## School Age Care Kids & Company/SummerKids Before School, After School and Summer Child Care

# PARENT HANDBOOK



ISD #31 Bemidji Public Schools Community Education Revised May 2016

## Parent Handbook TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page #</u>
I. INTRODUCTION/PHILOSOPHY OF PROGRAM	4
<ul> <li>II. PROGRAM FACTS</li> <li>Days of Operation</li> <li>Hours of Operation</li> <li>Locations</li> <li>Contact Information</li> </ul>	5
<ul> <li>III. PROGRAM COSTS</li> <li>Definition of Contracts/Fees</li> <li>Full Day Program/Fees</li> <li>Additional Fees</li> <li>Daycare Assistance through the County</li> <li>Billing/Payment Information</li> <li>Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit</li> <li>Scholarships</li> </ul>	7
IV. SUPERVISION/STAFF	12
<ul> <li>V. PROGRAM OFFERINGS</li> <li>Homework Help/Tutoring</li> <li>Snack Program</li> <li>Other Activities</li> </ul>	12
<ul> <li>VI. PROGRAM POLICIES</li> <li>Behavior Guidance</li> <li>Medications</li> <li>Program Check In/Check Out</li> <li>Movies and Music</li> <li>Other Policies</li> </ul>	13

VII. EMERGENCY INFORMATION	17
Emergency Contacts	
<ul> <li>Medical Information/Special Needs</li> </ul>	
Emergency Response Plan	
Weather Related Closings	
VIII. PARENT INVOLVEMENT	18
IX. SOME FINAL THOUGHTS	19

### **Parent Handbook**

## I. INTRODUCTION/PHILOSOPHY OF PROGRAM

Welcome to Bemidji School District's School Age Care Program. This handbook provides a reference for parents regarding our programs, policies, and rules. Please look over the handbook when you receive it, and refer to it as questions arise.

Currently we offer three programs for elementary aged children, grades K-5:

- Kids and Company After School Care is offered until 5:45 p.m. at all seven ISD #31 elementary schools: Central, Horace May, JW Smith, Lincoln, Northern, Paul Bunyan and Solway. This program operates each school day. We also offer full day programming on school release days (staff development, conferences and spring break) from 7:30 am until 5:45 pm.
- SummerKids Summer Care Program is offered for approximately nine-ten weeks each summer. Program hours are 6:45 a.m. until 5:45 p.m. Friday field trips by school bus are offered, as well as transportation to summer activities offered in the community. Since 2002, this program has been offered at Bemidji Middle School, which provides use of the pool, two gyms, large fields, and lots of space for our program. A temporary move to the high school is taking place for the summer of 2016.

We have not had a before school program since 2005. We need at least six children attending each day at a school in order to offer it, and we just have not had nearly enough registrations.

We offer a program for middle school youth in the summer:

The SummerYouth Program began in 2002. This program is for "middle schoolers" (Grades 6-8), so it allows for much more involvement of the children in planning and organizing the program. The program dates, hours, and offerings are the same as for SummerKids, but the group operates more independently. They often leave the building on their own supervised field trips to events and activities.

#### **Our Philosophy.**

Our program philosophy follows the Minnesota School Age Care Association (MNSACA) and National School Age Care Association (NSACA). We believe that school age care programs should promote, nurture, support and enhance all areas of children's development. We strive to provide a balance of recreational, social, and educational enrichment opportunities in an environment conducive to all children learning in a fun, playful way. Specifically, we hope to improve social competencies through guidance, positive role modeling and direct teaching of conflict resolution skills. In addition, we offer children a variety of activities from which to choose, offering physically active as well as quiet activities, reading and math enrichment through play and through structured programs such as America Reads, and homework assistance. Children may work on improving the skills they choose: athletic abilities, artistic expression, or depth of knowledge in areas of interest. We hope that each child will enjoy our program and learn many useful skills along the way.

#### **II. PROGRAM FACTS**

#### **Days of Operation.**

The Kids and Company Afterschool Program operates each day that school is in session. If school is closed, our program is also closed. If Before School care is available, it follows the same schedule and closure policy. We also offer full day programming on school release days (conferences and staff development days) to those families already served by our program. On early release days, when elementary schools close two hours early, are also offer care. We have a separate registration process for these days, and notification is by email and flyers.

The SummerKids Program operates approximately nine - ten weeks during the summer months. We should know specific dates by March of each year. It typically begins a full week after the last day of school, and it ends three weeks before school begins. This is necessary because of the movement and set up of SummerKids equipment and supplies, plus fall cleaning schedules.

#### Hours of Operation.

Before School Care opens at 6:30 a.m. and continues until breakfast. Breakfast is not included as part of the program, but the school then accepts supervision responsibility for children.

The afterschool program operates from school dismissal time (currently 2:50 at each school) until 5:45 p.m. each school day.

SummerKids/SummerYouth operates from 6:45 a.m. until 5:45 p.m.

#### Locations.

Kids and Company is offered at each elementary school in the Bemidji School District – Central, JW Smith, Lincoln, Horace May, Northern, Paul Bunyan and Solway.

The SummerKids Program is at the Bemidji Middle School. We currently provide a separate room for each grade level 1-5 and a room for SummerYouth. The children access both gyms, the pool, a computer lab and a large outdoor play space. We also utilize the free Summer Breakfast and Lunch Program for six weeks during the summer. Our program is active, with a wide variety of activities available, plus Friday field trips by school bus. We also provide transportation to many summer recreational activities located within city limits. We send children to activities at the middle school (in the building or on the grounds) at no cost. We escort them to the baseball, softball and soccer fields across Middle School Road for a small fee; if van transportation is needed, the fee is higher (see separate fee information, which is subject to change.)

#### **Contact Information.**

Listed below are telephone numbers you may need to contact us. Direct your questions about Kids and Company or SummerKids to the Kids and Company office. Billing questions, in particular, are handled by our office. Remember that you must contact us if there is a change in your child's attendance.

We now have cell phones for each Kids & Company site. The phones will be on during program hours, so you may always contact the staff from school dismissal

until 5:45 pm. You may also leave attendance messages on the voicemail, or you may text your message.

Kids and Company Office/Coordinator	333-3284 ext 35309
Kids and Company Billing	333-3284 ext 35302
Community Education Office	333-3284 ext 35301
Coordinator's Cell Phone	766-2494

	School Number	Program Cell Phone
Central	333-3220	760-2901
Horace May	333-3240	760-1854
JW Smith	333-3290	556-6517
Lincoln	333-3250	556-7241
Northern	333-3260	760-0787
Paul Bunyan	333-3119	760-4408
Solway	467-3232	308-3710

The Kids and Company Office is located at 15<sup>th</sup> and Beltrami Ave NE. We have a locked drop box outside the building, so you may drop off paperwork or payments there at any time. We are open 7:30am until 4:30pm. Our mailing address is:

Kids and Company ISD #31/Community Education 502 Minnesota Avenue NW Bemidji MN 56601

#### **Email Addresses and Websites:**

Program email:	sac@bemidjicommunityed.com
Community Education:	http://www.bemidjicommunityed.com
Kids & Company:	http://www.rschooltoday.com/bce/kidsandco/
SummerKids:	http://www.bemidjicommunityed.com/summerkids
Registration/billing:	https://bemidji2.sacc.rschooltoday.com/public/home/

## **III. PROGRAM COSTS**

#### **Definition of Contracts/Fees.**

In order to keep costs as low and as fair as possible, we have created three different contract levels for our program. At each level, there is a daily fee charged,

regardless of the number hours of care. In addition to the fee variations due to contract level, we also provide a discount when multiple children in a family are enrolled under the same contract.

The contract secures a place for your child in our program. Since our program costs remain the same regardless of actual attendance, we charge fees based on the contracted days. In other words, we charge for all days your child *is contracted* to attend, even if they do not actually attend. The varied contract is the one exception to this rule.

Following are the three contract options:

- **Full Time:** In order to reserve a space in our program each school day, parents should select the full time contract, which has the lowest daily fee. You pay this fee for each day we hold the program. For SummerKids, the full time contract reserves a spot for your child each day the program is offered.
- **Part Time Regular, or "Pick Your Days":** This contract is for children who attend the same weekdays each week, such as each Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, or each Friday, etc. We reserve space for the child on those contracted days only. If requested ahead of time, we may be able to accommodate additional days if needed. The fee for part time regular is slightly higher than full time.
- **Part Time Varied:** This contract level is for parents who have staggered, varied work schedules so that children attend sporadic days throughout the month. However, parents must notify us of the days their child will attend, either by sending us a monthly attendance calendar or by calling our office by noon on the day involved. Fees are highest for the varied contract due to the additional recordkeeping required and the fact that additional staff may be required.

**K-1 Program:** There is an exception for children enrolled in the K-1 program, since these children attend school every other day: A child that needs to attend each of his/her school days is considered full time, and parents are charged ½ of the full time rate. With the part-time regular contract, since the child will actually attend every other contracted day, the part-time regular fee will again be cut in half.

**Contract Changes:** Because we understand that situations can change, we allow two contract changes within a program or school year at no cost. Additional contract changes will be assessed an additional fee of \$10.00. To change your contract, complete a Contract Change Form, which is available from Kids & Company staff, from our office and on our website. The same form may be used to change your address, phone number, etc., although you can make these changes yourself on the billing website.

**Full Day Program Fees:** We have one set fee per child for our full day programming. You are not charged, and your child is not expected, unless you register for the day. We have a deadline for registration that is a few days before the day in question so that we can accurately determine staffing needs. We may be able to accept additional children after the deadline, but the fee is higher. If you register your child but your child does not attend, we charge an administrative fee. These fees are fairly low, but frustrating for parents. They are necessary because they add to the cost of doing business. Full day program fees are included on your bill as a separate item.

Current rates are provided as an insert with this handbook and online.

**EACH YEAR, you must re-register for our program**. Our billing program streamlines the process significantly when registering online – you just need add new registration, choose a contract and start date, update your child's grade and make changes as necessary to other fields. We will inform parents via email and flyers when registration begins.

#### **Additional Charges**

We require a **\$20.00 registration fee** for each child when you register for Kids & Company or SummerKids. Even if your child does not attend, this fee is not refunded.

<u>Please register early</u> to avoid additional fees. Planning for staff and supplies is difficult if registrations come late. A rush of registrations the first few weeks of school can lead to mistakes, unhappy or missing children, and frustrated staff! To that end, we have initiated an additional registration <u>fee</u> of \$20.00 per child if you register between the Wednesday before school starts and the end of the second week of school. Example: School starts on Tuesday, September 8. You must

register before midnight on Wednesday, September 2, or after midnight on Friday, September 18, to avoid the additional fee. Avoid this additional fee by registering early!

Other than occasional costs for special activities, the following additional fees may apply:

- Finder's fee: If your child will be absent from our program, you must call or text the program's cell phone to report that absence before the end of the school day. If it's before 1:30 pm on the day in question, you may also call our office or email us (sac@bemidjicommunityed.com). If we are not notified of the absence, you will be charged a \$1.00 finder's fee for that day. We ask for this notice because we take our responsibility for your children very seriously. A missing child must be located, so staff must take time from the group to find out why a child is not there, or why they showed up on an unscheduled day. If we do not get a call, we waste valuable time that should be spent doing activities with the children.
- Late fee: Our program ends promptly at 5:45 p.m., and our staff have not committed to work beyond that time. If parents are late picking up their child, it is a great inconvenience and additional cost to our program. Therefore, we do charge a significant fee if children are not picked up by 5:45 p.m. See table below. A consistent problem with lateness may result in dismissal from our program.

Late Level	Description	Fee
Level 1	Pick up between 5:50 and 6:04 pm	\$5.00
Level 2	Pick up between 6:05 and 6:25 pm	\$10.00
Level 3	Pick up later than 6:25 pm	\$15.00

Staff will attempt to call parents beginning at 5:50 pm, starting with cell phone numbers. If we cannot reach parent, emergency contacts will be called. If no one is coming to pick up the child by 6:30 pm, law enforcement will be called to pick up the child and take him/her to an appropriate shelter.

• **Transportation fee:** During our summer program, we will provide transportation via School District van to most local recreational activities such as basketball, gymnastics and group activities involving music and science.

There is an additional fee for this service, with a maximum charge per child per day. See "Current Rates" insert for current transportation fees. We do not charge an additional fee for getting children to activities located at the Middle School.

#### Daycare Assistance.

We do bill counties for those parents who receive daycare assistance. Please let us know when you register or call our office as soon as possible to notify us if you receive this assistance. If you pay a sliding fee, that fee is due every two weeks. Once the county is billed for their portion, you will receive an invoice for your sliding fee. These are due within one week. Failure to pay your sliding fee can result in the county cutting off your assistance! Daycare vouchers will be sent to each school for parent's signature. NOTE: only daily childcare fees will be paid by the county. Parents are responsible for late fees, finder's fees, transportation fees or any other charges.

#### **Billing/Payment Information.**

Bills are sent via email or mail every two weeks during the school year and are due within one week of receipt. During the summer we send out bills weekly so parents can keep up more easily.

You may bring or mail payments to our office (1420 Beltrami Ave NW). Our office hours are 7:30am - 4:30pm during the school year, and there is a locked drop box in front of the building for payments or documents. We accept payment by credit card: 1) at Community Education in person, 2) by phone 333-3284, or online <u>https://bemidji2.sacc.rschooltoday.com/public/home/</u>. We accept payments at the middle school during our summer program, but we do not accept payments at Kids and Company sites.

#### Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit.

Information necessary to claim the child and dependent care tax credit is available at our billing website. This includes the total amount you paid us from January 1 to December 31 of the previous year. Note that some payments may be excluded if required by law, such as late fees.

#### Scholarships.

At this time, we have a limited number of scholarships available. We are able to offer scholarships by hiring Bemidji State University (BSU) Work Study students

as staff, for which we pay 25% at the end of the year. Scholarships cover up to 50% of our program fees. (Note that late fees and finder's fees are not included as part of the scholarship.) You must submit a new scholarship form prior to the start of each program. Please contact our office for additional information on scholarships.

## **IV. SUPERVISION/STAFF**

School Age Care standards require a staff-child ratio of 1:15 at the elementary schools, and our actual ratio ranges from 1:10 to 1:12. Some sites may have lower ratios because of space limitations or the particular children enrolled. Each site has at least one Activity Leader and one or more Activity Assistants or Activity Aides. Everyone must submit to a criminal background check before they can work or volunteer with our program. We train staff in CPR and First Aid as well as special training sessions on topics such as guidance, safety, etc. We attempt to hire the best possible staff for our program – those who have experience working with children and coursework in education or child development. Please contact our office if you have any concerns about the quality of our staff.

## **V. PROGRAM OFFERINGS**

As our philosophy indicates, we believe that our program should attempt to meet the needs of the whole child. Therefore, we offer choices of activities each day. Each child is different: some want quiet play with one or two others, some need physical activity the entire time, and many want a combination of activities at different times. Art exploration, craft and hobby activities, gym games, board games, reading, imaginary play and free play are all part of our program as well as occasional clubs.

**Homework Help/Tutoring.** We provide children with the opportunity to work on their homework and offer tutoring as much as possible. Another BSU work study program, America Reads, provides our program with tutors at no cost. Sometimes it is difficult to find a quiet space for this, but we will do our best to provide quality space and the help children need. Homework time will be scheduled so that children have a chance to have a snack, relax and play for a period of time before going "back to work". Please contact the staff at your school about the particular homework or tutoring needs of your child.

**Snack Program.** Kids and Company participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. This program provides two benefits to families: Since we receive partial reimbursement for snacks served, we are able to keep our fees as low as possible. In addition, the program has strict nutritional requirements for afterschool snacks, which is your assurance that an appropriate quantity of snack items from two food groups is served.

Mail:
 U.S. Department of Agriculture
 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
 Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
 Email: program.intake@usda.gov.
 This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

#### **Other Activities.**

Occasional field trips or special activities may be planned. If the entire group attends a field trip, a District school bus is used, driven by an approved bus driver. In the summer, we provide transportation to summer recreational activities using School District vans. Staff must pass testing requirements of The District Transportation Department before driving a van.

The additional costs for Friday field trips at SummerKids/SummerYouth are included in your daily fee. On rare occasions, we may participate in activities that involve an extra fee. If these fees create a burden, call our office to discuss a possible scholarship.

Volunteers occasionally visit the programs to present a special topic or activity such as dance, sports, art, science demos, etc. These visits expose children to different hobbies and interests. If you have an interest area that you'd be willing to share with the children, or know of someone who would, please contact our office! Note

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the <u>USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form</u>, (AD-3027) found online at: <u>http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\_filing\_cust.html</u>, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

that any volunteer who visits our program must pass the School District's criminal background check.

## **VI. PROGRAM POLICIES**

**Behavior Guidance.** It is our goal to serve all children and help them be successful in our program. Whenever possible we will use positive guidance techniques to encourage appropriate behavior, such as modeling, reinforcing positive behavior, redirection, giving verbal reminders, etc. Most children respond well to these methods. Behavior that is more serious and/or puts the child or others in danger may require more serious methods such as "time in" or removing privileges. "Time in" is similar to a time out in that the child must leave the area, but the time is spent with a staff person so that, once the child calms down, the issue is discussed. If the behavior continues despite our interventions, we will bring it to the parent's attention. Parents are a valuable resource, knowing what works or does not work with their child. If the behavior is a serious problem, we will ask for follow up at home with consequences you feel are appropriate. If all of these efforts fail, the child may be excluded from the program, temporarily at first, or permanently if necessary. Obviously, we are particularly concerned about behavior that harms or endangers other children.

If you ever have any concerns about your child's behavior, please feel free to contact the staff. Also, the staff appreciate knowing ahead of time about any issues and possible solutions.

Any behavior involving injury to another person or school property is reported to the parent right away. We will also discuss recurring problems that are continuing despite our best efforts. Although these issues may not seem dangerous, they have a negative impact on the program. Examples include running away/hiding from staff, being disrespectful, using inappropriate language, or not following other Kids & Company rules. Another major issue of concern is bullying. Bullying behavior is not tolerated. These behaviors may include physical threats, exclusion, spreading lies, damaging another child's items or projects, name-calling or any form of intimidation toward another. Remember that we are part of the school district, and we do follow the same rules as the school. To view the School District's Code of Conduct, you may go to the following website:

#### http://www.bemidji.k12.mn.us/parent/code-of-conduct/

At Kids & Company, we strongly believe in the value of each child, regardless of differences. We will not tolerate use of any words, language or actions that demean another child based on ethnicity, religion, gender, height, weight, clothing, disability, athleticism, etc. – basically demeaning language and behavior is not tolerated. We expect children to display appreciation for the uniqueness of each individual.

Children with repetitive, inappropriate behaviors that endanger themselves or others, despite our reasonable efforts to work with the child and parents, will be removed from our program.

In addition to the behavior of children, we occasionally must deal with parent behavior that is inappropriate. There are certain behaviors that we cannot tolerate at our program. These behaviors include:

- Use of inappropriate language, including typical "curse" words and derogatory terms associated with a particular ethnic group, religion, gender, etc.
- Bullying children or staff. Bullying includes more than physically harming another; it includes threats or other forms of inappropriate intimidation, yelling at others, or insulting others. If you have a concern about the comment or behavior of another child, please pull aside and speak to a staff person about it and allow us to handle the situation. It is not appropriate for a parent to yell at or intimidate any child at our program. If your concern is about a staff person, please address your concern respectfully to the staff person directly, away from children and other parents. Also, please call the Program Coordinator about any concerns you have with staff or other children.

Keep in mind that all of us are role models when we are around children. We expect our staff to model appropriate behavior around children, and we expect parents to do the same. When you need to discuss something with our staff, please

be respectful toward them. If you are upset and feel out of control, we ask that you step aside with the staff person so you are away from the children.

**Medications.** Please notify us of any medications your child takes. This could be important information for medical staff in an emergency. If we need to give medication to your child during our program hours, you must provide us with the same information and items required by the school: medication in an appropriately labeled prescription bottle, a doctor's prescription and instructions on administering the medication, if it is prescription medication, or a form signed by the parent for non-prescription medication. Please ask for the appropriate paperwork if this situation applies to your child.

If your child has a medical issue that requires an emergency plan with the school district, you must provide us with a copy of that emergency plan.

**Program Check In/Check Out.** Whenever you bring or pick up your child from our program, we need you to personally sign in and/or sign out your child on the attendance charts. Safety is a basic part in our program, and we cannot send a child to a car or have an underage sibling sign out a child. If a child is dropped off at the door, there is no assurance that the child actually comes into our program safely. We are not responsible for a child if he/she is not signed in.

When you register your child, you may authorize others to pick up a child. Please provide at least three names as requested. We would also appreciate a call if someone other than the parent will be picking up your child. If you have a court order to exclude someone from having contact with your child, please provide the name of the person and a copy of the legal documents. We would also appreciate a photograph if possible. We cannot keep a child from a parent without this documentation.

Parents often want our staff to know all of the children and parents right away, and the staff does attempt to learn names and faces quickly, but it may take some time. Our initial focus is on learning each child's first name, then last name (to help with taking attendance), then the parent names. We would appreciate you taking the time to learn our staff names, also!

**Movies and Music.** Although not considered a regular part of our program, staff may occasionally show movies during program hours. Also, children occasionally bring in videos to show during our program. The only movies we will play without question are those rated "G". In order to show a "PG" movie, staff must have reviewed the entire movie for appropriateness, and information about the video will be posted a week in advance. If you have an objection to any particular movie, arrangements will be made for an alternate activity for your child. Music CDs must have an appropriate rating to be listened to during our program, even with headphones. Music for the whole group must be carefully screened for content.

#### **Other Policies.**

As a part of the Bemidji School District, our program follows their policies and procedures as much as possible.

For the ease of the children, we follow the same rules as the school where they attend our program. This includes rules about bringing particular items to school such as Pokemon cards, Gameboys, toys that could be real or replica weapons, etc. In addition, we will not be responsible for items a child brings to our program such as toys or money. It is best for all concerned if these items remain at home.

Our policy on outdoor play is also the same as the school: if the temperature is below  $0^{\circ}F$  (actual or wind chill), we will not take children outdoors. Please be sure your child brings appropriate clothing each day for outdoor play!

## **VII. EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

**Emergency Contacts.** It is very important that you provide the names of three emergency contacts when you register. In an emergency, we will need as many options of ways to find you as possible. Also, keep in mind that only the emergency contacts listed may pick up your child.

**Medical Information/Special Needs.** Please complete the medical information portion of the registration packet as completely as possible. Information you provide will only be shared with staff that work with your child. In addition, we appreciate any additional information you provide that may help us understand and better serve your child. If there is a diagnosed condition that may affect the child's behavior, ability to communicate, or ability to do different activities, please indicate that information on the form. We ask because we want to do what's best for your

child. We may ask for additional information from you or the name of a school resource for assistance on your child's needs, if necessary.

#### **Emergency Response Plan.**

If your child has a condition that could result in an emergency (such as a seizure disorder, life threatening allergy, diabetes, etc.), you must provide our office with a copy of his/her Emergency Response Plan. This document should also be on file in the Health Para office. This plan gives us direction on how to handle an emergency that may occur. We also need any emergency equipment or medications, such as an epipen and inhaler, because we cannot access the items you have given to the school. Health paraprofessionals do not work beyond 3:00 pm, and the health office must be kept locked at all times.

#### Weather Related Closings

Weather alerts can be very confusing, and decisions, unfortunately, often have to be made last minute. We have updated our policy to coincide with the radio announcements you hear on the radio to make this communication easier:

- When school is cancelled or dismissed early, Kids & Company is cancelled. School staff remain at the school until all children are on a bus or picked up, so it is less confusing for the kids in our program to be cared for in the same way.
- When school continues until normal time, but after-school activities are cancelled, we will operate, but only for one hour. This announcement comes late, and it is difficult for parents to find an alternate place for their child with short notice. We will provide a stopgap so that parents have time to get to the school to pick up their child. For everyone's safety, we ask parents to pick up their child no later than 4:00 pm on these days.

**It is strongly suggested that you make a family plan** for these situations and let your child's teacher know the plan. If your child has a designated bus, you should be able to have them ride the bus home, if necessary. In addition to the radio announcement, we will update the Kids & Company, Community Ed, and School District websites and the Community Ed facebook page with the above information. I will also send an email to all parents who have provided us with an email when they registered.

## VIII. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

There are many ways that parents can become involved with our program, as shown below.

We ask for parent volunteers to serve on the Community Education Advisory Council. The Advisory Council reviews Community Education policies and programs and provides advice on additional programming ideas. Please contact the Community Education Director if you would be interested in becoming a part of this important group.

A program survey is available on our website. We greatly appreciate the number of responses we receive. We use the surveys to plan staff development and training sessions to improve the program. Please be sure to take the survey and add any comments.

Are you looking for another way to help or be involved? We always welcome donations of toys, items useful for crafts (fabric, paper products, spools, buttons, ribbon, etc.) or time. Parents are welcome to join us on field trips (though we may ask you to drive yourself if the bus is full). We also welcome parent volunteers to assist with projects, teach or share a craft or interest, etc.

## **IX. SOME FINAL THOUGHTS**

We consider parents and children as our customers, and we wish to provide the best possible childcare at a reasonable rate. We welcome your ideas and suggestions and give serious consideration to incorporating parent ideas into our program. Please call our office at any time to discuss any concerns or suggestions you may have.