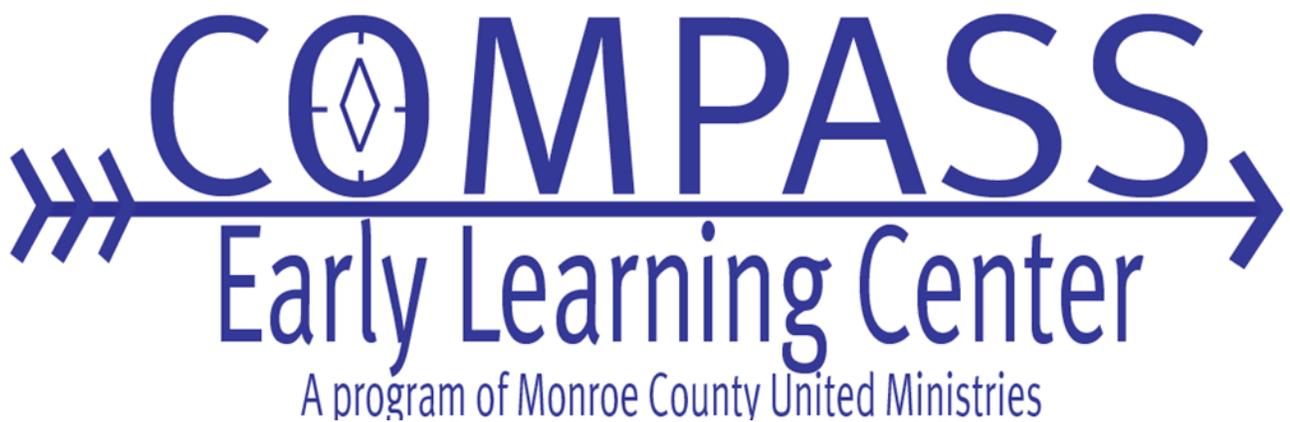


2020
Parent Handbook



Welcome to Compass Early Learning Center!

History

In 1939, the Bloomington Council of Church Women saw a need for child care for low-income working families on Bloomington's northwest side. Through their efforts, we were born as the Bloomington Day Nursery, the first all-day nursery school in Bloomington and the first licensed child care program in the county. Throughout our history we have been known by several names: The Bloomington Day Nursery, The Christian Center and Monroe County United Ministries. In 2017, we specifically named our childcare program Compass Early Learning Center. We serve children from families of all income levels and offer our own sliding fee scale in addition to the Child Care Development Fund and On My Way Pre-K vouchers.

MCUM is funded by a number of sources, including: parent fees, the faith community, United Way, city & county government, state and federal funding programs, and many individual contributors. Without these funds, including child care fees, Compass would not be able to offer its fee scale.

Mission

MCUM creates lasting solutions to educational, economic and social injustice in our community through quality services, collaboration, and innovation. Our 30-year vision is to eliminate generational poverty in Monroe County. You can learn more about the agency at www.mcum.org.

Legal Responsibility

MCUM is governed by a Board of Directors who has legal and fiduciary responsibility over the programs and facilities. Some board members are appointed for one year and others are elected into 3-year terms. The Board has several committees that oversee various functions of the agency. The Program Committee is responsible to oversee and review parent surveys and policies pertaining to the child care program, as well as consider and approve payment plans.

Non-Discrimination

Monroe County United Ministries shall not discriminate against any current or potential client, applicant, employee, member, volunteer or participant on the basis of race, color, marital, parental or familial status, religion, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, nationality, age, disability, ancestry, reprisal, political beliefs, or any legally prohibited classification.

Compass Program Overview

Compass Early Learning Center is open Monday-Friday, 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM all year, excluding the following MCUM holidays:

- New Year's Day

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

Compass also typically closes for 4 days to offer professional development and training to our staff on topics such as: supervision, curriculum development, & first aid recertification. When possible, these trainings will be scheduled during the above closures to avoid scheduling conflicts.

Additionally, Compass may be closed the week in between Christmas and New Years Day. Please see the Appendix for our current school-year calendar.

Lead Teachers determine individual class schedules and post them in the classrooms for parents. Every schedule will include a variety of activities, indoors and out, as well as meals. All schedule activities conform to licensing regulations and Paths to Quality standards, and include the following activities:

- **Circle Time:** Conversation & sharing, music & movement, finger plays, stories, flannel board, or circle games.
- **Learning Centers.** Children may choose from centers such as art, language, dramatic play, music, math/science, social studies, and large & small muscle movement.
- **Lunch.** Wash hands & story if time permits before lunch. After lunch: Wash up & go to the bathroom.
- **Outdoor Play.** Children select from a variety of outdoor activities such as sand play, using balls & large wheeled toys, swinging, climbing, gardening, jump ropes, nature walks, painting and so on.
- **Rest Time.** Quiet time prior to rest: Children hear a recorded story, song or may be read to by staff or volunteers. As children wake, they read books or play quiet games on their cots; children who do not sleep or who awaken early are offered another section of the room to look at books, play with table toys, and engage in other quiet activities

Compass Early Learning Center is licensed by the State of Indiana as a center-based care. Facilities and records are inspected regularly by the Indiana Family & Social Services Administration (FSSA), the State Fire Marshal, & Child and Adult Food Program. We work diligently to meet the requirements of these agencies and consistently receive high marks from these inspections. You are welcome to view our most recent inspection reports upon request.

The following are prohibited on MCUM property (including the parking lots):

- Smoking;
- The use of alcohol;

- Use or possession of firearms unless required to carry a firearm as a condition of employment; and
- Use or possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances.

Education Philosophy

At Compass, we believe young children have a natural curiosity about the world in which they live and an innate thirst for learning. Our teachers use a philosophy known as developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) to engage children's minds in many creative ways.

Developmentally appropriate activities are projects that are suitable to the child's age, individual talents, and culture. Our program's philosophy includes the belief that when presented with developmentally-appropriate materials and learning tools, a child grows and develops to her/his full potential. Our goal is to make education so much fun children will think that they played all day, when really they have learned through play. Generally, our Lead Teachers will conduct a baseline developmental assessment within the first month of enrollment. We aim to conduct a minimum for two additional assessments each year in order to determine progress and highlight where additional resources could be beneficial in keeping your child on track for kindergarten readiness.

Curriculum

Compass Early Learning Center uses the Creative Curriculum as the main basis that guides teachers' development and intentional implementation of learning opportunities consistent with the goals for children in our care. The Creative Curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based program that features exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. The Creative Curriculum focuses on the social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language developmental domains.

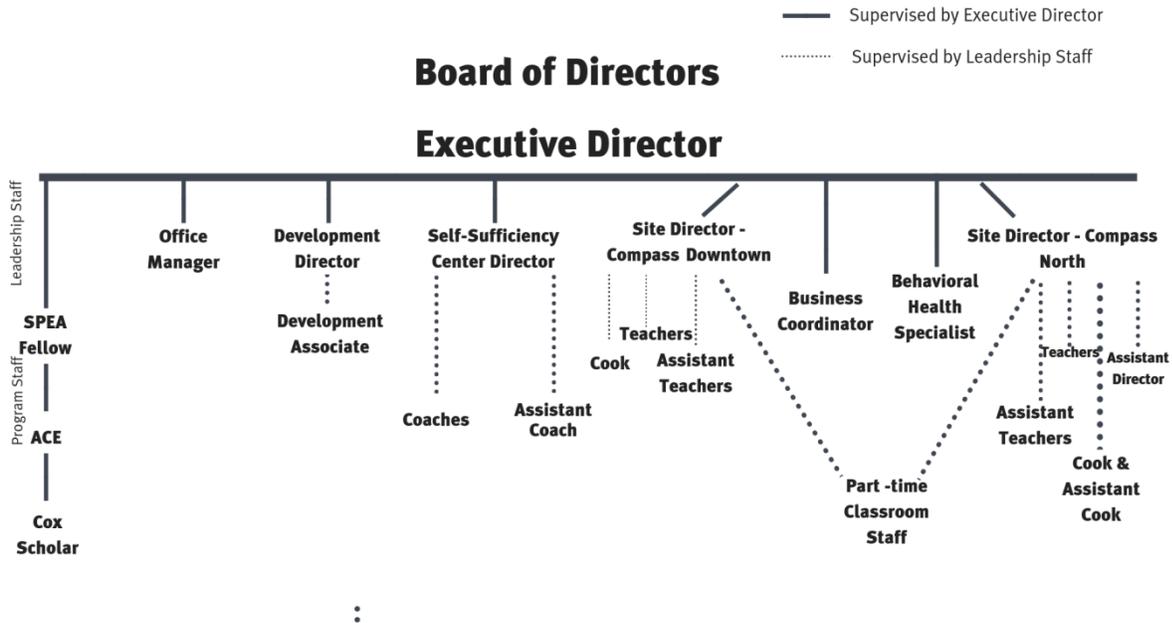
Staff & School Family

We abide by the guidelines set forth by the State of Indiana center-based child care licensing standards. However, we see these standards as minimum limits of the education and experience required. Therefore, we really strive to exceed these limits and hire persons who are the most qualified at the time of hiring.

All lead teachers must have a current Child Development Associate credential, a degree in early childhood education, child development, or in elementary education with a kindergarten endorsement.

In addition to these educational and experience requirements, all staff must pass a FBI fingerprinting search, an initial and random drug screening, a general health physical and an annual TB test. All staff is certified in pediatric first aid and CPR. Lastly, they must receive 30 hours of additional training each year.

Here is MCUM's organizational chart:



Executive Director - The Executive Director is primarily responsible for the overall operation of the entire agency, including the Self-Sufficiency Center and Compass Early Learning Center. Any parent may make an appointment with the Executive Director.

Katie Broadfoot – 812-339-3429 ext. 11 or kbroadfoot@mcum.org

Site Director – The Site Director oversees the staff and guides the programs day-to-day operations. Any issues or problems not resolved on the classroom level should be brought to the attention of the Site Director.

Compass-North: Brittney Denton – 812-339-3429 ext. 10 or bdenton@mcum.org

Compass-Downtown: Stacy Jones – 812-727-3737 or sjones@mcum.org

Compass Business Coordinator - The Business Coordinator is responsible for fees & enrollment paperwork associated with Compass families and maintains personnel files. She also helps facilitate payment plans.

Kayla Delaplane – 812-339-3429 ext. 19 or kdelaplane@mcum.org

Lead Teachers – Teachers are responsible for the overall functioning of the classroom. They work closely with the Teacher Aides in planning the layout of the room, the curriculum, and the activities taking place within the room and play areas.

Teacher Aides – Teacher Aides work closely with Teachers to carry out the planned activities of the classroom, assist with cleaning and maintaining order in the classroom and play areas.

Part-Time Aides – These classroom staff help cover ratio during busy times during the day and assist Lead Teachers & Teacher Aides with planned activities.

Behavioral Health Specialist – We have a full-time early childhood mental health therapist on our staff. She holds her MSW & LCSW credentials and can be available to all children enrolled in our program upon consent to treat protocol. Teachers often make referrals but parents are also welcome to self-enroll.

Megan Stahly, MSW, LCSW – mstahly@mcum.org

Cook and Cook Assistant – The Cook and Cook Assistant have primary responsibility for the food service of the child care program. They plan menus, order food, rotate stock, prepare and serve meals and clean up the premises after the meal is concluded

Volunteers - We have a number of volunteers who work in our agency and visitors to the classroom. Volunteers who work 8 hours or more a month have been screened with a FBI fingerprinting search and are required to have a TB test. If you see a new face, never hesitate to inquire who is present in your child's classroom.

All about Enrollment

Eligibility

1. Enrolling, custodial parent must be a Monroe County resident;
2. All household parents/guardians must meet one of the following employment/educational criteria:
 - Employed 25+ hours per week
 - Enrolled in a full time accredited educational program
 - Employed part time (20+ hours/week) & enrolled in an accredited educational program part time (6+ credit hours)

The Business Coordinator reviews eligibility twice annually, in February and in August. During reverification, parents will be asked to verify their income & resubmit new class schedules. If you have any changes in your job, school, or life circumstances that might impact your eligibility, please inform us as soon as you can so we can work together on a solution.

Process

Please contact a Site Director to arrange a brief, informal meeting and tour of our facility – we want to make sure it is going to be a great fit! Site Directors can inform you of the availability of spots and/or your position on Compass' waitlist. If you determine Compass is the place for you, please complete an Enrollment Packet along with a \$25 registration fee.

Once you have completed the Enrollment Packet and its form contents, our Business Coordinator will need the following additional things from you once we have a spot available for your child:

- A certified copy of your child's birth certificate;
- Employment & educational verification: paycheck stubs for the previous 30 days, your class schedule, or both;
- Child support documentation (if applicable);
- Documentation for any other income (SSI, rental income, unemployment, etc.), and;
- A completed Physical form.

Children cannot attend Compass without the paperwork and documentation above. Health examinations must be completed by a physician within one year prior to admission or no later than 30 days after admission.

Schedule & Schedule Changes

We expect children to attend our program regularly. All enrollments are based on 5 days per week unless special arrangements have been made with MCCSC's Special Education program.

Children who do not maintain attendance of at least 25 hours per week may be dropped from the program.

Please submit your tentative daily schedule to the Site Directors upon enrollment, and thereafter any time your work or school schedule changes your drop-off/pick-up times. Schedules are used to make sure we can maintain adequate staffing patterns. Please never hesitate to inform us of unusual circumstances that warrant a temporary change to your schedule; we'll accommodate changes whenever we can.

Classrooms & Ratios

Each group of children (class) is assigned teaching staff who have primary responsibility for working with that group of children. This staff will provide ongoing personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care as needed to protect your child's well-being.

Compass Early Learning Center meets all requirements of staff to children ratios as mandated by our license. Ratios are maintained during all hours of operation (including field trips and outdoor time).

When there is a combination of ages within a group of children, during opening and closing times, in particular, staff shall determine the ratio required by the age of the youngest child in the group. On occasion, we may merge classrooms in accordance with licensing standards to best utilize the staff available.

Classroom Transitions

Children will typically transition to the next age group when a spot becomes available. Our staff make great efforts to get to know every child in the program to ensure the child's comfort when they do move from one group to another. Additionally, children are given every opportunity to get to know their new teacher prior to moving into the new room.

Financial Policies

Tuition Fee Structure

Compass accepts 3 distinct payment options, each of which determines your weekly tuition:

1. Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) (aka CASY) vouchers
2. On My Way Pre-K vouchers
3. Compass' Sliding Fee Scale

CCDF

This is a fee assistance program administered through Chances and Services for Youth (CASY), whereby parents have **little to no fees** associated with childcare, but Compass will be reimbursed. All eligible families must apply for this program. We can help you apply if you are not already on it – please contact our Business Coordinator. It is the responsibility of parents to provide proper documentation to support their applications. Parents who are eligible and choose not to apply will be charged the full fee on our sliding fee scale.

Once accepted into the CCDF program, parents will receive a card to swipe for their attendance. The card is the property of the parents and cannot remain onsite. **This card must be swiped each day.** We understand that sometimes others bring your children to school and they don't have possession of your card. In those cases, please swipe your card at the next opportunity or simply provide others with your 16-digit card number. All swipes must be made up within one week, otherwise we will not be able to accept your child in our care.

It is important to note that the CCDF program are limited in the number of days their children can be absent from our program. You may choose to use those days for vacation, personal days, or sick days. We urge caution in using these days because if a child is absent after these days are used up for the year, you will be assessed the full fee for the time period they missed.

On My Way Pre-K

This is a fee assistance program for 4 year olds administered through the State of Indiana whereby parents often have **no fees** associated with childcare, but Compass will be reimbursed. All eligible families must apply for this program. We can help you apply if you are not already on it – please contact our Business Coordinator. It is the responsibility of parents to provide proper documentation to support their applications. Parents who are eligible and choose not to apply will be charged the full fee on our sliding fee scale.

Once accepted into the On My Way Pre-K program, parents will receive a card to swipe for their attendance. The card is the property of the parents and cannot remain onsite. **This card must be swiped each day.** We understand that sometimes others bring your children to school and they don't have possession of your card. In those cases, please swipe your card at the next opportunity or simply provide others with your 16-digit card number. All swipes must be made up within one week, otherwise we will not be able to accept your child in our care.

Compass Fee Scale

All families not eligible or on the wait list for CCDF and On My Way Pre-K will be placed on our own sliding fee scale, which sets your weekly fee **based on your household size and income** so as to ensure you are not paying more than 10% for childcare. You can see where you will fall in current fee scale, posted in the Appendix. We also offer a discount for siblings, as noted on the fee scale.

Fees are posted to your account each Monday for the following week and are due weekly on Fridays. We can accept cash, check, and credit cards. You can also set up automatic payments, which we highly recommend. Receipts will be placed in your child's folder the following day.

Payment Plans for Fee Scale Families

Our goal is to provide services at an affordable price. If you find you are struggling to keep current on your fee scale tuition rate or have special circumstances that might change the frequency or day you would be able to pay in full, we are happy to arrange a payment plan.

If you would like to create a payment plan, please write a brief letter explaining your circumstances and deliver it to our Business Coordinator. Each month, our Business Coordinator will pass requests to the Program Committee of the Board of Directors, who will approve, deny, or modify plans. The committee only reviews requests during their monthly meetings, so please

allow up to 30 days for a decision. Until a plan has been approved, parents are responsible for their current tuition rate.

When a plan is approved, the terms will be formally drafted and signed by both parties as an agreement.

Extra Charges

- There is a charge of \$15 **per child** not clocked out, picked up, and out of the building by 5:40 PM, plus \$10 for every 5 minutes after 5:40 PM.
- We charge a \$20 service fee for bounced checks.
- Children in our older classrooms have the opportunity to swim at Mills Pool over the summer for a small fee (which varies by year, as determined by the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department). Anyone who is unable to pay these fees can apply for a scholarship – we can help you through that process.

Other Financial Policies

We will provide an annual summary of fees paid in the previous year for tax purposes, upon request. Please contact our Business Coordinator with at least 3 days' notice.

We can accept payments by family members or friends, as long as the name of your child is in the memo line.

Compass charges for 6 holidays.

At the end of our program year (December 31), we close our accounts and must have all payments in full.

Families who have withdrawn from the program and who owe balances will be turned over for collection if not paid. All costs of collection, plus interest, will be added to the balance due.

Program Policies & Information

Attendance

Enrollment is based on five days per week and 25 minimum hours unless special arrangements have been made through MCCSC's Special Education program.

Children who will be eating breakfast at Compass must be here by 9:15 AM, otherwise, all children should arrive by 9:30 AM, in clean diapers. Children must be picked up by 5:30 PM.

Please call us and let us know if your child is not going to attend school. Children not present for 10 consecutive days without contact will be terminated from our program on the 10th day.

Enrolled parents pay their weekly fee even if a child is absent (vacation or sick).

Parents who withdraw their children from our program over the summer have no guarantee of re-enrollment in the fall, although we will attempt to accommodate families who wish to reenroll.

Snow Days

When MCCSC schools close for snow-related reasons, so does Compass. When there are weather delays, Compass will open at regular business hours and will be open for drop-off until 9:30 AM, like normal.

Closings will be posted to MCUM's Facebook page as well as local radio and TV stations.

Drop-off and Pick-up Policy & Procedure

You will be given a door code to use to get into the building as well as to clock your child in and out on the computer inside of the front door as you enter. Once you are clocked in/out please walk him/her to their room, bringing them to a teacher and signing them in/out on the classroom clipboard. We are not responsible for your child until he or she is brought to a teacher and signed in on the clip board in their classroom. Anyone picking up your child will need to be on their pick up list. If the person picking up has never done so before, even if they are a parent, they will need to show a photo ID to a teacher before the teacher will release the child to them. No one under the age of 16 may pick up, and those who are must have a valid driver's license with no restrictions. Please make sure to inform anyone dropping off or picking up your child that they will need to clock them in/out on the computer and sign them in/out on the clipboard.

Release of Children

For the protection of children, a child may be released only to adults or children over 16 years old with a full, unrestricted driver's license, as indicated on his/her emergency form. You may update your form at any time by contacting our Business Coordinator or Site Director. In the case of a last minute change, you may call our office. However, identification will be required of this individual in order for us to release your child.

Children will not be released to persons under the apparent influence of drugs, alcohol or who pose another safety risk that may be harmful to a child.

Due to safety issues, it is very important that we always have two current contacts with telephone numbers on file. If we attempt repeatedly to reach a parent or their contact numbers without success, we are required to contact child welfare.

Communication

Teachers use a variety of methods to keep parents informed about their class activities, and will also offer parent-teacher conferences each year. All employees of MCUM are required to exercise discretion in regard to all matters pertaining to official business and records. We ask that parents also exercise this same discretion, particularly in the temptation to add pictures or names of your child with his/her friends on social media.

Staff-Parent Communication

All classrooms have communication logs as another means to communicate when face-to-face daily interactions are not possible. It is helpful when, after reading each entry, you initial to indicate you have read it. Teachers may provide information that requests a follow-up conversation or conference, which you may schedule at a time convenient for both of you.

Class Dojo is an optional app you can download to communicate with your teacher, other parents, and the school family at large. Teachers also have classroom newsletters that will be distributed frequently to update you on lesson plans.

Health and Wellness

We strive to promote positive health and wellbeing each day in our program through active play, healthful nutrition, rest, and social-emotional development.

Sickness

We cannot accept or keep ill children in our center. Please keep your child at home if he or she shows signs of illness and call us to let us know each day he/she will be absent.

Compass follows the American Academy of Pediatrics Managing Infectious Diseases within Childcare Standards. The Appendix shows the most common reasons we may send your child home. Your child will be kept as comfortable as possible in our health room until picked up. If a parent cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called. If your child is sick for more than 5 consecutive days, state regulations require a doctor's statement of good health before he or she may return to school.

Medications

We are glad to distribute medication in its original container with a label that state's the child's name, doctor's name, prescription number, name of the medication, date, and instructions. Staff will record distribution on a log indicating the time of administration and their initials.

We distribute over-the-counter medicine the same as prescription medicine, with a doctor's note and in its original packaging only.

Medications will only be distributed by staff who have been trained in passing medication. All medications are stored in the Health room and not the child's classroom. At the end of the day, please pick up medications and take them home.

Allergies

Please notify us of any allergies, food allergies or other medical conditions. Because of animal allergies, MCUM will not permit pets with fur or feathers on site, except as "visiting" pets for educational or demonstration purposes.

For children with special health or food allergies, the child's health care provider must give MCUM an individual care plan that is prepared in conjunction with the parents and specialists involved in the child's care. Parents give consent, upon enrollment, for MCUM to post any allergies. Allergy lists could be posted in each classroom office, the health room, and the teachers' lounge. All food allergy lists are posted in the kitchen. Parents may be required to bring in alternate foods to replace items on the menu, i.e. replacing cow's milk with a soy product.

Due to allergies, state regulations prohibit home baked goods in the school. Individual birthdays will be celebrated with singing and talking about your child's special day. You may send a treat for the entire class for special occasions (fruit, prepackaged snacks, stickers, etc.), but please speak with a Site Director in advance.

Head Lice

Please notify us if your child has head lice or nits (eggs). If lice or nits are found while the child is in our care, parents will be called to pick the child up immediately. Please, do not bring your child back to Compass until he/she has been treated with special shampoo. Proof of treatment must accompany child when he/she returns. We reserve the right to exclude children where proof has not been satisfactorily provided.

Injuries

In the event of a minor injury, child care personnel will implement standard first aid techniques. If the situation is more serious and further treatment is required, an ambulance may be called at the parents' expense. Parents will be contacted immediately through the numbers given on the emergency card

In the event of a serious medical emergency, one staff member will begin first aid treatment. A second person will call for an ambulance; will telephone the parent or failing that, the person on the emergency card; and contact the Site Director and/or the Executive Director. A staff member who is known to the child will travel with the child to the hospital.

Some injuries are not severe enough to warrant transport to the emergency room by ambulance, yet the injury may require treatment beyond first aid levels. In these instances, the parent will be contacted to come and transport the children themselves.

Behavioral Health Services

Compass is proud to employ a full time early childhood mental health therapist who can provide services to your child while they are here in our care, **at no cost to you**. This is a voluntary service. Our therapist focuses on the child and family's strengths through positive reinforcement as well as behavioral and cognitive modification.

The foundation for sound mental health is built early in life, as early experiences—which include children's relationships with parents, caregivers, relatives, teachers, and peers—shape the architecture of the developing brain. Sound mental health in the first few years of life provides an essential foundation of stability that supports all other aspects of human development—from the formation of friendships and the ability to cope with adversity to the achievement of success in school, work, and community life later in life.

Significant mental health issues do occur in children this age, and it can have social, developmental, physical and academic consequences as well as mental health issues such as anxiety and post-traumatic stress. Early intervention and prevention can help to strengthen their development by building resilience, protective factors, coping skills, self-regulation skills, relationships and identifying needs in the family.

Therapy will be conducted through therapeutic play, because this is how a child at this age communicates and learns. Play provides many benefits, including stress relief, provides positive connections, improves self-esteem, teaches emotion regulation skills, etc. It also allows children to practice these skills. Our sessions help your child (depending on age, developmental ability and individual need) learn to...:

- become more responsible for behaviors and coping skills.
- problem solve.
- regulate his or her emotions, including relaxation skills and anger management techniques.
- cultivate empathy and respect for the thoughts and feelings of others.
- learn new social skills and interpersonal skills for use at school and at home.
- develop an improved self-esteem.

Children may benefit from therapy if they....:

- have frequent tantrums or defiant behavior.
- have aggressive behaviors such as biting or hitting.
- are experiencing difficulties in school or childcare.
- have difficulty connecting with either peers or adults.
- exhibit fear, worry or anxiety, including separation anxiety.
- have eating or sleeping problems.
- are struggling with an adjustment such as the birth of a sibling, entering school or day care, etc.
- appear withdrawn or disconnected, or is experiencing regressive behaviors.
- are coping with a recent separation or divorce in the family.
- have experienced trauma such as domestic violence, abuse, hospitalization, etc.

If you have any questions about early childhood mental health therapy, our program, or want to get to know our therapist to determine if this might be a good fit for your child, please contact our therapist, Megan, at (812) 339-3429 ex. 32 or mstahly@mcum.org for an initial assessment. Megan coordinates care with other agencies and can also help connect families with community resources, including MCUM's Self-Sufficiency Center.

Teachers are trained in referring children who may need individual support to Megan. If your child is referred, Megan will contact you. This is a voluntary service, which you are welcome to accept or decline.

Safety

To insure the safety of the children during a fire, monthly fire drills are performed. During tornado season, tornado drills are practiced as well. Each classroom has these emergency plans posted by the door including an exit map.

Emergency Action Plan

MCUM has adopted an emergency action plan in the event of an emergency. The plan includes strategies for sheltering-in-place, evacuation to the administrative building on our campus or even off premises. In the event of an evacuation, the safety of the children is our primary consideration. If we leave our campus, information will be broadcast on all the local radio stations giving information as to where you may pick up your children. We will also post a notice on the front doors of the center indicating where we have gone. Once we are completely away and established at our evacuation center, we will contact you or other persons on the child's emergency cards to have someone pick up the children as quickly as possible. Parents must make immediate arrangements for the pickup of their children following a disaster. Parents/guardians who pick their children up at an alternate location must sign for the children. If parents/guardians or emergency contacts cannot be reached within 3 hours of closing, staff may contact Child Protection to take over the care of the child(ren).

Certain disasters such as a toxic spill or other biohazard may require quite drastic measures, including conditions that are unsafe for us to allow people to enter our facility. In that case, the doors will be locked and no one will be granted access until local authorities assures us that it is safe to open the doors. This is to guarantee the safety of all the children. We have enough food and water on our premises to remain comfortable for up to three days.

Any parent with questions about our emergency action plan is encouraged to contact the Site Directors or Executive Director and speak with them about their concerns or to receive a copy of our written plan.

Proper Clothing

Please send children dressed for active and/or occasionally messy play and dressed for the weather. Children in diapers should arrive in a clean diaper. Always send your child with close-toed shoes that fasten - no sandals (must strap behind the heel), clogs or flip-flops. Improper footwear is a common cause of injury. We reserve the right to provide a change of clothing (if possible) or send a child home when children are not dressed appropriately for the season.

A change of clothing for your child should be kept in their cubby. If your child uses their change of clothing, please send in another set of clothes with them the next day. For children requiring diapers, parents must send diapers in the original packaging and baby wipes. We will let you know when your supply is running low so that you can replenish it.

Driveway Etiquette

Please be aware of the dangers of pedestrians in our driveway. Children may cross in front of you unexpectedly. Children frequently exit our doors and may start across the parking lot without looking while en route to the playground or pool. Please help us maintain vigilance in this matter and drive slowly while within the perimeter of the grounds.

Never leave a purse or backpack in an unlocked car while on MCUM premises. We are not responsible for theft of items taken from vehicles in our parking lot, whether locked or unlocked.

Discipline

We are excited to introduce you to our comprehensive classroom management program called Conscious Discipline. It is a way of organizing our classroom around the concept of a School Family, where each member learns the skills needed to successfully manage life tasks such as learning, handling frustration, communicating effectively, being sensitive to people's needs and getting along with others. Conscious Discipline empowers teachers and students with Seven Basic Skills of Discipline: composure, encouragement, assertiveness, choices, positive intent, empathy, and consequences. Please don't hesitate to call or stop by the office if you have a question or would like more information about the really cool stuff going on in our classrooms! You can also learn more about Conscious Discipline by visiting www.ConsciousDiscipline.com.

Behavior Management

Compass Early Learning Center believes in providing a safe, nurturing environment and building connections with the children to assist them to learn and grow. The method of discipline utilized here is Positive Discipline which provides consequences rather than punishment. There are no time-outs, isolation or corporal punishment. Positive discipline teaches children what to do and allows children to learn to resolve their own differences; whereas punishment tells children what not to do without teaching how to problem solve in the future.

Positive discipline is used by:

Planning:

- Anticipating and eliminating issues
- Setting boundaries and having a structured classroom
- Having a consistent schedule
- Teach skills in self-control and communication
- Modeling desired behaviors

Intervening When Necessary:

- Redirection
- Provide an alternative activity
- Offer a choice of 2 acceptable options
- Guide through acceptable self-expression
- Tracking and documenting behaviors when necessary

We use positive discipline by showing love and encouragement:

- Reinforcing positive behaviors
- Using encouragement
- Demonstrating respect and caring for each child
- Appreciating the child's point of view

Teachers will note observations of challenging behavior and will document this in the child's portfolio. Children who are not able to respond to our intervention strategies may need more professional care and may be referred to our on-site behavioral therapist.

Once one of the teachers or staff has referred the child, the therapist will contact the family in order to set up an evaluation to determine the child's strengths and needs. The family will then meet with the therapist, teacher and director to develop a collaborative, client-focused behavior plan that they will review, agree upon and sign.

The staff and family will regularly review the plan and alter it if necessary in order to ensure the most success for the child. If the plan is not followed by student or parents, and/or there is no measureable improvement in the child's harmful or disruptive behavior in the timeframe established by the behavior plan, Compass Early Learning Center will dismiss the child from our programs.

We reserve the right to terminate any child's enrollment if any further incident occurs, or if we feel that any of following conditions exists:

- Endangering self and/or others. This includes both verbally and physically.
- The child's needs exceed the school's resources. An example of this is excessive amount of the teacher's time spent the child's needs to the point where the children are out of ratio and causing potential additional safety issues.
- Repeated uncontrollable behavior can lead to discontinuation of preschool services. In that case, a two-week notice may be given before termination of services in order to allow parents to find alternate childcare. However, in extreme cases where a child must be removed from our facility immediately due to safety issues, the two-week notice will be waived. This will be established in the behavior plan.

Biting

Biting is a natural, developmental behavior in which many young children engage, especially during their second and third years of life. We recognize that biting is a distressing activity for families, staff, and the child who has been bitten. Because biting is so distressing, everyone involved would like to eliminate it quickly. Unfortunately, a quick fix is not usually available. However, biting does require immediate action by staff to comfort the child who has been bitten, express disapproval of the action, and work to find the cause of the biting.

Staff members respond to biting as they would other aggressive behavior. When a particular child bites on a regular basis, the center staff attempt to find the cause of the biting and take action to prevent future incidents.

The family of a bitten child is notified of the incident the day the incident occurred. Confidentiality prohibits the staff from divulging the name of the biter. The family of the biter is informed personally and privately the same day.

All biting incidents are documented by the teacher(s) in an incident report which is reviewed and approved by the Center Director. A copy of the incident report is given to the family. The other copy is kept in the Center's incident report file.

Parent Policies

Our staff coordinates **opportunities throughout the year for parents to be involved in a variety of ways.** This is an excellent opportunity for families to work on projects to support the

program, meet others for general support, and participate in special events. We survey parents/guardians up to twice per year for your feedback about our program and we utilize the results of these surveys when setting our annual improvement goals.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled about two times per year. Informal conferences regarding specific behaviors or situations are strongly encouraged to help us better understand your child's situation. If you would like to schedule a parent-teacher conference, please contact our Site Director so s/he can coordinate and facilitate plans for other staff to supervise the class during the conference, if need be.

Parents as Visitors

Parents are always welcome as visitors to their child's classroom during the program's regular hours of operation, but we ask that you let us know when you would like to come. If you would like to join your child for a meal, please make arrangements through the Site Director ahead of time so we can include you in the meal count, which is given to our kitchen staff by 9:30 each morning.

Resources Available for Compass Families

- **Workshops:** We try to offer workshops that interest parents in the evenings, with a light meal and child care provided. In the past, we've had workshops on behavior management, rainy day activities you can do at home, reading readiness, stress reduction techniques, car/bike/home safety, and various health questions such as asthma or childhood illnesses.
- **Outreach events:** Our staff frequently hosts seasonal activity nights, such as Trunk or Treat, Milk & Cookies with Santa, Parents' Night Out, etc. These nights are optional and participation is free.
- **Self-Sufficiency Center:** The other program of Monroe County United Ministries is the Self-Sufficiency Center, which is available to Compass families at no additional cost. The SSC provides basic needs assistance (client-choice food pantry, cleaning & hygiene items, vouchers for clothing and small housewares, etc.) as well as asset-building coaching (help finding affordable housing, help navigating a new career or education track, financial planning, etc.). You may drop in on Mondays and Tuesdays from 12-6pm or Thursdays & Fridays from 12-5 pm. We are also available Monday-Friday 8am-4pm by appointment (812-339-3429 ext. 13 or 15). Please see the appendix for a flyer about this program.
- **Holiday Assistance:** In early October, the Site Director will place a sign up form in your folder. If you would like to sign any/all members of your family up to receive 3-5 gifts off of a wish list you create, simply complete the form and turn it back in. We will match your family up with a sponsor who will shop and wrap your gifts. When you pick your gifts up, you will also receive a holiday food basket, which contains 3-4 days' worth of food items, cleaning & hygiene supplies, and your choice of a full size ham or turkey.

Independent Agreements between Parents & Staff

From time to time parents have made agreements with staff that are outside of the regular programs here at MCUM. Examples of this would be if parents hire teachers to do babysitting during evenings or on weekends or if teachers initiate special personal time with children enrolled in program. We encourage parents and staff to continue with these types of arrangements, but do caution parents to understand that these extra-curricular experiences are optional activities and are

not covered by our insurance nor does MCUM assume any responsibility for accident or injury during extra-curricular activities.

Grievance Policy

Compass Early Learning Center and Monroe County United Ministries provides a means for all program participants to use in the event a participant has a complaint. The procedure is as follows:

1. Discuss any complaints with the Site Director. If unresolved, go to next step.
2. Request a meeting with the Executive Director. If unresolved, go to next step.
3. Send a letter to the Program Committee of the Monroe County United Ministries Board of Directors. Briefly outline your complaint and the result you desire. A meeting may be scheduled with the Program Committee, the Executive Director and you. Address your letter in the following manner to ensure it is distributed to the correct individual:

Program Committee Chairperson
Monroe County United Ministries, Inc.
827 W. 14th Ct.
Bloomington, IN 47404