

MONTANA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS-GFB



Policy Manual

SECTION 9000: CHILD CARE--EARLY EDUCATION, PRE-SCHOOL, EXTENDED CARE

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9000 Child Care Programs / Definitions

Besides managing Catholic schools for grades K-12, the Montana Catholic Schools have a number of other school supported programs that provide care for children. It is important to note that these programs are Catholic in nature and teaching the faith is essential to their mission.

To understand the distinctive nature of these programs, the following general definitions shall apply whenever these terms are used in diocesan policy:

- Child Care Programs are programs that care for children (under 18 years of age) other than the traditional K-12 educational programs.
- State Licensed or Licensed child care programs are those programs that the State of Montana requires to be licensed in order to be operated. Examples of these licensed child care programs are:
 - Infant Care Programs refers to noncompulsory programs for infants (ages birth through 2) which provide care for an extended period of time.
 - Day Care Programs refers to noncompulsory programs for young children (ages 2 through 6) which provide care for an extended period of time.
 - Preschool/Pre-K Programs refers to noncompulsory programs for young children (ages 2 through 6) which are primarily instructional in character and which follow a school year calendar and have enough contact hours to qualify for state licensure.
- Exempt child care programs are those child care programs that are not required by the State of Montana to be licensed in order to be operated. Examples of these exempt child care programs are:
 - Extended Care Programs refers to noncompulsory, school-operated programs that provide care before-and/or after-school for school-age children.
 - Recreational Programs refers to noncompulsory recreational programs for school-age children that must comply with certain limited hours of service (e.g. camps, summer programs, etc.).
 - Preschool/Pre-K programs that fall beneath the threshold of state requirements. For example, programs serving older students (aged 4-5) need to be licensed when they extend beyond 6 hours per day of contact. Programs serving younger students (ages 3 and under) need to be licensed if they extend beyond 4 hours per day of contact hours.
- Director refers to a person designated by the school or parish to manage a child care program. Directors of both licensed and exempt programs must meet certain qualifications including those set by the state to hold this position.

9150 Catholic Identity of Child Care Programs (to also include pre-K and preschool in this section)

- The child care program has a mission statement which indicates the integration of the Roman Catholic faith in all aspects of school life.
- The child care program provides regular opportunities for the school community to experience prayer.
- The child care program uses religious resources and instruction that is faithful to the Roman Catholic Church teachers and meets the requirements set forth by the USCCB.
- The Bishop approves those who teach the faith and there is ongoing formation for catechetical and instructional competence.
- The child care program maintains an active partnership with parents whose fundamental concern is the spiritual and academic evaluation of their children.

- The child care program has a service-oriented outreach to the Church and the civic community that is age-appropriate.
- The child care program uses signs, sacramental, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church.
- All child care program personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.

9200 Accountability

- All licensed child care programs part of the Catholic school shall be licensed by the state of Montana and accountable to the Diocese and the Superintendent.
- The Catholic Schools Office shall insure that all state/county licensing requirements are met in those programs requiring such licensure.
- All employees, children, volunteers, and others involved with Diocesan Child Care Programs shall be under the auspices of the Montana Catholic Schools GFB and subject to the policies and practices established by the Diocese and the Catholic School's Office.

9300 Program Supervision

Child Care Programs affiliated with a Catholic school shall be the responsibility of the Principal who shall delegate direct supervision of the program to the Child Care Program Director, who has the responsibility to hire the Child Care staff.

9310 Program Director

- The Child Care Program Director shall ensure the parish or school-based child care program meets all the requirements, policies, and practices set by the State of Montana, the Montana Catholic Schools, the Superintendent, the local parish (if applicable) and the school.
- The Director should be Safe Environment trained, currently certified in CPR/First Aid, have a background in child development, and be engaged in ongoing annual training.

9400 Licensed Child Care Programs

9410 Licensed Care Programs

- A Catholic school may operate a Licensed Care Program that provides child care for the parents of the local Catholic school and/or parish community.
- A school's Licensed Care Program shall meet the following minimum requirements:
 - The program shall comply with all state of Montana rules and regulations for operating a Licensed Child Care facility.
 - The program shall be made available to children of Catholic families in the local community.
 - The program and its staff shall be directly supervised by an on-site Director who is appointed and supervised by the school's principal.
 - The program should be financed by fees from participating families and should not be subsidized by the school.

9500 Exempt Child Care Programs

9510 Extended Care Programs

- A Catholic school may operate an exempt Extended Care Program that provides before- and/or after-school care for the school's regularly enrolled students in grades Kindergarten through eighth.
- A school's Extended Care Program shall meet the following minimum requirements:
 - The program shall provide participating students with planned and professionally supervised recreational and learning activities.
 - The program shall only be available to students who are regularly enrolled in the school.
 - The program and its staff shall be directly supervised by an on-site Director who is appointed and supervised by the school's principal. The program should be financed by fees from participating families and should not be subsidized by the school.