collected via tuition express will be reflected on statements. Checks, cash and money orders submitted to the Gretna Public Schools Foundation will not appear on your Tuition Express statements. It is our recommendation that families access their account once a month and print off a transaction receipt. The website is [www.tuitionexpress.com](http://www.tuitionexpress.com). If you request the Gretna Public Schools Foundation supply you with any financial statements pertaining to Kids Connection, a \$2.00 fee will be charged per statement requested. All financial statements or information requested must be picked up at the Gretna Public Schools Foundation in person. Photo identification matching the information on all requested statements is required in order to complete all transactions regarding financial statements.

**TUITION EXPRESS AGREEMENT FORM:** All families registered in the Kids Connection program are required to have their account set up on automatic tuition deductions through Tuition Express. At the time of the initial registration families will complete a Tuition Express Agreement Form, and provide a voided check. Your current Tuition Express Agreement form will be kept on file from year to year. Families only need to complete a new Tuition Express Agreement Form if you are changing your account information. If you need to make account changes, you must do so, in person, at the Gretna Public Schools Foundation. It takes approximately 10 business days from the time the Gretna Public Schools Foundation receives the new account information before the account is active.

**RETURN PAYMENT:** A \$35.00 fee will be assessed to your account if the Gretna Public Schools Foundation receives notification of a return payment from your financial institution. If the Gretna Public Schools Foundation receives more than three returned payments within in one school year, your child may be removed from the Kids Connection Program. If the Gretna Public Schools Foundation receives notification that your payment has been returned, a letter will be sent by the Foundation office notifying you of the return. Payment can be made at the Foundation office by the due date specified in the letter, or the amount will be added with the next scheduled deduction. If two (2) consecutive payments are returned, a second letter will be sent by the Foundation office notifying you of the return. If two (2) consecutive payments are returned, you will be notified that your child/ren will be suspended effective immediately upon the Foundation receiving notification of the return. You will be given one week beginning with the date of suspension to rectify your account. Tuition fees will be assessed during all periods of suspended services and are non-refundable. All payments must be made to the Foundation office in the form of cash or money order. Failure to rectify your account in full within one week following the date of suspension will result in immediate removal from Kids Connection, and your account being submitted to collections. Parents or guardians will be responsible for any collection costs or charges incurred. These charges will be added to the outstanding balance on their account. Should the child be removed from the program, and the account is paid in full, the child will be eligible for re-enrollment into the Kids Connection program provided the school does not have a wait list, and a \$50.00 registration fee per child is submitted. Completion of new registration paperwork may be required. If three (3) payments are returned during the school year your child/ren will be removed from the program. Should the child be removed from the program, and the account is paid in full, the child will be eligible for reenrollment into the Kids Connection program provided the school does not have a wait list, and a \$50.00 registration fee per child is submitted. Completion of new registration paperwork may be required.

**TITLE 20:** The Gretna Public Schools Foundation accepts Title 20 from qualifying individuals. Title 20 is a child care subsidy program provided by the State of Nebraska, and is set up through Nebraska Health and Human Services. In order for the Gretna Public Schools Foundation to accept Title 20, families must have a current provider authorization form on file, complete a Tuition Express form, and provide a voided check from an approved bank account. If Title 20 authorization expires, Kids Connection services will be suspended beginning the day following the authorization expiration date. Families will be given one week beginning with the date of suspended services to receive authorization to reinstate childcare services. If re-authorization is not received within the specified one week time period, immediate removal from the program will occur, unless they declare their intent to activate their account as self-pay (see below). It is the families' responsibility to contact their caseworker for re-authorization of services. The Gretna Public Schools Foundation assumes no responsibility in setting up services or for continued service. Title 20 does not pay for registration fees, late fees, or field trip fees during the school year. Should you declare your intent to activate your account as self-pay, you must do so by contacting the Gretna Public Schools Foundation, and supplying us with written notification of this request upon approval.

**Activating your account as self-pay will result in the approved bank account we have on file being charged for any childcare services rendered once you have declared intent to switch from Title 20 to self-pay. Families are responsible for any charges accrued on their account in the event that Title 20 authorization is expired and services are rendered as self-pay. All charges for self-pay services rendered are non-refundable, as the Gretna Public School Foundation will not honor backdated Title 20 authorization requests. Failure to secure Title 20 reauthorization or submit a request assuming the responsibility of full self-pay, within the one week time period beginning with the first day of suspended services will result in the family being removed from Kids Connection. Once a family is removed from Kids Connection, should they choose to re-enter the program, they will be required to do so by registering as a new family. This means the family must: complete a new registration form for each child, complete a tuition express form and provide a voided check from an approved account, submit an immunization for each child, and pay a \$50.00 registration per family. Additionally, tuition may be requested at the time of registration pending the start date of the child/ren.**

**LATE PICK-UP FEES: All children are to be picked up by 6:00 pm. Families will be charged for late pick-up at a rate of \$20.00 per child for the first 15 minutes, and \$15.00 per child for each additional 15 minutes of care provided.**

**The clock located near the designated sign-in area at your site is the clock used to determine drop-off and pick-up times. Site Directors will complete and supply families with a form indicating all late pick-up fees assessed and a date specifying when these fees will be deducted from their account. Families will not be able to use the program until they have signed the form presented to them by the Site Director detailing the late-pick up. All late pick-up fees will be deducted from your account in addition to tuition fees. Families accruing three late fees in a school year will result in immediate removal from the Kids Connection program. Families removed from Kids Connection due to late pick-up fee violation are eligible to be placed on a wait list and/or re-register for Kids Connection the following school year. Late fees begin at 6:01 pm: 6:01 pm – 6:15 pm an initial \$20.00 late fee per child is imposed; 6:16 pm – 6:30 pm an additional \$15.00 late fee per child fees is imposed; At 6:31 pm, if we have been unable to contact parents, guardians or other persons authorized to pick-up, authorities will be notified and we will report child/ren as abandoned.**

**FEDERAL TAX ID NUMBER: The Federal Tax ID number of the Gretna Public Schools Foundation Kids Connection program is 36-3754393.**

**YEAR END TAX STATEMENTS: It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to maintain records of the total amount paid for the child during the calendar year. Each family will be provided with one itemized statement by January 31 with the prior year's tuition and payment information. If you request the Gretna Public Schools Foundation supply you with additional year-end tax statements, a \$2.00 fee will be charged per statement requested. All financial statements or information requested must be picked up at the Gretna Public Schools Foundation in person. Photo identification matching the information on all requested statements is required in order**

to complete all transactions regarding financial statements.

**STATUS CHANGES:** Any change in registration status for your child, such as changing from full time to AM, must be provided by completing a 'STATUS CHANGE FORM' obtained from and returned to the Site Director at your site or from the Gretna Public Schools Foundation. Changes in the account used for your Direct Pay must be reported on a separate form provided by your Site Director. Changes made to an account shall under no circumstance be less than two weeks (14 days) prior to a deduction. Not all status changes will be granted due to our license capacity and may require being placed on a wait list until a spot becomes available.

**WITHDRAWAL FROM THE KIDS CONNECTION PROGRAM (By the family):** Families who wish to discontinue childcare services with the Kids Connection program must give a two-week (14 days) written notice of withdrawal completed on our "KIDS CONNECTION WITHDRAWAL FORM". This form is available at your child's site, or from the Gretna Public Schools Foundation located at 11217 South 216<sup>th</sup> Street. The two-week period begins from the time the Site Director receives the completed forms. Parents are obligated to continue payment of any tuition or fees to meet the requirement regardless of the child's attendance. Any charges incurred during this time are nonrefundable.

**WITHDRAWAL FROM THE KIDS CONNECTION PROGRAM (By the Foundation):** Reasonable steps will be taken to avoid termination; however, if we can no longer provide care we will give a two-week notice. The two-week notice is null and void if the child is being removed for disciplinary reasons (please see "Disciplinary Policy"). You are responsible for payment for those two weeks even if your child does not attend. Kids Connection may terminate services for any of the following reasons (but are not limited to):

- Failure to honor obligations listed in the Family Policy Manual, or in any written policies provided.
- Any actions by parents or children that adversely affect the program. Offensive language used by parent/guardian or staff harassment.
- Lack of parental cooperation.
- Failure to complete required forms.
- Inability to meet the child's needs without additional staff.
- Failure to maintain a current account balance.

# Your Child's Day

**PROGRAM PLANNING:** Site Directors at each site are responsible for program planning. Activities are prepared in advance so that staff, parents, and children are aware of the week's activities. Site Directors will also include staff and children in program planning to assist in scheduling activities suitable for all. Weekly activity plans are posted on the parent board each month. A variety of age-appropriate activities are planned daily to coincide with the daily schedule, providing the children a choice in activities in which to participate.

**SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS:** Each Kids Connection site has a variety of developmentally appropriate supplies and materials for each child to be engaged in an activity. Supplies and materials are inspected weekly to ensure that they are in good condition. Supplies and materials not in good condition will be removed from the site immediately.

**ITEMS FROM HOME:** Please discourage your child from bringing toys or other items from home. Kids Connection has ample equipment to meet the children's needs. Kids Connection will not assume responsibility for toys or other items brought from home. Be sure to visit with your Site Director regarding your site's policies regarding items from home. Please do not send your child to Kids Connection with a cell phone. They will not be allowed to use it. In the event that you need to contact your child at Kids Connection, please feel free to call the Program Director. The Program Director will be able to assist you in speaking with your child. Conversely, a child may be permitted to contact a parent/guardian if the Site Director deems the situation as appropriate.

**LOST AND FOUND:** If your child is missing articles of clothing or personal property, please inquire at the site as soon as possible. Unclaimed items will be put in the school's lost and found. Kids Connection is not responsible for lost items.

**WEBSITE:** As our program continues to grow so will our website. Our hopes are to have a link off of [www.gretnadragons.org](http://www.gretnadragons.org) in the early fall.

## **KIDS CONNECTION DAILY SCHEDULE:**

### **Morning Schedule 6:30 Site Opens**

**6:30 Table Games/Cartoons**

**7:00 Breakfast**

**7:45 Breakfast ends/Restroom & Hand Washing/Dismiss to gym**

**8:00 Dismiss for school at Gretna Elementary & Palisades**

**8:20 Dismiss for School at Thomas Elementary**

### **Afternoon Schedule 3:10 & 3:30 School Dismissal**

**3:10 Attendance at Gretna & Palisades**

**3:30 Attendance at Thomas**

**Restrooms & Hand Washing**

**3:45 Afternoon Snack**

**4:00 Homework/Spelling/Reading**

**4:30 Planned activities for the day**

**5:30 Free Choice Time in commons area or gym**

**6:00 Site Closes**

**Kids Connection will only show movies with a G or PG rating. If movies are shown, there will be a posting of the movie on the parent board. The posting will include the name of the movie, the rating, and the date of the movie. If you prefer your child not view a movie, please let your Site Director know.**

## **Attendance**

### **AM Attendance**

**Due to the fact that children arrive at different times for the morning program, children will be checked in on the attendance sheet as they arrive, or group attendance will be taken prior to school starting.**

### **PM Attendance**

**After children have arrived and placed their belongings in the designated spot attendance will be taken. Within the first 20 minutes of the program opening in the afternoon, the Site Director will have an accurate attendance record. Any child who is scheduled to attend in the afternoon and is not accounted for, the Kids Connection staff will implement the "Missing Child Procedures". This policy is outlined in a later section.**

### **Hand-washing/Restrooms**

**Children and staff are to always wash and dry their hands thoroughly before handling or consuming food, and after the use of the bathroom facilities.**

### **Snacks/Morning Breakfast Program**

Weekly menus are posted at each site. The breakfast will meet guidelines set forth by the state. Breakfast will only be served until 7:45. If your child is not going to be at the site by this time please provide them breakfast.

### **Afternoon Snack**

After attendance is complete, children will be served an afternoon snack. Weekly menus are posted so that staff, children, and parents are aware of the daily menu. Snacks must represent two of the four food groups. Adequate and appropriate portions will be given based on the children's needs. Substitution snacks are provided for children who have special dietary needs on days when the scheduled snack is not appropriate.

### **Lunch**

The Kids Connection program will not provide lunches. On the days that children will be there all day please provide them with a sack lunch.

Summer – Sack lunches required Monday, Wednesday, & Friday

Kids Connection provides lunch Tuesdays & Thursdays

### **Activities**

Each Kids Connection program offers a variety of structured as well as unstructured experiences to the children. The following areas will be a part of the daily schedule:

#### ***Gross Motor activities***

Children will have an opportunity to run, climb, and jump through outdoor free play, as well as, organized games led by the staff.

Weather permitting the children will play outdoors. All children who are well enough to be at Kids Connection will be expected to participate in this activity. You can help your child to enjoy this time outdoors by being sure that he or she is dressed for the existing weather conditions. If your child has chronic health problems that prohibit or limit outdoor play, please notify your Site Director.

#### ***Fine Motor skills***

Children will have an opportunity to participate in a variety of age appropriate table games, arts and crafts, blocks, and Legos.

#### ***Free Choice Time***

Time is set-aside for children to select materials and engage with peers to manage their play independently. This allows children to make decisions and have control of their world.

#### ***Supplemental Recreational Programming***

Children will be given an opportunity to participate in various types of supplemental recreational programming focusing on a variety of interests including: nutrition, physical activity, literature, mystery, problem solving, world culture, science, outdoor recreation, drama, art, entrepreneurial skills, citizenship, social skills, etc.

### ***Additional activities***

Additional areas are offered for children to engage in music/movement, dramatic play, reading activities, cooking, science projects, and completion of school assignments.

### **Departure**

Children leaving the Kids Connection site must be signed out daily by a parent, legal guardian, or a person specified on the child's authorization list. Parents cannot call and request their child to be signed out by a staff member to leave with another individual, or walk home. This policy is outlined in more detail in a later section.

### **Supervision & Safety**

**PROVIDING APPROPRIATE CARE AND SUPERVISION:** Staff members of a childcare program are the most important element in successful operation of the program. It is the staff that is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe, healthy environment. The staff shall assume responsibilities for providing adequate and appropriate supervision at all times children are in attendance. Every situation will differ; however, it is expected that childcare staff will use good judgment in assessing proper supervision while children are in our care. Appropriate supervision is provided by adhering to the following guidelines:

- Staff remaining in the same room as the children.
- Children shall never be left unattended.
- Staff will try to eliminate distractions and interruptions such as telephone calls & radio/ CD players.
- An accountability plan will be in place for children who need to use the bathroom or drinking fountain during outdoor play.
- If during Kids Connection time, the child needs to go to their classroom, a Kids Connection staff member will escort them.
- Staff will be visible and available at all times.

**ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN ENROLLED:** One goal of the Kids Connection program is to provide a safe environment for each child. Knowing all children scheduled to be present is part of this goal. Attendance is taken promptly after school dismissal as the children arrive in the gym. If a child is scheduled to attend Kids Connection after school, the child does not arrive, and a parent/guardian has not notified Kids Connection, the Site Director will initiate the 'Missing Child Procedure'. If a child will be absent or will be late to Kids Connection, please let the school secretary know when you call your child in. You do not need to call in for the a.m. session.

**MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE/POLICY:** If a child is scheduled to attend Kids Connection after school, and the child does not arrive, and a parent/guardian has not notified Kids Connection, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Check with the school secretary and health room aide to see if the child left school or has gone home ill.
2. Check classroom and with classroom teacher.

3. Call parent or emergency numbers on enrollment form.
4. If unable to reach parent or emergency number, the Police Department will be called for assistance.

If step 3, "call parent or emergency numbers on enrollment form," is reached on more than three occasions and the parent/guardian did not notify Kids Connection that the child would be absent, the child will be permanently removed from the Kids Connection program.

**DROP OFF & PICK-UP PROCEDURES:** A child will be allowed to leave Kids Connection only when accompanied by a parent/guardian or by a person listed in writing by the parent as authorized to pick up the child. Any parent or authorized person who picks up the child must sign the Sign In/Out Sheet and enter the time the child was dropped off and picked up. Kids Connection staff members cannot sign a child in or out of the program. Failure to sign in the child in the morning or out in the afternoon may result in the removal of the child from Kids Connection. Kids Connection will not be responsible for children left unsupervised before our official opening time. A photo ID is required for any authorized person other than a parent/guardian to pick up a child.

**SIGN IN & OUT SHEETS:** Sign in/out sheets will only be on file for the current school year.

**RELEASE OF A CHILD: CUSTODY/DIVORCE/UNAUTHORIZED INDIVIDUALS:** It is our policy to release a child to either parent unless we have a copy of a court order/divorce decree prohibiting one of the parents from having custody of the child. The school may have a copy of this, but because we are a separate entity from Gretna Public Schools we require a copy for our records. For the safety of your child, it is imperative that this information is supplied and discussed with your child's Site Director. The Gretna Public Schools Foundation will not assume responsibility for children released to unauthorized individuals if we do not have the proper documentation on file.

## Health & Safety

Illness policy: Kids Connection cannot accept any child who has a contagious illness or any of the following:

- Fever: Any child with a temperature of 100 degrees or above
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Contagious skin or eye infection

If any of the above occurs at Kids Connection, parents will be called to pick up their child. The child must be picked up within 1 hour of being notified. If we cannot reach you, we will contact the authorized individuals on your child's/children(s) registration form. Please let the Site Director know if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness. Notice will be posted to all families within the site, letting them know that their child has been exposed to a contagious illness/disease. For confidentiality reasons, the name of the child with the confirmed illness will never be released. Common colds and allergies should not, unless causing the child to feel too uncomfortable, prohibit attendance. It is our policy to have conditions that encourage cleanliness and good health practices among both staff and children. Please refer to the health exclusion policy for additional information

## Gretna Kids Connection Exclusion Policy

### EXCLUDE IF:

1. Temperature of 100°F orally, or 99°F axillaries, or higher.  
(Free of fever for 24 hours)
2. Temperature of 100°F orally, 101°F rectally or 99°F auxiliary or higher, plus one of the following: a) severe cold with yellow-green nasal discharge b) cough c) sore throat d) sneezing e) swollen glands, or f) skin rash other than mild diaper rash.
3. Headache, dizziness, or seizure.
4. Red, watery or draining eye(s).
5. All discharge has not ceased.
6. Drainage from the ear(s). 4. a) All drainage from the ear(s) has not ceased, or b) Note is required from a physician or nurse practitioner stating that the child is not communicable.
7. Lice.
8. After treatment, free of lice and nits for 24 hours.
9. Skin lesions, i.e., impetigo, ringworm, and scabies. 6. a) Skin sores are healed, or b) Note is required from a physician or nurse practitioner stating that the child is not communicable.
10. Free of upset stomach and vomiting for 24 hours.
11. Diarrhea (2 or more loose, watery stools per day). Diarrhea free for 24 hours.

**HEAD LICE:** If head lice or nits are found on your child, you will be called to pick up the child and given information on treatment. The child will be checked upon their return and may stay if the child is "nit free".

**CHRONIC AND SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS:** At the time of registration, parents are expected to indicate on their child's registration form if their child has chronic or special health needs that require special attention. Parents are expected to provide the Site Director of any procedures or accommodations that may need to be taken. All staff within your child's program will be properly trained in the procedures outlined for children who have special accommodations, needs or medical conditions listed.

**STORING AND ADMINISTERING MEDICATION:** Medication can be stored and administered at Kids Connection under the guidelines which are set forth by the Nebraska Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure division. Kids Connection requests that all medication be delivered directly to Site Directors and that proper documentation is completed. Kids Connection will not store nor administer any medication that has not been delivered to the Site Director by parent/guardian, accompanying proper completed documentation. Expired medication will not be kept on site, as it is a violation of our licensing agreement with the State of Nebraska. All expired medication will be returned directly to a parent/guardian. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to supply Kids Connection with non-expired medication, accompanying completed proper documentation in order to administer any prescription or non-prescription medication on site.

· **8-016.03 Delivery of Medication:** Any child care provider, center, or preschool staff person who gives or applies medication shall do so in accordance with the "5 Rights" as required in Nebraska Statutes 71-6718 through 6742. These are:

1. The right drug;
2. The right recipient;
3. In the right dose;
4. By the right route;
5. At the right time;

· **8-016.04 Parental Responsibility:** Parents or any licensed health care professional shall determine if child care providers or center and preschool staff are competent to give or apply medication. Center and preschool directors have the responsibility to assess the ability of staff to give or apply medication safely.

· **8-016.05 Confidentiality:** Any childcare provider, center, or preschool staff who gives or applies medication shall not disclose information about a child's medication unless such information is needed to protect the health of other children or staff.

· **8-016.06 Written Permission and Instructions:** All childcare providers, center or preschool staff shall give or apply medication, both prescription and non-prescription, only with prior written permission and written instructions from a parent. Childcare providers, center or preschool staff shall comply with the instructions provided by the parent. Medication shall be in the original container, stored according to instructions, clearly labeled for a named child, and returned to the parent when no longer needed. The dosage will not exceed that which is printed on the label. Expired medication shall

not be given or applied to a child and shall be returned to the parent.

· 8-016.06A Report to Parents: Any error the giving or applying medication shall be reported to the parent.

· 8-016.07 Unusual Circumstances: There must be a written statement from the licensed health care professional who prescribed the medication allowing the provider to give the medication when:

1. Any prescription medication is given or applied as needed (PRN); or
2. By route other than oral, topical, inhalant, or instillation.

· 8-016.09 Hand washing: All childcare providers, center and preschool staff shall wash hands before giving or applying any medication. If handling any bodily fluids is involved, caregivers must also wash hands after giving or applying medication.

**MEDICATION LOG:** Each site has a designated medication binder for children enrolled receiving medication. The information within the binder is kept confidential. For each child receiving medication there must be a completed medication log sheet signed by a parent or guardian which includes a competency statement permitting Kids Connection to administer medication to your child. If medication is to be given on an 'as needed' basis, prescription or non-prescription, a note from a licensed health care professional indicating that Kids Connection can administer the medication on an 'as needed' basis is required. Medication log forms are required to be updated each summer, at the beginning of each school year, and at any time medication type, dose, route, and/or time of administration is modified.

**MEDICATION STORAGE/FIRST AID KIT:** All medications and first aid supplies are kept on site and stored in an area that can be locked at all times. An additional locked box is provided for medications that may need to be refrigerated. The following first aid supplies are available at all times: fever thermometer and covers, band-aids, sterile gauze pads, tweezers, tape, and gloves.

**EPI-PEN:** If your child has an allergy that may require the use of an Epi-pen, Kids Connection will require his or her own Epi-pen kept on site which will be provided by the parent or guardian. If your child would require the use of the Epi-pen while in attendance the following steps will be taken:

1. The Epi-pen would be injected by a staff member.
2. 911 would be called after the Epi-pen is injected.
3. The parent or guardian would then be contacted and given further information.

**LATEX GLOVES:** Latex gloves are worn by staff when administering first aid. Please inform the Site Director and indicate on your child's registration form if your child has a latex allergy.

**SUNSCREEN:** In order for Kids Connection to administer sunscreen to a child during school year operations, a medication log must be completed by parents/guardians. A doctor's note is not required in this case. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide sunscreen that is labeled with the child's name. During summer operations, we do not require that a medication log be completed nor do we require a doctor's note; however, we do require that a parent or guardian complete a Kids Connection 'Sunscreen Administration Form'.

**MINOR AND SERIOUS ACCIDENTS:** In case of an accident at Kids Connection, emergency first aid will be administered and parents or guardians will be notified. If the Site Director is unable to reach the parent or guardian, emergency phone numbers will be used. An emergency unit will be called only in extreme cases. These units are dispatched by city or county officials according to the location of the school and are usually required to take patients to the nearest hospital. A staff member would accompany any child being transported to a local hospital, and remain with the child until the parent or guardian has arrived. At the time of enrollment parents give the Gretna Public Schools Foundation Kids Connection program permission to transport and treat in the event a medical emergency arises. A copy of the child's registration form and immunization records would be brought to the hospital with the staff member. An accident report outlining the care and procedures administered to the child will be completed and placed in the child's file. A copy will also be given to the parent and the Foundation office. The parent or guardian must sign the accident report before the child will be allowed to return to Kids Connection. Parents or Guardians are responsible for any expenses incurred due to an injury.

***General Guidelines Used for Administering First Aid***

1. Staff will not move the child until we determine the extent of the injury.
2. Any mild cut or abrasion will be washed with warm water and a Band-aid will be applied. Salves, ointments, or creams will not be applied or kept on site, unless an "as needed" script is provided by a licensed health care professional and the parent or guardian has supplied the medication.
3. In case of deeper cuts possibly requiring sutures, staff will call the parent or guardian immediately. If we are unable to reach the parent or guardian, we will contact another authorized person on the child's registration form, or notify the child's listed physician for medical advice.
4. If a limb is visibly distorted we will contact the parent or guardian immediately. The parent or guardian can then make the recommendation as to having 911 dispatched, or if the parent would prefer to transport. If we are unable to get in contact with the parent or guardian staff will call 911 immediately. If a child is transported to a local hospital, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital, and remain with the child until the parent or guardian has arrived.
5. If a child becomes unconscious 911 will be called immediately.
6. In case of a head injury of any kind, staff will apply a cold compress to the injured area, and call the parent or guardian.

**CPR/FIRST AID:** At least one staff member who is CPR/First Aid certified must be on duty at all times. Often times several employees are certified per site, as the Gretna Public Schools Foundation Kids Connection pays for any employee who desires to become CPR/First Aid certified.

**MANDATED REPORTING:** According to law, school employees and all other persons are required to notify Child Protective Services and law enforcement officials if they suspect a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.

**FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS:** Fire and tornado drills are conducted and documented quarterly. Quarterly fire and tornado drills are completed in am and pm sessions, so all children are familiar with evacuation procedures. A written record of fire and tornado drills, along with a map showing proper evacuation routes, is posted at each Kids Connection site.

**NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY:** As a licensed childcare center, we are required to provide a two component nutritious snack. There are no additional fees charged to families for breakfast or afternoon snack. Breakfast and afternoon snack is planned by the Site Directors. Site Directors are trained in menu planning and food handling.

## **Behavior Management**

**DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN:** As stated in the “Child Care Center Standards” regulation book distributed by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure for Child Care Licensing: The center shall ensure that no child is left alone, pinched, punched, shaken, struck with any object, bitten, or spanked by staff; a brief, supervised separation from the group may be used. Staff shall not discipline children: by denial of food, by forced napping, for a toileting accident, or with subjection to derogatory remarks about themselves or their family, abusive or profane language, yelling or screaming, or threats of physical punishment. Parents will be informed if the child’s behavior becomes unmanageable.

**DISCIPLINE GUIDELINE:** Fighting, hitting, kicking, abusive language, signs or expressions, back talk, disrespect, not obeying the rules, hurting another child or staff, and repetitive negative behaviors will not be tolerated.

If any of the above behaviors occur, the discipline guidelines below will be followed.

- The child will be immediately separated from the situation.
- The child will be given a cooling down period of 3-5 minutes. The separation will be brief, but the goal is for the child to regain enough self-control to rejoin the group or activity.
- Isolating the child in any area where the child cannot be seen and supervised by a staff member is prohibited.
- Depending on the behavior, it may be necessary for the Site Director to complete a Child Disciplinary report. Although not all behaviors will warrant a Child Disciplinary report, it is important for the Site Director to communicate to the parent or guardian any serious or repetitive behavior issues or incidents.
- In extreme situations, it may be necessary to immediately contact the parents or guardians.

**DISCIPLINE POLICY:** If an inappropriate behavior does occur, we will use a positive approach by encouraging the child’s good behavior and redirecting his/her activity. If the behavior continues, the child will be removed from the total situation, or given “time out”. We will also consult with parents regarding any serious problem. Each consultation is documented and placed in the child’s file. When, in the judgment of the Site Director, the inappropriate behavior is serious enough to warrant further action but not serious enough to warrant immediate suspension from Kids Connection, the Site Director will complete a Child Disciplinary Report (CDR). A copy of the CDR will be given to the child and parent/guardian, and the child may not return to Kids Connection until both the parent/guardian and the child sign the CDR. After three (3) CDR’s, the child will be suspended from the program for three (3) school days. Following the suspension, three (3) additional CDR’s will result in suspension from the program for ten (10) school days. Following the 10-day suspension, any behavior serious enough to warrant a CDR will result in immediate and permanent removal from Kids Connection. If the inappropriate behavior is of a serious nature, the Site Director and Kids Connection Administration may determine that it is necessary to immediately suspend for a determined period of time, or permanently remove a child from the Kids

Connection program. This decision would be made after the Site Director and Kids Connection Administration have investigated the facts and given the child oral and written notice of the charges against him/her, and notifying the parent or guardian of the final decision being made. Disciplinary decisions are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. All disciplinary actions are final for the best interest of the Kids Connection program. Families are responsible for all charges accruing during any period of time in which a child is suspended from the Kids Connection program. Tuition will not be adjusted for any circumstances surrounding a suspension pertaining to disciplinary actions, as all charges are non-refundable. Examples of behavior which may result in immediate suspension for a time period to be determined by Kids Connection Administration, or permanent removal from Kids Connection include, but are not limited to:

- Intentionally striking or injuring another child or a staff person
- Intentionally damaging school or Kids Connection property
- Threatening another child or a staff person
- Repeated occurrences of a behavior which might otherwise result in a written warning

**INAPPROPRIATE FORMS OF DISCIPLINE:** The following are inappropriate forms of discipline that will not be used by staff at the Kids Connection program:

- Restraints
- Profane or abusive language
- Isolation without supervision
- Placing a child in a dark area
- Inflicting physical pain
- Forced physical activity, such as running laps, doing push-ups, etc.
- Verbal abuse or loud voice tones directed in a derogatory manner

**BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT:** The above discipline guideline and policy has been established to provide consistency throughout the Kids Connection program. The lists below are other appropriate procedures that the Kids Connection program has in place to aid in behavior management:

- Children within the program will have a clear understanding of the rules and expectations of the program.
- Children in the program may help in determining some program rules.
- A variety of daily activities and routines are established that allow children to make choices.
- Praising acceptable and appropriate behaviors.
- Actively listening to children about their feelings and frustrations.
- Redirecting negative behaviors and suggest appropriate behavior.
- Employ staff that model appropriate behavior to the children.
- Allow children to resolve conflicts with staff supervision.

**STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR:** We find it helpful to provide an outline of the expected standards of behavior for families enrolled in Kids Connection. Please take a few minutes to review these statements with your child:

1. The rights, property and dignity of each person in and around the school are to be safeguarded at all times.
  - No abusive language, signs or expressions will be allowed.
  - No theft of any kind will be tolerated.
2. Authority in the program is established for the health, safety and well being of all members of the program. No child will be allowed to undermine that authority.
  - Conditions do not exist which allow for continued “back talk” from students when reasonable requests are made. Abusive language or signs will not be acceptable.
3. School facilities are the property of all residents in the Gretna School District. Day to day abuse of any part of the facility cannot be allowed to occur.
4. Each child needs a few minutes to “cool down” after an exciting day in school. Children should put belongings in designated areas, sit in their “circle”, take attendance and be served after school snack.
5. Children are expected to demonstrate a responsibility of respect for: themselves, other children, Kids Connection staff, parents, and for the space and materials we utilize for operations.

# Consolidation Days, Snow Days, & Summer Kids Connection

**CONSOLIDATION DAYS:** The program will operate during vacations, staff development days, parent-teacher conference days, teacher conventions, and early release days. Consolidated sites are used during the days school is not in session. Typically on these days, Gretna Elementary and Thomas are consolidated to one site. Your child must attend the site where their home site is assigned. A schedule of the consolidation dates and locations will be distributed in your packet for the entire school year. Building selection is based on availability, and maintenance work that may need to be done at the school. During consolidation days, Kids Connection operates from 6:30 am – 6:00 pm. In order to use consolidation days, pre-registration for these days is required. Registration sheets are available at your home site approximately two to three weeks prior to the consolidation days. Children will not be allowed to use the consolidation days unless pre-registration is complete and submitted to your Site Director by the due date. Once the registration deadline has occurred, days cannot be added, changed or removed. Charges are based on the days that you pre-register for, regardless of attendance, and charges are non-refundable. On days when school is not in session, regular rates do not apply. Please review the current fee schedule inside your registration packet indicating our current rates. Additional charges may apply if there is a scheduled fieldtrip. Consolidation charges are in addition to your regular tuition deduction that debits from your account on the first and third Friday of the month. Each Kids Connection site will require sack lunches on full days.

## THE DAILY SCHEDULE FOR CONSOLIDATION DAYS/SNOW DAYS/SUMMER

6:30- Site Opens  
6:30-7:30 Quiet Table Games or Free Choice Time  
7:30-7:45 Restroom & Hand Washing  
7:45-8:15 Breakfast  
8:15-8:45 Quiet Table Games or Free Choice Time  
8:45-8:50 Clean-up & Circle Time  
8:50-9:00 AM Attendance  
9:00-11:15 AM Center Time  
11:15-11:30 Clean-up, Restroom, & Hand Washing  
11:30-12:00 Lunch  
12:00-12:50 Outside (Weather Permitting or Indoor Activities)  
12:50-1:00 PM Attendance  
1:00-3:15 PM Center Time  
3:15-3:30 Clean-up, Restroom, & Hand Washing  
3:30-4:00 Afternoon Snack  
4:00-5:00 Outside (Weather Permitting or Large Muscle Activity)  
5:00-6:00 Quiet Table Games or Free Choice Time

**6:00- Site Closes**

**Summer -**

**6:30-8:00 Breakfast & Open Play**

**8:00-11:00 Clubs**

**11:00-12:00 Lunch & Recess**

**12:00-3:00 Field Trip or Planned activity**

**3:00-4:00 Afternoon Snack & transition time**

**4:00-6:00 Rotation of recess/crafts/open play**

**Clubs – A variety of clubs will be offered during the summer session to allow for exploration and expansion of children’s interests.**

**CENTER TIME:** During consolidation days, Kids Connection will operate center time in the morning and afternoon. Lesson plans will reflect the scheduled activities that are planned for each center. Morning center time will operate from 9:00 am – 11:15 pm, and afternoon center time will operate from 1:00 pm – 3:15 pm. Each site will offer three different centers, and children will be grouped according to age/grade level.

**Center 1: Quiet Center:** The quiet center is where the children have an opportunity to participate in books, puzzles, activity sheets and table games.

**Center 2: Art/Activity Center:** The art/activity center is where the children will have an opportunity to complete art projects and use a variety of art materials. This center will also be used for cooking and science activities.

**Center 3: Group activity/Large Muscle Activity:** This area is designated to provide children an opportunity to interact with their peers through an organized and supervised activity provided by the staff. A variety of activities should be planned for each group that is age appropriate.

**FIELDTRIPS:** During consolidation days throughout the school year, fieldtrips may be planned. Fieldtrips are an intricate part of the Kids Connection summer program. Each summer site is given designated days in which they will be allowed to leave the site for scheduled fieldtrips. Field trips are an option, and we do not require children attend. However, we feel that many of the field trips are a fun and educational experience, and feel that it is important for children to attend. We always welcome parent or guardian volunteers on field trips. If at anytime you are interested in attending a scheduled field trip, please let your home Site Director know. For added safety the adult to child ratio is lowered on field trip days. For swimming field trips we reduce child to adult ratio to 5:1. The following is a list of field trip safety procedures that is used for staff and children within the program.

## **FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES:**

### **Staff Procedures:**

- Prior to a scheduled field trip, staff is informed of important details of the trip (example: prohibited areas, meeting locations, times, cell phone numbers, etc.)
- Staff will wear a designated Kids Connection field trip T-shirt.
- Kids Connection will maintain a 5:1 child to adult ratio on swim trips. Half of the staff will be in the water, and the other half will be supervising by walking the pool deck.
- Each staff member will keep a list of children's names in their designated group.
- Each staff member will carry a first aid kit.
- Staff will accompany children to and from the bathroom.
- During the field trip, staff will count their group before moving to another designated area.
- Fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled departure time, staff will meet at a designated location. Site Directors will then complete an initial attendance and an additional head count prior to departure.
- **Accountability:** The ultimate accountability of children will be done in writing, on a field trip tracking sheet, by name as each child loads the bus.
- One staff member will be assigned to complete a final check of the bus after arrival back at the site. This will serve as added safety to make sure all children have departed the bus.

### **Procedures Established for the Children:**

- a. A buddy system will be established for each child.
- b. Children must wear a designated Kids Connection field trip T-shirt.
- c. Prior to departing the site, the following will be reviewed with the children:
- d. Bus rules.
- e. Field trip rules and safety procedures
- f. Safety procedures for crossing the street
- g. Children are taught the following steps indicated below, to take if for any reason they are to get separated from their group. We feel it is important to teach children the appropriate steps to take should such incident occur.
  1. Upon arrival at the field trip location, a "lost child" area is identified.
  2. We teach children to:
    1. Remain in the area where they last saw their group or go to the "lost child" area.
    2. Ask for help in an open visible place from someone in charge.
    3. NEVER leave the area with an unidentified person.
    4. Teach children to tell a staff member immediately if their buddy is missing.

**TRANSPORTATION FOR FIELD TRIPS:** The Kids Connection program uses Gretna School District for field trip transportation.

**BUS RULES:** The following are bus rules that children are expected to follow:

- Children must stay seated and facing front at all times.
- If windows are down, hands must remain inside the bus.
- Feet must be kept out of the aisle.
- Voice levels must be kept to a minimum while on the bus.

**SUMMER KIDS CONNECTION:** During summer, Kids Connection operates from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm at selected sites. Summer rates will apply. A calendar of summer activities such as swimming, field trips and special activities will be published and submitted with the registration materials provided in the spring. Most activities on the calendar are included in the tuition. However, there may be additional activities or items that may require additional payment at your child's site, if your child participates. Children are only able to attend the summer site where their home site is assigned. Children must have completed their first year of Kindergarten before being eligible to attend the summer Kids Connection program. Children enrolled in the summer program do not receive vacation credit during summer operations. Families are charged for twelve weeks of services. Should operations exceed 12 weeks families will incur no additional charge.

**SNOW DAYS:** If school is cancelled due to weather conditions, Kids Connection will make every effort to open, however there are many factors we must take into consideration. First and foremost is safety, the district's ability to remove snow at the designated sites, or other conditions that could pose a danger to the children, staff, or facility. In the event that Kids Connection is closed, the Foundation will try to place the closing on the local television stations and radio. Because we are not a school, television stations may choose not to post it on their closings. Information will be posted on our website regarding Kids Connection operations due to inclement weather conditions: [www.gretnadragons.org](http://www.gretnadragons.org). Always call ahead if you have any questions to the main number 332-3265 as our voice messaging system would reflect whether or not Kids Connection will be open or closed.

If school is closed due to weather conditions the decision will usually be made by Gretna Public School District officials before 6:30 am, and announced on local radio and television stations. If Kids Connection is operating, it will open at the designated sites listed below. The hours of operation would be from 6:30 am until 6:00 pm. Snow days are the only days that parents or guardians do not have to pre-register for, and can use any locations listed below. Breakfast and PM snack will be provided at no additional charge, as it is included in the full day rate. You would be responsible to pack your child a sack lunch. The full day rate will apply on snow days. A snow day billing statement will be given at your child's home site. The statement will reflect the date of the snow day, total amount due, and the date the amount will be deducted with your regular deduction amount.

**Designated Snow Sites:**  
**Palisades (to be determined)**  
**Thomas (Consolidate with Gretna)**

**Designated Summer 2011 Sites: Thomas Elementary & Palisades Elementary**

**School closings announced after 6:30 am**

**If school is closed due to weather conditions, and the decision is made by the Gretna Public School District officials AFTER 6:30 am, all Kids Connection Sites will be open regular hours from 6:30 am until 6:00 pm.**

**School closings announced during the school day**

**If school is closed due to weather conditions during the school day, all Kids Connection sites will be open as soon as staff arrives.**

## **Partnership with Families**

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:** Parental involvement is a very important part of our program. Parents and children working together with staff members is an important element in a quality childcare program. Visitation is encouraged by parents and other interested parties who wish to visit the site. A solid relationship with the Kids Connection employees at your school, built on mutual trust and respect, is key in

**making your child care arrangement work well for everyone. Keep these tips in mind as you begin to build your relationship:**

- **Keep the lines of communication open at all times. Let your provider know if there is something going on in your child’s life that may be affecting behavior.**
- **Be aware of program policies and honor them. Respect drop-off and pick-up times, and call if you are going to be late for any reason.**
- **Get involved with the program. The more you participate, the more dedicated you will feel.**
- **There are bound to be certain topics or situations that are difficult to talk about with Kids Connection employees. If you have developed an honest, open way of communicating with one another, discussing these issues as they arise will not be as difficult. Things to consider when discussing difficult issues:**
  - **Raise issues when they first develop. If you put off a discussion, it may be harder to bring it up later.**
  - **Avoid confronting Kids Connection employees in front of other parents or children. Set up a time to speak privately, in person, or over the phone.**
  - **Think about what you want to discuss ahead of time, and even practice how you want to say it.**
  - **Be specific about your concerns. Give examples of things that have happened or observations you have made.**
  - **Never discuss a problem when you are feeling angry or not in control of your emotions.**
  - **Remember that conflicts are normal and part of most relationships. They can usually be resolved when both parties can see the other’s views and are willing to compromise.**

#### **KIDS CONNECTION COMMITMENT TO FAMILY FRIENDLY SERVICE:**

**To keep our commitment we need your help throughout the year!**

**Help us “stay in tune” with your needs and interests!**

- Tell us about your day when you pick up your child.**
- Help us learn about your child’s special talents and strengths.**
- Tell us when your child needs extra help or support.**

- Keep us informed about any important changes we need to know about to serve you
- Let us know about your family and cultural traditions.
- Make suggestions when you think we could serve you better.
- Ask questions if you don't understand our policies or procedures.
- Tell us the best ways for you to connect with your child's experience in our program.

**Visit whenever you can – You are always welcome!!**

**We want to build positive relationships with all of our families.....help us CONNECT to achieve this goal!**

**COMMUNICATION TOOLS:** The list below indicates strategies which the Kids Connection program feels are helpful in communicating with families.

- A parent bulletin board is posted at each site with reminders, policies, and general information specific to your child's site.
- Each family has their own parent file. Parent files should be checked daily for correspondence.
- Monthly newsletters will be distributed by the Site Director highlighting program events and news.
- Ideas, Suggestions, & Complaint Forms are available for parents to complete at anytime. These forms can generally be located on the sign in and out table at your child's site.
- Our website ([www.gretnadragons.org](http://www.gretnadragons.org)) is an excellent way for our families to access general information regarding Kids Connection policies and procedures, lesson plans, breakfast and snack menus, contact information and much more.

**VISITORS:** Kids Connection welcomes you to visit the site at anytime and wants you to feel free to ask questions. Please consult with the Site Director should any problems arise concerning your child, whether at home, school or Kids Connection. Visits are also conducted by the Kids Connection Program Director, Foundation Boards Members, and State-licensing officials.

**FAMILY INFORMATION:** It is the responsibility of parents to notify the Site Director of any changes in employment, address, phone numbers, care and/or custody arrangements, and any other important information regarding the child or family situation. All changes must be completed in writing and submitted to your Site Director.

**PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Call your child's site or speak to the Site Director if your child will not be attending.
- Notify the site in advance if anyone other than the parent or guardian will pick the child up.
- Notify your Site Director of any special needs your child may have. The information must also be listed on your child's enrollment form.
- Sign your child in/out daily.

- Honor Kids Connection operating hours by not dropping your child off before 6:30 am, and picking your child up by 6:00 pm.
- Update your child's records as changes occur.
- Notify the Site Director in the event of questions or concerns with Kids Connection staff or policies.
- Have your tuition account set up with a valid account through Tuition Express, and keep the account current.
- Notify in writing on the appropriate form provided by the Kids Connection program of changes to your child's enrollment status or intention to withdraw from the Kids Connection program.

**PARENT PROGRAM EVALUATIONS:** Year-end program evaluations will be provided for the parents to complete. Evaluations will be placed in the individual parent files. Once the evaluations are completed, evaluations will then be forwarded to the Foundation office.