

THE DIOCESE OF HELENA



Policy Manual

SECTION 9000

CHILD CARE

(EARLY EDUCATION, PRE-SCHOOL, BEFORE SCHOOL, & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS)

FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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9000 Child Care Programs

9100 Definitions

- Besides managing Catholic schools for grades K-12, the Diocese of Helena has a number of other school and parish supported programs that provide care for children.
- 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 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.
 - 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.).
 - 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.

9200 Accountability

- All licensed child care programs established in the Diocese of Helena, as 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 Diocese of Helena and subject to the policies and practices established by the Diocese and the Catholic School's Office.

9300 Program Supervision

- In parishes that do not have an established elementary school, child care programs shall be under the supervision of the pastor.
- 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 Diocese of Helena, the Superintendent, the local parish (if applicable) and the school.

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 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.