

Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center

Parent Handbook



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Welcome to Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center

Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center was established in September 2013 to provide a rich, formative, high quality, developmentally based bilingual program for preschool children.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center (AIBCC) is:

- To provide high-quality bilingual, multicultural, and inclusive early childhood education. • To provide a learning atmosphere that is suited for advancing self-esteem, confidence, and the art of learning through play-based practices and nurturing relationships.
- To provide an outstanding program using a child-focused environment with professional and certified staff.
- To ensure a space guaranteeing a student-teacher ratio that focuses on the child's social and intellectual growth.
- To respect the parents, families, and caregivers as the main educators of the child. • To advocate for early childhood education.

PHILOSOPHY

Early childhood development is an especially important period in your child's life. Social learning, communication, intellectual awareness, and physical strides are all part of these first few years. Moreover, these are done in an ever-increasingly socially and culturally diverse environment. In recognition of these developmental changes and diverse settings, the AIBCC has created a program dedicated to meeting your child's growing awareness in a bilingual English/Spanish classroom.

Our goal is to teach children using a variety of methods, including role playing and dramatic movement, free play, sensory development, and sharing. We also believe that each child learns and develops at his or her own pace. Since this is a bilingual school, our curriculum will be in English and Spanish, with materials written and taught in both languages; the youngest class of two-year-olds will be 100% Spanish Immersion, which allows them to gain a firm basis in Spanish for the rest of their time in AIBCC. We promote each child's instinct for learning, inquiry, and discovery, resulting in his or her own mastery of the world around them.

Moreover, we rely on you - the parents - as an extension of the AIBCC staff. Who knows your child better than you? If you have any questions or comments about your child's learning, do not hesitate to talk to one of our teachers because communication is the hallmark of a successful school, no matter how big or small.

We look forward to working with you and your child, as well as ensuring that your child grows and develops!

Most Sincerely,

R. Carolina Reyes
Owner and Director
Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center

Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday 7:00 am to 5:30 pm.

Enrollment

To enroll at AIBCC you must follow these procedures:

1) Fill out the Registration and Enrollment Form (found here: [Arcoirisbcc.com/registration](https://arcoirisbcc.com/registration)) and pay the registration fee.

This form acknowledges both your registration with AIBCC, and your agreement to the terms of continuous enrollment throughout the year. The year is divided into three parts:

- Fall, September 2 to December 31
- Spring, January 2 to June Graduation Party
- Summer Fun, June Graduation Party to August 30

The tuition rate for two-year-olds and 3-to-5-year-olds can be found on our website, found here: <https://arcoirisbcc.com/registration-and-enrollment>.

2) Download and complete the other forms found here: [Arcoirisbcc.com/registration](https://arcoirisbcc.com/registration)

- Registration and Enrollment Form
- Receipt and acknowledgement of the rules set forth in this Parent Handbook
- Photography Authorization Form
- COVID-19 Waiver Form
- Health Inventory Form
- Emergency Form
- Maryland Immunization Certificate Form
- Topical Basic Care Product Application Approval
- Maryland Medication Administration Authorization Form
- Asthma Action Plan And Medication Administration Authorization Form
- Allergy and Anaphylaxis Medication Administration Authorization Form
- Seizure/Convulsion/Epilepsy Disorder Medication Administration Authorization Form
- Special Health Condition Individualized Care Plan Checklist
- Blood-Lead Testing Certificate
- Asthma Action Plan Form (if necessary)
- Allergy Action Plan Form (if necessary)

Please note: On occasion, a preschool program may not be an optimal fit for a child or family. AIBCC is a center that will make every effort to work collaboratively with families to resolve any challenges that arise. Additional resources may need to be used to support a child's success in AIBCC. If, after all reasonable efforts are exhausted, and the problem cannot be resolved, AIBCC reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program.

Tuition Rates & Fees

There is a one-time registration fee due at the time of enrollment (see the Arco Iris Registration and Enrollment Form). A minimum of three days per week is required enrollment for each child in the program. **Payment is still required during all absences, professional days/events, holidays, and closings for any reason, such as (but not limited to) weather events, strikes, epidemics or pandemics, government legislation, etc.**

- Full Days are from 7:00 am – 5:30 pm.
- Registration fees are \$150 per child for this school year.
- **Tuition payments are weekly:**
 - All payments will be automatically processed from a bank account or on a credit card using the Brightwheel app.
 - Every family must download the Brightwheel app, register with Brightwheel, and enter their billing information.
 - If automatic payments fail to be processed due to insufficient funds or any other reason, then it is the responsibility of the primary payer in Brightwheel to make a payment using the Brightwheel app.
- Checks will no longer be accepted as a form of payment.
- If cash tuition payments are made, then these must be paid directly to the Director or Assistant Director; receipts will be provided.
- If, for whatever reason, a payment cannot be made, then a late fee of \$50 will be added to the account at 5:30 pm on the due date (or thereafter).
- Payment is still required when AIBCC is closed for the last week in December.
- Sibling Discount is 5% of the total amount when both children attend full-time. Sibling discounts will not be available to families who receive scholarship/voucher payments. The discount will be applied to the lower tuition rate.
- \$150 per child/month Summer Hold Fee is to be paid when your child does not attend AIBCC during the summer months (mid-June to August 31st), but you do plan to have the child return in September. Paying this \$150 monthly fee will guarantee your child's space in AIBCC. The Summer Hold Fee is per child.
- No payment is necessary for the break in August if the child is not on Summer Hold status.
- Overtime Fees for late pick up on or after 5:30 pm are due upon arrival, paid to the teacher required to stay overtime. In addition, our license ends at 5:30 pm. Please be conscientious about this since the teachers' day ends at 5:30 pm and many of them have their own children. The fees are \$5.00 for the first five minutes and \$2.00 for every additional minute. If payment is not made immediately to the teacher, then the fee plus 5% will be added to your Brightwheel account.
- Please notify the AIBCC Director or Assistant Director when a 2-year-old child turns 3 years old so that the lower tuition rate can become effective; failure to notify AIBCC will result in a higher tuition rate. There will be no refunds for days/weeks under the higher rate.
- AIBCC reserves the right to charge the weekly tuition rate regardless of child absences due to vacations, sickness, professional days/events, holidays, inclement-weather closings, epidemics, pandemics, or absences of any other kinds emanating from social, environmental, physical, or economic occurrences.
- AIBCC reserves the right to terminate enrollment should an account become overdue.
- Due to increasing inflation costs and associated overhead costs, there will be a yearly increase in tuition.
- Families with children enrolled with childcare scholarships must ensure that their scholarship portal is kept updated. Failure to do so may lead to cancellation of scholarships and the family will be responsible to pay for days/weeks/months in which the lapse has occurred.

Withdrawal

If you plan to withdraw your child from AIBCC, then you must provide a written notice to the Director or the Assistant Director at least fourteen (14) days prior to the withdrawal date. **Not doing will void your right to any refund.** If you do not plan on having your child attend AIBCC during the summer months (from the graduation ceremony to the first week of school) but do plan on having him or her return in September, then you must pay \$150 per child, per month. Paying this monthly fee will guarantee your child's space in AIBCC. If you decide for your child not to return, please inform the Director as soon as you know.

Developmental Screening and Assessments

AIBCC plans to follow MSDE guidance on developmental screening. Developmental screening is important to identify children with developmental concerns who may need to be further evaluated by a child development professional and receive early intervention as needed.

AIBCC uses "Ages and Stages Questionnaires-3" as the tool for developmental screening. Parents will receive a questionnaire at the time of enrollment and then another one later in the school year.

Assessments are confidential and are only shared with the child's parents or guardians, along with the teachers who work with the child. These assessments greatly help teachers with the child's progress throughout the school year.

Pre-kindergarten

Children in the pre-kindergarten classroom must be four years old before September 1st. This will help the children with the transition to kindergarten in the following year. Exceptions may be possible, but this will need to be discussed with the Director.

Head Start

AIBCC is now partnering with the Head Start program at the Lourie Center for Children's Social and Emotional Wellness. Head Start is a federally-funded community-based program which assists a multitude of families from diverse backgrounds. If you are interested in learning more about the program, please go to:

<https://www.louriecenter.org/LC/programs-services/head-start/>

Curriculum

AIBCC is licensed and regulated by the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care and is an active member of the Prince George's Child Resource Center, Maryland State Child Care Association, Maryland Family Network, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the NAEYC Maryland chapter (MDAEYC). We also hold a Level Three in the Maryland EXCELS Quality Rating and Improvement System of the Maryland State Department of Education. We are actively working on becoming accredited by MSDE and improving to a Level Four rating in the coming year. All staff meet or exceeds qualifications of the State of Maryland.

AIBCC has a wide variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds that we value and respect. We strongly believe that each child is unique and central to their own learning. Therefore, our curriculum is set to help each child grow socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively. *Creative Curriculum* and *Children Study Their World* are two of the instructional platforms we use at AIBCC.

Curriculum:

- **Arts and Crafts:** Many varieties of painting, coloring, collaging, drawing; papier mâché, etc.
- **Dramatic Play:** Role playing, acting out stories and poems. Recent research indicates dramatic play correlates highly with later academic success.
- **Free Play:** Organized free play is one of our best sources of learning. Block play, water and sand play, house corner/imagination station, are only a few of the areas provided for your child.
- **Social Studies:** Learning about community helpers, social skills, transportation, children, and customs around the world, often through circle time discussions and props for dramatic play areas occur in a thematic approach to a developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- **Language and Literacy:** We provide a print rich environment, read stories to young children, provide time for conversation, use of flannel boards, puppets, books, etc. and this fosters language and literacy development. We provide developmentally appropriate writing activities.
- **Mathematical Thinking:** Emphasis: patterns and relationships, and the search for multiple solutions to problems with the focus on the child's approaches to mathematical thinking and problem solving. The content, concepts and procedures are stressed within the larger context of knowing and doing. Activities may include collections of things, matching and comparisons of attributes, patterns, counting and one to one correspondence, recognizing numerals, shapes, and spatial relationships.
- **Music:** Activities include singing, dancing, recordings, rhythm instruments, learning a steady beat, echoes, chants, active listening, etc.
- **Physical Activities:** Climbing apparatus, balance beams, tricycles, tunnels, parachute play, etc. used for large muscle development. Fine muscle development is planned daily as well, with drawing or writing, scissor practice, puzzles, play dough, pegs and pegboards, construction toys, etc.
- **Science and Nature:** Beginning concepts form with exposure to animals, insects, plants, planting gardens, playing with natural materials such as sand, water, or woodworking, estimating, comparing, describing, and recording, etc.
- **Cooking/Food Experiences:** Experiences are planned once each week to provide an opportunity for making healthy snacks as well as involving nutrition, science, math, and language experiences.

Lesson Plans: Lesson plan sheets are posted weekly for families and are an effective communication tool for you and your child. So many events happen in the day of a young child, your inquiries can sharpen your child's memory skills. The activities of the curriculum include story time, art, music, dramatic play, social skills, intellectual activities, and large and small muscle development. Intellectual activities include activities in Language Arts and Literacy (Reading), Scientific Thinking, Mathematical Thinking, Social Studies, and the Arts. If you have any questions concerning the lesson plans, please feel free to talk to your child's teacher. Summer Activity Plans replace the lesson plans during the summer program.

Goals for the Children:

AIBCC uses the developmental guides within the ELA (Early Learning Assessment) as goals for children ages 3-5 years along with a center developed checklist used for two-year-old children. These checklists/guides are available for viewing in each classroom. To help each child reach their optimum developmental goals, the following is included in our practice:

- Provide print/auditory materials in the child's home language, when possible and with help from their family.
- Invite family or community members to share information and resources relevant to the child's culture, background, diagnosis, or disability.
- Display photographs of children's families.
- Ensure that books, dolls, toys, and displays reflect the cultures and abilities of the children in the

program.

- Avoid materials that depict bias and stereotypes.
- Provide equipment that is accessible and appropriate for children of all abilities.

Themes:

AIBCC uses a variety of fun and developmentally challenging themes throughout the year. In any given month we will be discussing:

- All About AIBCC
- AIBCC Rules and Safety
- Getting to Know You and Your Family
- Transitions
- The Fall Season / Harvest Time
- Body Parts
- The Five Senses
- Fire Safety
- Nutrition
- Thanksgiving
- Compassion for Others
- Children Around the World
- Holiday Celebrations and Traditions
- The Winter Season
- Birds and Animals in Winter
- Feelings and Emotions
- Space and the Solar System
- Dinosaurs
- Transportation (Air, Water, Land and Rail)
- African American History
- Valentine's Day (Love, Kindness, and Caring)
- Community Helpers
- Communication
- Disability Awareness
- The Spring Season
- Plants and Gardening
- Farm Animals
- Pets
- Zoo Animals
- Fish and Amphibians
- The Summer Season
- Insects and Spiders

Show and Tell:

We ask that families observe the topic of the weekly theme or unit (on the lesson plan) to enable you to give the child guidance in making an appropriate selection to bring in for "Show and Tell." This is important for several reasons, it bridges home and Center activities, provides for quality activities with your child at home, and eliminates inappropriate items being brought to AIBCC (such as weapons, Ninja turtles or wrestling

figures). Please rehearse with your child the story they will talk about their object to make it more interesting for the other children and grow vocabulary! Your cooperation in making Show and Tell a truly worthwhile language arts experience is appreciated.

Field Trips:

Field trips requiring bus transportation will be taken on occasion by children. Parents must sign class permission slips in advance. Children will travel by Prince George's County-approved school bus, which do not have seat belts. If desired, families may drive their child in their own car and safety seat. We encourage adult family members to join us! At our request and for safety precautions, a responsible adult family member of a child with challenging behaviors may be required to attend the field trip for the child to participate.

All children may participate in walking field trips on the grounds of the building or surrounding neighborhood or go to the Terrace Room in this building to watch a show or other activity, upon signature of this Parent Handbook granting permission by parent or guardian.

Communication

AIBCC is very proud of its commitment to open communication. We feel that it is extremely important to be in close contact with parents regarding how your child spends his or her day. Since drop-off and pick-up times are often rushed and busy times for children, parents, and teachers, we encourage you to schedule a classroom conference either by phone or in person. We also ask that you share with us information that may be affecting your child at home or school to best assist you. To that end, the Director is happy to be a bridge between you and the teacher, if you believe this would be necessary. Other than face-to-face communication, we utilize other forms of communication, such as Brightwheel, Facebook, Instagram, email, monthly newsletters, the AIBCC website, weekly notebooks, and phone calls. Parent/Teacher conferences will be held twice a year, and we strongly encourage all parents to attend since these are the opportunities to touch base, share information, and set goals. Of course, you are always allowed to schedule a separate meeting with the teacher whenever you like.

All the teachers have email accounts that you can find on the monthly newsletter. Alternatively, you can send a message to arcoirisbcc@gmail.com, and the Director or Assistant Director will ensure the proper teacher gets your message.

Parent Involvement

AIBCC believes in the power of community and having the AIBCC staff and families work together. We have scheduled various activities throughout the year where we would love to have volunteers come in and help us. Some of these important events include parent workshops, AIBCC field trips, Mother's Day and Father's Day celebrations, holiday parties, and the graduation/end-of-the-school year party.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

AIBCC does not discriminate based on race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, national origin, sexual preferences, or disabilities. Toilet training is not required for enrollment. AIBCC provides for all children, including those with identified disabilities and special learning and development abilities. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns to include children with special needs. AIBCC staff are aware of the identified/diagnosed special needs of individual children and are willing to be trained in following through specific intervention plans. The supervising lead teacher or the Director will make appropriate professional referrals when necessary. AIBCC expects that family members will be involved in the development and use of individualized education plans. AIBCC will address the priorities and concerns of families of children with special needs.

Drop-off and Pick-up Policy

Please notify AIBCC **by phone** if you anticipate arriving after 9 am, or if your child will be absent for the day, or if you will be late picking up your child at the end of the day.

The temperature of the child will be taken by AIBCC staff as they enter the lobby. If the child or anyone else in your child's household shows COVID-19-like symptoms, then your child may not be admitted into AIBCC. COVID-19-like symptoms include any new onset of cough or shortness of breathing OR show at least TWO of the following symptoms: fever of 100.4 F degrees or higher, chills, shivering, muscle pain, sore throat, headache, loss of taste or smell, and gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea).

It is the responsibility of the parents to call and inform AIBCC if arriving after 7:30 am. Parents are responsible for picking up their children promptly by 5:15 pm. This will allow the inevitable time that is taken up by collecting the child's items and discussing any concerns with the teacher.

Children will be released only to the parent or legal guardian. Should an unexpected situation arise in which the parent or legal guardian cannot pick up the child, the parent or legal guardian must speak with the child's teacher. AIBCC will only release the name listed on the emergency form. When that person arrives, he or she must show a driver's license to verify proof of the person.

AIBCC staff are always happy to provide an individual overview of a child's day to the parent at pick-up time. Please note, however, that this will not be possible after 5:00 pm. As stated in the Tuition Rates & Fees section of this document, overtime fees for late pick up on or after 5:30 pm are due upon arrival, paid to the teacher required to stay overtime. We take these fees very seriously and collect them without exception. The fees are assessed as follows: \$5.00 for the first five minutes and \$2.00 for every additional minute.

Nutrition

We ask our parents to join our efforts of healthy eating when they bring in food for the children's lunches, school celebrations, and other special occasions.

AIBCC does not provide lunch, so you must bring your child's lunch each day. USDA recommended portions for preschool lunches include $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits and/or vegetables, $\frac{1}{2}$ slices of whole grain-rich bread, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup granola, 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of lean meat, $\frac{3}{8}$ cup of beans, 3 tablespoons of peanut butter, or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of yogurt. Go the link for more information: https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_childmealpattern.pdf

****IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING PEANUT AND TREE NUT ALLERGIES****

Under no circumstances may parents send any food product with peanuts or tree nuts to AIBCC. Due to the severe allergies that some children may have to peanuts, products with peanuts or peanut derivatives, or tree nuts are prohibited.

AIBCC adheres to a TOTAL NUT FREE policy. Parents and guardians need to be mindful of any products containing nuts when preparing lunches or snacks. No nut or seed butters are permitted at Arco Iris. If such products are sent with a child's lunches, then they will not be served. Parents of children who, historically, have suffered an anaphylactic reaction to any foods or insect bites, need to provide the school with a recent medical action plan.

Illness

You are the best judge of your child's health, and we trust you will not bring a sick child to the center. However, if in the opinion of the teaching staff or Director your child is sick, we will call you to come and pick-up your child within one hour. Your child will be isolated from the other children until you arrive.

After your child has been ill, it is important to adhere to the following guidelines when determining whether or not your child is ready to return to school.

- Mood, appetite, behavior and activity are again normal
- No fever for 24 hours without a fever reducer
- Antibiotics (if prescribed) have been used for a full 24 hours (48 hours in the case of strep)
- Vomiting, diarrhea cleared for 24 hours
- Frequent coughing, excessive nasal discharge resolved
- Pain (earache, cramps, headache, etc.) resolved

We will separate him/her from the other children and be monitored constantly if your child has any of the following: "pink eye" (conjunctivitis), "chickenpox" (varicela), frequent diarrhea, vomiting (three times in a row or more), or a fever of 100.4 degrees F or higher. If the temperature is taken under the armpit, then add one degree. That is, if the temperature under the arm is 99.4, then adding one degree equals 100.6, which is now considered feverish and the child must stay home. This is done for the child's safety and for the safety of the other children. We will call the family or guardian immediately and expect that the child will be picked up within two hours. In case the family cannot pick up the child, the family will have to provide us with the name of the responsible party that will pick up the child. This person must be 18 years of age or older. Your child must remain at home until the illness has cleared completely. In the case of any of the above-mentioned conditions, a child must remain at home for a minimum of 24 hours without any further symptoms prior to returning to AIBCC. Moreover, if your child is not well enough to participate in all aspects of the daily schedule, please keep your child at home.

COVID-19 Illness

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) follows guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The latest guidance states that individuals stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick) if you have respiratory virus symptoms that aren't better explained by another cause. You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:

- Your symptoms are getting better overall, and
- You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

When you go back to your normal activities, take added precaution over the next 5 days.

Emergencies

The family will have to provide telephone numbers and names of people (age 18 and over) authorized to receive their children. When that person arrives, he or she must show a driver's license to verify proof of person.

Medicine

We will only be able to provide medication to children whose parents have filled out the medication authorization form, **which needs to be signed by a physician**. A child taking antibiotics will have to stay home for at least the first 24 hours of the cycle.

Accidents

In the case a child is in any type of accident, the family will be informed immediately after the child receives first aid. If something appears that requires greater care, we will call the child's doctor and/or 911.

Allergies

It is the responsibility of the family to keep us informed about any type of allergies that the child may have. We will assume the responsibility of not providing the child with anything that the family will not authorize; this includes food, liquids, medicine, and latex.

Absences, Holidays, and Closings

If for some reason the child is going to be absent, the family should inform AIBCC by 8:00 am. AIBCC will be closed for approximately one week in late December/early January and for two weeks in August. **Payment is still required during all absences, holidays, professional days/events, and closings for any reason, such as (but not limited to) weather events, strikes, epidemics or pandemics, government legislation, etc.**

Parents and Guardians will receive the exact dates of prescribed closings approximately 3 months in advance. Please refer to the official AIBCC Calendar.

Inclement Weather Policy

School closings and delays are made to ensure the safety of our children. You must make your own judgment about driving in hazardous weather situations. If bad weather begins and you wish to pick your child up early, please feel free to do so.

To find out if AIBCC is closed due to weather conditions, please refer to email correspondence, Class Dojo (until transition to Brightwheel is completed), and our Facebook page (Facebook.com/ArcoIrisBCC).

Tuition is flat rate and there is no prorated cost due to closings, weather-related or otherwise (see above). It is the responsibility of the family to make prompt payments according to the contract established. In this way, AIBCC can meet all its obligations, including payroll, insurance payments, rent, and other associated business costs.

Transportation

It is the responsibility of the family to bring and pick up the child to and from AIBCC.

Personal Materials

Please bring the following items with your child on his or her first day:

Two-Year-Olds

- Blanket (to be taken home at the end of each week for washing)

- Complete set of extra clothes for every day (at least two changes of clothes)
- Disposable diapers
 - No cloth diapers permitted.
 - When potty training, we only use pull-up diapers (which can be opened on the side)
- Baby wipes
- Diaper rash ointment (with lotion and ointment application form)
- Sunscreen and insect repellent (with lotion and ointment application form)
- Sippy cup (if applicable)
- Fitted sheets for a child-sized cot
- Backpack for all of your child's belongings

Three- / Four- / Five-Year-Olds

- Blanket (to be taken home at the end of each week for washing)
- Complete set of extra clothes for every day (at least two changes of clothes)
- Baby wipes
- Sunscreen and insect repellent (with lotion and ointment application form)
- Fitted sheets for a child-sized cot
- Backpack for all of your child's belongings

AIBCC will show the utmost care in looking after personal items. Nevertheless, please label all your child's belongings.

Please do not bring toys from home. Unless requested by the teacher, toys from home are not allowed.

Class Management

Our program recognizes the importance of helping children acquire and develop internal control and a positive attitude towards others. AIBCC provides a nurturing and secure environment where your child will be able to develop and refine these social skills. AIBCC is committed to offering guidance helping the children learn and understand the confines of acceptable behavior by using positive behavioral support strategies, such as addressing the behavior (not the child), providing choices, using redirection, reflection, and problem solving, having very clear rules and expectations, and acknowledging children's feelings. AIBCC considers the child's family as an essential part of this process and will count on its support to find the best solution to any problem that may occur during the hours the child is in our care.

Discipline Policy

Our program considers all areas of development important, and teaching discipline is one of them. Adults who care for children have the responsibility of guiding children toward appropriate behaviors in a warm and supportive environment. This includes:

- Communicate to children using positive statements
- Talk with children in a calm quiet manner
- Communicate with children on their eye level
- Model appropriate behavior
- Set up classroom environment to prevent problems

Arco Iris BCC Rules

- **BE KIND:** We want to have a positive environment where every child can create great friendships/relationships.
- **BE SAFE:** Let's take care of one another! We want to make sure that our children are safe and healthy.
- **TAKE CARE OF OUR CLASSROOM:** We want our children to learn how to take care of our classroom materials.

Other examples of our program's rules which are explained daily to the children:

- Always use your "listening ears"
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself
- Use your inside voice
- Always walk when indoors
- Share and take turns
- Ask a friend if they are okay and need a hug
- Have Fun

Children are required to conduct themselves in a manner suitable for learning and getting along with others. Classroom rules are set at the beginning of the school year. If a child experiences difficulties by not following the classroom rules, the following techniques will be taken:

- Provide choices
- Verbal redirection to promote behavior
- Conflict Resolution
- Positive Reinforcement
- Thinking Time

If behavior escalates to a point where the well-being of another child or teacher is in jeopardy, then the following steps will be taken:

- Parent Conference
- Find additional resources such as Infant/Toddler program, Child Finds, Project Win
- Parents will be called to pick up their child

Teachers will always make sure all the children are safe and make clear that inappropriate behavior is not acceptable at AIBCC.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution is the method staff will use to handle disputes between children. Conflict Resolution is a problem-solving approach used by teachers or parents to help young children learn to resolve differences.

With this method, children discuss and resolve disputes with the help of an adult or child mediator, and they are encouraged to discuss what happened and reach an agreement about how to solve their problem.

SEFEL Pyramid Model:

AIBCC staff are trained in the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (previously known as SEFEL). This model helps education professionals to interact with children and understand, address, predict, and respond to challenging behaviors. For more information, please click on this link: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/sefel>.

Six Steps of Conflict Resolution by Betsy Evans (<https://www.kidsandconflict.com/>):

Steps 1 and 2: Supporting Feelings. (The first two steps in problem solving encourage children to express their strong feelings.)

1. Approach Calmly, Stopping Any Hurtful Actions

- Calmly approach children who are having problems.
- Stop hurtful actions and words.
- Place yourself between children, on their level.
- Use calm body language to soothe children and convey your neutrality: comforting gestures, eye contact, soft voice, supportive facial expression.

2. Acknowledge Children's Feelings

- State feelings concretely.
- Reframe children's hurtful words as you acknowledge feelings.
- Let children know you need to hold any objects in dispute.
- Watch for signs that children have fully expressed their feelings – then move on with problem solving.
- If necessary, acknowledge feelings throughout the problem-solving discussion.

Steps 3, 4, 5 and 6: Supporting Children's Solutions. In the last four steps, children take the initiative in finding a solution. These steps are the "thinking" part of problem solving.

3. Gather Information

- Ask children questions about the conflict.
- Listen for each child's perception of the problem so that you can repeat or restate relevant details for the children to consider.
- Key roles in this step – listen neutrally; void taking sides or forming opinions about the situation.

4. Restate the Problem

- Repeat back what the children have said, reframing any hurtful words and resisting any judgments or quick solutions.
- If children correct your statement, then restate the correction.

5. Ask for Ideas for Solutions and Choose One Together

- First, ask children involved in the dispute for solutions.
- Next, ask children nearby for ideas.

If children are not agreeing on a solution...

- Tell them that you have an idea and ask if they want to hear it.
- Give limited choices.
- Tell the children you will need to decide the outcome. (This is absolutely a last resort and is rarely necessary).

6. Be Prepared to Give Follow-Up Support

- Give support to children's ideas and efforts by making a simple affirming statement.
- Stay nearby briefly, as children re-engage in their activities. This way, you are available to help if there is any confusion about the solution or if unresolved feelings flare up once again.

Staff does **not** use the following methods:

- Physical punishment such as hitting, shoving, or spanking
- Mental or emotional punishment such as humiliation, shaming, or threatening.
- Depriving a child of meals, rest, or necessary toilet use
- Confinement of a child in an enclosed area such as a closet or locked room

Please inform a teacher or the Director if you witness questionable treatment of a child.

PRINCIPLES OF GUIDING BEHAVIOR

1. Tell children what they can do instead of what they cannot do.

Give children safe limits they can understand. Positive statements offer clear and explicit instructions. Avoid, "You know better."

2. Protect and preserve children's feeling that they are lovable and capable.

Recognize their feelings without accepting their actions. "I see that you are angry. I can't let you hurt others."

3. Offer children choices only when you are willing to abide by their decisions

"Are you ready to rest?" This is not a good question when a child is overtired, and resting is next in the routine. "Would you like to play with dinosaurs or paint?" This is a better question since both options are available.

4. Change the environment instead of the child's behavior

Ensure that materials and furniture are accessible to children. Avoid open areas indoors. Be sure children are near water during messy activities.

5. Work with children instead of against them.

Offer simple rules and clear choices. "We cannot throw toys in the classroom because someone may get hurt." "You can throw bean bags in this basket or wait to play ball when going outside."

6. Maintain your authority calmly and consistently. Allow children to safely experience the natural consequences of their behavior.

Adult: "She is unsure about playing with you because she is afraid you will hit her again." OR "I see that you spilled your milk. Get a paper towel and let's clean it up."

7. Set a good example. Speak and act only in ways you want children to speak and act.

Model positive interactions with children and other adults. Use language, body language, and facial expressions that you want children to repeat.

Transitions

Transitions work better when we know what to expect. By planning transitions, we can help children adjust to new settings and approach new experiences in a positive way.

Transitions happen when:

- Children enter a program for the very first time
- Children go from preschool to kindergarten
- Children move to a different community
- Children attend more than one program

Birthday Celebrations

AIBCC would like to celebrate each child's birthday. If you would like to participate or provide something to share with the class, please let us know in advance. At the same time, please let us know in advance if you would not like to celebrate your child's birthday. *Please do not send any treats, party favors, cakes, or candy that contain nuts or nut derivatives as part of the birthday celebration.*

Telephone, Address, and Emergency Form Changes

Any change of address or telephone must be immediately communicated to AIBCC. **Emergency form changes are serious. If you believe that a change is needed, please call the Director immediately to resolve this change.**

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled twice a year to discuss your child's development, his or her achievements, and to share some of his or her artwork. We also encourage parents to approach us at any time before 5:00 pm if they would like to talk about their child or would like to schedule a separate conference.

Suggestions

If you have any suggestions about how we can improve our service, please communicate them to us either by writing, by phone, or personally.

Contact Information

Please feel free to call or email AIBCC with any of your questions or concerns.

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Amendment to the Parent Handbook

Escalation Policy for Challenging Behaviors at Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center

Purpose

Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center is committed to supporting children's social-emotional development through developmentally appropriate practices and strong family partnerships. Challenging behaviors are viewed as a form of communication, and every effort is made to support the child before considering dismissal.

Step 1: Classroom Support & Early Intervention

When a child displays challenging behaviors:

- Teachers observe and document behaviors objectively
- Developmentally appropriate strategies are implemented, including:
 - Positive guidance and redirection
 - Visual supports and consistent routines
 - Emotional coaching and calming strategies
- Informal communication with families occurs to share observations and strategies

Goal: Address behaviors early through classroom-based supports.

Step 2: Parent Conference & Behavior Support Plan

If behaviors continue or escalate:

- A formal conference is scheduled with families, teachers, and administration
- Documentation is reviewed together
- A written **Behavior Support Plan** is developed with clear goals and strategies
- Families are provided with recommended resources and support strategies to use at home

Goal: Promote consistency and collaboration between home and school.

Step 3: Final Review & Termination of Care (Last Resort)

If, after reasonable time and support:

- The child's behavior continues to significantly impact safety or the learning environment
- The center determines it can no longer safely meet the child's needs
- Family participation in agreed-upon supports has not occurred

Then:

- A final conference is held
- A written termination notice is issued (unless immediate safety concerns require expedited action)
- Families are provided with referrals to community resources or alternative care options

Goal: Act in the best interest of the child, families, staff, and program community.

Program Commitment

Arco Iris Bilingual Children's Center does not terminate care based on disability, language, culture, or family status and remains committed to inclusion, equity, and family partnership in alignment with NAEYC and MSDE guidelines.