



Family Policy Manual

Revised January 2023; August 2023; September 2023

Policies effective beginning the first day of summer 2023 – last day of school 2024

Millard Public Schools Foundation

5231 S 159 Avenue

Omaha, NE 68135

(402) 991-6710

Website: www.mpsfoundation.org

Email address: spark@mpsfoundation.org

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Welcome

Dear Parents,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome your family to the Spark program. The purpose of Spark is to provide before and after school child care in a familiar setting that offers planned activities, quality care, and excellent supervision.

Spark is operated by the Millard Public Schools Foundation. Our mission: The Millard Public Schools Foundation partners with the Millard Public Schools to support students, families, and the community by guaranteeing sustainable resources and offering high-quality programs.

The Spark program is conveniently located at each MPS elementary school and competitive in pricing. Each site meets Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services standards for School Age Only or Child Care Centers as well as meeting inspection requirements from the Fire Marshal and County Health Department.

The program attends to educational and nutritional needs of each child. A morning breakfast and after school snack are served at no additional cost. Planned program enrichment and activities vary to provide a fun, well-rounded, child care experience. Our supervised child care incorporates STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math), planned gross motor activities and games, literacy, skill building, and wellness. These are fun, interactive, and intentional experiences to provide learning opportunities with your child's enjoyment in mind! We want learning to be fun! Children will also have an opportunity to complete school assignments by participating in our incentivized homework lab, have free choice time, and explore the world through outdoor play.

This family policy manual outlines what you may expect from the Spark Program and what Spark expects from you in return. We hope it will be helpful and we welcome your suggestions for future policy manuals. If questions arise that aren't covered in the manual, please feel to speak to your Site Director, or contact the Millard Public Schools Foundation office at 402-991-6710.

We hope your family's experience with the Spark program will be an enriching, delightful experience. Welcome to Spark!

Sincerely,

MPSF Spark Administration



Millard Public Schools Foundation



Our Impact

We support our Millard Public Schools and the community we serve by:

- providing nearly \$1 million to the district so all 35 schools receive funding to support strategic initiatives within their buildings each year
- connecting Millard graduating seniors with over \$150,000 in scholarship funding
- supporting Millard Families in Crisis during difficult times



spark

Spark is the Foundation's before and after school program offered in all 25 Millard elementary schools. We also offer a summer program available to children that have completed their first year of Kindergarten through 5th grade.

The revenue we receive from the Spark program allows us to provide substantial funding to the district each year.

www.mpsfoundation.org

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Location	Address	Phone	New Email
Ackerman	5110 S 156th St 68135	402-991-6716	ackerman@mpsfoundation.org
Bess Aldrich	506 N 162nd Ave 68118	402-991-6719	bessaldrich@mpsfoundation.org
Black Elk	6708 S 161st Ave 68135	402-991-6722	blackelk@mpsfoundation.org
Bryan	5010 S 144th St 68137	402-991-6723	bryankn@mpsfoundation.org
Cather	3030 S 139th Plz 68144	402-991-6724	cather@mpsfoundation.org
Cody	3320 S 127th St 68144	402-991-6725	cody@mpsfoundation.org
Cottonwood	615 Piedmont Dr 68154	402-991-6728	cottonwood@mpsfoundation.org
Ezra Millard	14111 Blondo St 68164	402-991-6731	ezramillard@mpsfoundation.org
Grace Abbott	1313 N 156th St 68118	402-991-6589	graceabbott@mpsfoundation.org
Harvey Oaks	15228 Shirley St 68144	402-991-6736	harveyoaks@mpsfoundation.org
Hitchcock	5809 S 104th St 68127	402-991-6737	hitchcock@mpsfoundation.org
Holling Heights	6565 S 136th St 68137	402-991-6739	hollingheights@mpsfoundation.org
Montclair	2405 S 138th St 68144	402-991-6745	montclair@mpsfoundation.org
Morton	1805 S 160th St 68130	402-991-6747	morton@mpsfoundation.org
Neihardt	15130 Drexel St 68137	402-991-6749	neihardt@mpsfoundation.org
Norris	12424 Weir St 68137	402-991-6761	norris@mpsfoundation.org
Reagan	4440 S 198th Ave 68135	402-991-6763	reagan@mpsfoundation.org
Reeder	19202 Chandler Rd 68028	402-991-6859	reeder@mpsfoundation.org
Rockwell	6370 S 140th Ave 68137	402-991-6771	rockwell@mpsfoundation.org
Rohwer	17701 F St 68135	402-991-6775	rohwer@mpsfoundation.org
Sandoz	5959 Oak Hills Dr 68137	402-991-6788	sandoz@mpsfoundation.org
Upchurch	8686 S 165th St 68136	402-991-6789	upchurch@mpsfoundation.org
Walt Disney	5717 S 112th St 68137	402-991-6730	waltdisney@mpsfoundation.org
Wheeler	6707 S 178th St 68135	402-991-6794	wheeler@mpsfoundation.org
Willowdale	16901 P St 68135	402-991-6795	willowdale@mpsfoundation.org
MPSF Office	5231 S 159th Ave 68135	402-991-6710 402-991-6858 (fax)	spark@mpsfoundation.org



2023-24 SPARK CALENDAR

July 4, 2023 - Closed - Independence Day

August 7-9 - Closed - School Year Prep

August 10, 2023 - First Day of School

September 4, 2023 - Closed - Labor Day

September 5, 2023 - Consolidation

October 12, 13 & 16, 2023 - Consolidation

November 6, 2023 - Consolidation

November 22, 2023 - Consolidation

November 23 & 24, 2023 - Closed - Thanksgiving Break

December 21, 2023 - January 3, 2024 - Winter Break Consolidation

- **December 25 & 26, 2023 - Closed - Christmas Eve/Day (observance)**
- **January 1 & 2, 2024 - Closed - New Year's Eve/Day (observance)**

January 15, 2024 - Consolidation

February 16 & 19, 2024 - Consolidation

March 14, 15 & 18, 2024 - Consolidation

April 8-12, 2024 - Consolidation

May 24, 2024 - Closed - Summer Program Prep

May 27, 2024 - Closed - Memorial Day

Last Day of School - TBA

Program Information

LICENSING: Spark is a child care program licensed by the State of Nebraska through Nebraska Health and Human Services. Spark sites are visited throughout the year by our Child Care Licensing Specialist to maintain our licensing compliance with the State of Nebraska. The school-age child to adult ratio is 15:1. Spark is located in the gym, multi-purpose room, commons area and/or media center depending on the building in which the program operates.

Nothing is more important than a dedicated, experienced, and well-trained staff. Staff members are selected for their experience, training, and personal commitment to the needs of children. A background check is completed through the Child and Adult Protective Service Registry for each employee. A Nebraska State Patrol fingerprint registry check is completed for employees over the age of 18. All Spark employees are required to have documented annual in-service training and receive CPR and first aid certification.

CHILDREN SERVED: The Millard Public Schools Foundation Spark program does not discriminate in our admission policies based on race, sex, religion, place of national origin, or physical or mental abilities. Child care is provided for children ages Kindergarten – 5th grade, with exception of Montclair Elementary, as preschool children are served to support the school's Montessori program. During regular school days, children are only able to use the Spark site where their child is registered for school.

Spark provides care only for children who are: toilet trained; have age-appropriate eating, dressing, and hygiene skills; able to abide by the rules of the program as outlined in the Family Policy Manual; and are able to function effectively in a setting with one adult for each 15 children.

It is mandatory that parents list on the registration form **at the time of registration** should their child have any special needs or accommodations. Failure to comply with this request at the time of registration may result in removal from the Spark program. All information listed will remain confidential; but it is for the safety and well-being of your child that we request such information, so that appropriate and adequate care can be given to best serve your child's needs.

HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION: Spark is a year-round program that operates during regular school days, non-school days, inclement weather/remote learning days, and has a full-day summer program. However, Spark is closed on all major holidays. Please check the annual calendar listed in the previous section for a complete listing of days Spark is closed.

Millard Public Schools Foundation Office: The Millard Public Schools Foundation office is open Monday – Friday from the hours of 8:00am – 4:30pm. The Foundation office is closed on all major holidays (or observations).

Spark Sites (Regular School Days): Sites are open Monday – Friday from 6:30 am until school begins, and after-school from 3:30 pm – 6:00 pm except for Grace Abbott. Due to early release, all

sites with exception of Grace Abbott, open at 2:30 pm on Wednesdays. Grace Abbott's hours of operation are Monday – Friday from 6:30 am – 8:20 am, and 3:10 pm – 6:00 pm.

Spark Sites (Consolidation/Inclement Weather/Remote Learning Days): Designated sites are open on these days from 6:30 am until 6:00 pm. A schedule will be distributed early in the school year, detailing the dates of consolidation and locations. Please see the section titled 'Consolidation, Inclement Weather Days & Summer (Spark & Spark UP)' for inclement weather day policies and procedures.

HOLIDAYS: Spark will be closed for the 9 following holidays, or their observance: Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the Friday following Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day and Memorial Day. If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Spark will either be closed the Friday preceding the holiday; or the Monday and/or Tuesday following the holiday to honor the holiday's observance. *Spark will also be closed on August 7, 8, 9, 2023 & May 24, 2024, as we prepare our school-year and summer programs.*

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES FOR NEW FAMILIES: To initially register in the Spark program, the following information must be completed and submitted to the Foundation office prior to your child's first day in the program:

- Complete the online registration process and provide auto-pay account.
- Submit a current and complete copy of your child's immunization record.
- Pay the non-refundable registration fee of \$50.00 per child; children actively receiving Child Care Subsidy benefits are not subject to a registration fee.

At the time of registration families will be provided access to our family policy manual, a current fee schedule, and any other necessary information through the Parent Portal accessed on our website. Once the above processes have been completed, information will then be imported into our child care software and shared with your child's site.

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES FOR CURRENT FAMILIES IN THE SPARK PROGRAM:

Children must re-enroll each school year and/or summer to remain in the Spark program. Priority registration is held each year in the spring for current families wanting to register for summer and the upcoming school year.

Families who are currently in the Spark program always have priority so long as they have registered by the registration deadline each year. Siblings who will be entering Kindergarten in the fall are also given priority for the upcoming school year. For siblings to receive priority, they must be registered with the child currently attending Spark during the priority registration period. Priority is still given if the current child will be attending middle school for the upcoming school year. Families who do not register during priority registration may be forfeiting their spot in the Spark program as the position may be made available to another family. If a current family does not complete registration processes during priority registration and wish to re-register, the site must have open positions, and they will be required to register as a new family.

REGISTRATION FEE: A non-refundable registration fee must be paid at the time of the initial registration into the program and annually thereafter. The initial fee is \$50.00 per child and each subsequent annual registration is \$25.00 per child. If you remove your child from the Spark Program at any time, and choose to register them back into the program, a \$50.00 registration fee per child will be collected at that time. Children that qualify for Child Care Subsidy are not subject to payment of registration fees as we may receive reimbursement for these fees from DHHS.

ENROLLMENT CATEGORIES: Families have seven options of enrollment categories from which to choose. Tuition charges depend upon their chosen enrollment category, and the number of children being enrolled. Spark locations are licensed by the State of Nebraska and space is limited based on our license capacity issued by DHHS for each Spark site.

Your tuition is determined by the enrollment category for which you register your child/children. Tuition charges are based on enrollment category, not attendance or the number of days between deduction dates.

Full-Time – Reserves a space each morning and afternoon

Full-Time No Wednesday Afternoons – Reserves a space each morning and MTThF afternoon. May not attend Wednesday afternoons.

Part-Time (before school only) – Reserves a space each morning

Part-Time (after school only) – Reserves a space each afternoon

Part-Time After School No Wednesdays = Reserves a space on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday afternoons. *This enrollment category is not available for children attending Grace Abbott.*

Mornings with Wednesday Afternoons – Reserves a space each morning and Wednesday afternoon. *This enrollment category is not available for children attending Grace Abbott.*

Wed Afternoon Only – Reserves a space each Wednesday afternoon only. *This enrollment category is not available for children attending Grace Abbott.*

TUITION: The Millard Public Schools Foundation deductions occur from auto-pay accounts set up by families at the time of registration. Auto-pay accounts can be checking, savings or credit card accounts. Our bi-weekly deductions occur Mondays in accordance with our deduction schedule. Charges for non-school days and inclement weather days are deducted in addition to regular tuition charges. Tuition is based on the enrollment category for which each family has registered and is due regardless of the child's actual attendance. Please review the fee schedule for the current tuition rates.

The Millard Public Schools Foundation has the capability to withdraw funds out of two separate accounts. In custody situations, the Foundation can split the amounts by the necessary percentage as outlined in the custody decree and as agreed upon by both paying parties. Failure of both paying parties to adhere to the conditions as stated in their custody decree and/or signed acknowledgement of responsibility may result in termination of one or both paying parties, reallocation of financial responsibilities, or termination of services. Paying party eligibility will be terminated if the Millard Public Schools Foundation receives three (3) returned payments on behalf of a given paying party during one school year.

Should the financial institution account of one paying party no longer be valid, or if their eligibility is terminated, 100% of the tuition will then become the responsibility of the other paying party. Notification will be requested from the eligible paying party to assume 100% of tuition responsibility to continue services. Families will have one week from the date of request to comply. Failure to comply may result in termination of services. Once the eligible paying party acknowledges 100% payment responsibility to continue services, the Foundation will continue to withdraw 100% of the tuition out of their financial institution account until the non-eligible party is granted reinstatement as an eligible paying party. To be considered eligible, a paying party's account must be current and have a valid auto-pay account on file.

Failure to submit payment for all tuition and associated fees accrued on a paying party's account may result in termination of services. Determinations made regarding termination of services and/or future reinstatement of services, are done so at the discretion of the Millard Public Schools Foundation.

HOW IS MY TUITION DEDUCTION AMOUNT DETERMINED? Each enrollment category below has an annual amount. The annual amount is then divided into 20 equal deductions. Deductions occur bi-weekly, on Mondays, beginning on Monday, August 7, 2023. The final deduction of the 2023-2024 school year will be Monday, May 13, 2024. No deduction will occur on Monday, December 25, 2023. Please remember that deduction amounts will differ if non-school day services, and/or late fee charges, are scheduled to occur in addition to your scheduled deduction amount. *Your tuition is determined by the enrollment category for which you have registered your child/ren. Tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance, or the number of days between deduction dates.*

AUTO-PAY: Through enrollment in auto-pay at the time of registration, the Millard Public Schools Foundation Spark program automatically deducts the tuition by providing a debit/credit card or checking/saving account through our child care software.

Payers that have provided the Foundation with a valid email address, will receive an emailed invoice of payment as part of their enrollment in auto-pay. These invoices are helpful to track payments made to the program and are helpful tools for families participating in child care spending programs which may be offered through their employment. Payers may also access payment records by logging into the Parent Portal at www.mpsfoundation.org.

All families registered in the Spark program are required to have their account set up on automatic tuition deductions through auto-pay. If a card expires or the payer wishes to provide a different payment account, the payer is responsible for updating the account information through the Parent Portal. Any auto-pay account that is removed by a payer, must be replaced with a valid payment account no more than ten business days from removal.

RETURN PAYMENT: A \$35.00 fee will be assessed to your account if the Millard Public Schools Foundation receives notification of a return payment due to insufficient funds from your financial institution. If the Millard Public Schools Foundation receives three (3) returned payments due to insufficient funds, or invalid or closed account notifications, within one school year, your child may be removed from the Spark Program.

If the Millard Public Schools Foundation receives notification that your payment has been returned, an email will be sent notifying you of the return. Payment can be made online through the parent portal. Should your child's registration fee be returned insufficient, your contract may be immediately terminated.

If two (2) consecutive payments are returned, an email will be sent by the Foundation office notifying you of the return. You will be notified that services will be suspended should the account not be brought to good standing within two days. Failure to bring the account to good standing within one week of suspended services may result in termination of services. The Foundation reserves the right to hold families responsible for all charges accruing during any period in which a child is suspended from the Spark program.

All payments must be made to the Foundation office in the form of cash or money order. Failure to rectify your account in full within one week following the date of suspension may result in immediate removal from Spark, and your account being submitted to collections. Parents or guardians will be responsible for any collection costs or charges incurred. These charges will be added to the outstanding balance on their account. Should the child be removed from the program, and the account is paid in full, the child will be eligible for re-enrollment into the Spark program provided the program has openings, and a \$50.00 registration fee per child is submitted. Completion of new registration paperwork may be required.

If three (3) payments are returned during the school year your child/ren may be removed from the program. Should the child be removed from the program, and the account is paid in full, the child will be eligible for re-enrollment into the Spark program provided the program has openings, and a \$50.00 registration fee per child is submitted. Completion of new registration paperwork may be required.

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY: The Millard Public Schools Foundation accepts Child Care Subsidy. The Child Care Subsidy program is provided by the State of Nebraska and must be set up through Nebraska Health and Human Services. For the Millard Public Schools Foundation to accept subsidy, families must have a current provider authorization form on file and have an auto-pay account on file. Child care subsidy does not cover the cost of family co-pay amounts, late fees, and returned payment charges.

If the subsidy authorization expires, Spark services will begin being charged to the family's account at the enrollment category for which their child/en is/are registered. Charges accrued will be deducted from the bank account on file beginning with the next deduction following benefit expiration. Information regarding fees and a deduction schedule can be found on our Spark Fee Schedule.

It is the family's responsibility to contact their case worker for continued authorization of services as the Millard Public Schools Foundation assumes no responsibility in securing reauthorization for benefits. DHHS will not subsidize late fees, therefore these fees are the responsibility of the family.

If your subsidy plan includes a co-pay, and you pay the co-pay to another provider, this must be indicated on your authorization. Without that statement, you will be responsible for co-pay fees paid to the Millard Public Schools Foundation. Documentation of fees paid to another provider may be requested.

LATE PICK-UP FEES: All children are to be picked up by 6:00 pm. Our program closes at 6:00 pm per our agreement with DHHS licensing and our MPS building agreement. Families will be charged for late pick-up at a rate of \$20.00 per child for the first 15 minutes, and \$15.00 per child for each additional 15 minutes of care provided. The time on the iPad at the designated sign-in area at your site is the clock used to determine drop-off and pick-up times. The child care software we utilize automatically assesses late fees based upon the time a child is signed out of the program. All late pick-up fees will be deducted from your account in addition to tuition fees. In cases of split tuition, late pick-up fee policies will be assessed in full to the party responsible for the late pick-up.

Families accruing three (3) late fees in a school year may result in immediate removal from the Spark program. Families removed from Spark due to late pick-up fee violation may be permitted to register for Spark the following school year.

Late fees begin at 6:01 pm: 6:01 pm – 6:15 pm an initial \$20.00 late fee per child is imposed; 6:16 pm – 6:30 pm an additional \$15.00 late fee per child fees is imposed; At 6:31 pm, if we have been unable to contact parents, guardians or other persons authorized to pick-up, authorities will be notified, and we will report child/ren as abandoned.

FEDERAL TAX ID NUMBER: The Federal Tax ID number of the Millard Public Schools Foundation Spark program is **47-0678796**.

YEAR-END TAX STATEMENTS: In addition to invoice history, families access their year-end tax statements through the Parent Portal at www.mpsfoundation.org. Year-end tax statements will become available at the beginning of a new calendar year for payments made in the previous year.

STATUS CHANGE: Any change in registration status for your child, such as changing from full time to AM, must be submitted online through the Parent Portal at www.mpsfoundation.org. Any form of payment changes must be made in your Spark account online. Changes made to an account shall take effect no less than two weeks (14 days) from the date of request.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SPARK PROGRAM (By the family): Families who wish to discontinue child care services with the Spark program must submit this notice through the Parent Portal. The date of withdrawal must be at least two weeks (14 days) after the request. The two-week period begins from the date of request. Parents are obligated to continue payment of any tuition or fees to meet the requirement regardless of the child's attendance. Any charges incurred during this time are non-refundable.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SPARK PROGRAM (By the Foundation): Reasonable steps will be taken to avoid termination; however, if we can no longer provide care to meet an individual child's needs,

we will provide a two-week notice. The two-week notice is null and void if the child is being removed for disciplinary reasons (please see "Disciplinary Policy"). Families are responsible for payment for those two weeks even if your child does not attend. Spark may terminate services for any of the following reasons (but are not limited to):

- Failure to honor obligations listed in the Family Policy Manual, or in any written policies provided.
- Any actions by parents or children that adversely affect the program.
- Offensive language used by parent/guardian, and harassment of staff.
- Lack of parental cooperation.
- Failure to complete required forms or online processes.
- Inability to meet the child's needs without additional staff.
- Failure to maintain an account in good-standing.

TRANSFER REQUESTS: Any transfer request must be submitted online as a 'New Contract.' Approval of the 'New Contract' is subject to availability. The registration fee for a new contract pertaining to a transfer request may be waived if the request occurs during the same school year.

Your Child's Day

PROGRAM PLANNING: Spark programs offer a wide variety of STEAM-based enrichment activities. Activities are prepared in advance so that staff, parents, and children are aware of the week's activities. Activity plans are posted on the at the sign-in/out area and coincide with the daily schedule. In addition to planned activities, children are given opportunities to complete homework, engage in free choice activities, and play outdoors.

SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS: Each Spark site has a variety of developmentally appropriate supplies and materials for each child to be engaged in an activity. Supplies and materials are inspected weekly to ensure that they are in good condition. Supplies and materials not in good condition will be removed from use immediately.

ITEMS FROM HOME: We request your refrain from permitting your child to bring play items and electronics from home. The exception to this is school-provided electronics necessary to complete coursework and reading. Spark has ample equipment to meet the children's needs. Spark will not assume responsibility for items brought from home. Please do not send your child to Spark with a cell phone. If you need to contact your child at Spark, please feel free to call the site and ask for the Site Director. The Site Director will be able to assist you in speaking with your child. Conversely, a child may be permitted to contact a parent/guardian if the Site Director deems the situation as appropriate.

LOST AND FOUND: If your child is missing articles of clothing or personal property, please inquire at the site as soon as possible. Unclaimed items will be put in the school's lost and found. Spark is not responsible for lost items.

FAMILY COMMUNICATION: Keeping you informed is a top priority at Spark. In addition to on-site communication materials, we encourage our families to keep up to date with Spark news and happenings on our website (www.mpsfoundation.org), on Facebook, via email communication, and opting to receive text alerts. Types of information you will receive through our family communication plan include postponements or cancellations due to inclement weather, reminders about various events such as summer and annual registration, consolidation pre-registration, and more! These services are a great way to stay informed about your Spark site.

SPARK DAILY SCHEDULE:

Morning Schedule	6:30	Site Opens
		Fine Motor/Table Games
	7:00	Free Choice Time/Table Games/Quiet Activities
	7:15	Large Muscle Activities/Group Game
	7:45	Restrooms & Hand Washing
	7:55	Breakfast Snack
	8:15	Line up for School

	8:30	Dismiss for School
Afternoon Schedule	3:30	School Dismissal, Attendance, Handwashing & Afternoon Snack
	3:55	Homework Lab/Reading/Math-Literacy
	4:20	Large Muscle Activities/Inside Gross Motor/Outdoor Play
	4:45	Enrichment/STEAM Programming/Makerspace
	5:15	Free Choice Time/Group Game
	6:00	Site Closes

All sites except for Grace Abbott dismiss at 2:30 pm on Wednesday afternoon. Adjustments will be made in the daily schedule to accommodate early dismissal.

Attendance

AM Attendance

As children arrive for the morning program, their attendance will be tracked in our child care software and on our attendance tracking template.

PM Attendance

As children arrive to our program after school, their attendance will be tracked on our attendance tracking template and transferred into our child care software. Within the first 20 minutes of the program opening in the afternoon, for any child scheduled to attend in the afternoon and has not accounted for, Spark staff will implement the ‘Missing Child Procedures’. This policy is outlined in a later section.

Handwashing/Restrooms

Children and staff are to always wash and dry their hands thoroughly before handling or consuming food, and after the use of the bathroom facilities.

Meals and Snacks

Breakfast Program

Each Spark site participates in the school breakfast program provided by Millard Public Schools. Summer program breakfast service is determined upon annual review each spring. All breakfast meals meet USDA requirements under the National School Breakfast Program. The cost of the breakfast program is included in fees associated with our fee schedule or non-school day tuition. Weekly menus are posted at each site which is provided by the Millard Public Schools Food Service Department. Menus and times which breakfast is served may vary at each location.

Afternoon Snack

After attendance is complete, children will be served an afternoon snack. Weekly menus are posted so that staff, children, and parents are aware of the daily menu. Snacks represent at minimum two of the four food groups. Adequate and appropriate portions will be given based upon the children’s needs. Substitution snacks may be provided for children who have special dietary needs on days

when the scheduled snack is not appropriate. Please discuss any special dietary needs with your Site Director.

Lunch Program

Each Spark site participates in the school lunch program provided by Millard Public Schools during non-school days and our summer program. All lunch meals meet USDA requirements under the National School Lunch Program. The cost of the lunch program is included in fees associated with non-school day tuition. Weekly menus are posted at each site which is provided by the Millard Public Schools Food Service Department. Menus and times that lunch is served may vary at each location.

Activities

Each Spark program offers a variety of structured as well as unstructured experiences to the children. The following areas will be a part of the daily schedule:

Homework Lab/Reading/Math-Literacy

Children have an opportunity to complete their homework while attending Spark afternoon programming. Spark offers an incentive-based homework opportunity which encourages children to complete assignments given to them from their school day.

Children choosing not to participate in Homework Lab have opportunities to independently read, listen to stories, read to others, or choose to participate in an activity from our Math-Literacy cart.

Large Muscle Activities/Indoor Gross Motor/Outdoor Play

Children will have an opportunity to run, climb, and jump through outdoor free play and organized games led by the staff. Weather permitting, children will play outdoors daily. All children who are well enough to be at Spark will be expected to participate in outdoor play. You can help your child to enjoy this time outdoors by being sure that he or she is dressed for existing weather conditions. If your child has chronic health problems that prohibit or limit outdoor play, please notify your Site Director.

Enrichment/STEAM Programming/Literacy

Children will have an opportunity every day to participate in hands on enrichment activities. These will include STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) based exploration. We will be introducing a new homework program that will encourage and incentivize time each day where students can work on homework, read, or be read to.

Free Choice Time/Group Game

Time is set aside for children to select materials and engage with peers to manage their play independently. This allows children to make decisions and have control of their world. Children may also choose to play in an organized game supervised by Spark staff.

Supplemental Recreational Programming

Children will be given an opportunity to participate in various types of supplemental programming focusing on a variety of interests including nutrition, wellness, problem solving, multicultural activities, drama, entrepreneurial skills, service projects, and social emotional learning.

Departure

Children leaving the Spark site must be signed out daily by a parent, legal guardian or a person specified on the child's authorization list. Parents cannot call and request their child to be signed out by a staff member to leave with another individual, or request their child be permitted to walk home. This policy is outlined in more detail in a later section.

Supervision & Safety

PROVIDING APPROPRIATE CARE AND SUPERVISION: Staff members of a child care program are a very important element in successful operation of the program. It is the staff that is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe, healthy environment. The staff shall assume responsibilities for always providing adequate and appropriate supervision for children in attendance. Every situation will differ; however, it is expected that child care staff will use good judgment in assessing proper supervision while children are in our care.

Appropriate supervision is provided by adhering to the following guidelines:

- Staff remaining in the same room as the children.
- Children shall never be left unattended.
- Staff will try to eliminate distractions and interruptions such use of phones for reasons not pertaining to operations.
- An accountability plan will be in place for children who need to use the bathroom or drinking fountain during outdoor play.
- If during Spark time, the child needs to go to their classroom, they will require escort. The request may be denied if staff are required for supervision of the group.
- Staff will be always visible and available.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN ENROLLED: One goal of the Spark program is to provide a safe environment for each child. Knowing all children scheduled to be present is part of this goal. Attendance is taken promptly after school dismissal as the children arrive in the gym. If a child is scheduled to attend Spark after school, the child does not arrive, and a parent/guardian has not notified Spark, the Site Director will initiate the 'Missing Child Procedures'.

If a child will be absent or will be late to Spark, it is very important you notify our staff. Messages may be left on voice mail 24 hours a day by calling the number for your child's site. Messages left with the school secretary **DO NOT** fulfill this obligation. Spark is not a program of the Millard Public Schools, and the school secretary is not responsible for taking messages for Spark. You may also email absences to your Spark site's email account.

MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE/POLICY: If a child is scheduled to attend Spark after school and the child does not arrive, and a parent/guardian has not notified Spark, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Check with the school secretary and health room aide to see if the child left school or has gone home ill.
2. Check classroom and with classroom teacher.
3. Call parent or emergency numbers on enrollment form.
4. If unable to reach primary or emergency contacts, the Police Department will be called for assistance. If step 3, "call parent or emergency numbers on enrollment form," is reached on more than **three** occasions as the parent/guardian did not notify Spark that the child would be absent, the child may be removed from the Spark program.

DROP OFF & PICK-UP PROCEDURES: A child will be allowed to leave Spark only when accompanied by a parent/guardian or by a person listed by the parent as authorized to pick-up the child. Any parent or authorized person who drops off or picks up a child must be present at our sign in/out area during arrival and/or departure. Spark staff will assist the with sign-in/out through use of our child care software. Failure of a parent/guardian or authorized individual to be present for sign-in/out processes may result in the removal of the child from Spark. Spark will not be responsible for children left unsupervised before our official opening time. A photo ID is required for any authorized person other than a parent/guardian to pick up a child.

SIGN IN & OUT RECORDS: Sign in/out records are kept electronically in our child care software. Should you require copies of monthly sign-in and out information, please contact your Site Director.

RELEASE OF A CHILD: CUSTODY/DIVORCE/AUTHORIZED INDIVIDUALS: It is our policy to release a child to biological parents unless we have a copy of a signed court order/divorce decree prohibiting one of the parents from having custody of the child. Children are also eligible to be released to authorized individuals as permitted by the parent having custodial rights on a given day as stated in the court order/divorce decree. The school may have a copy of the court order/divorce decree on file, but because we are a separate entity from Millard Public Schools, we require a copy for our records. For the safety of your child, it is imperative that this information is supplied and discussed with your child's Site Director.

Parents/guardians can designate individual's authorized to pick-up their child/ren from our program. This is done at the time of registration and can be modified at any point by the parent through the Parent Portal at www.mpsfoundation.org. If you have any issues with updating authorized individuals permitted to pick-up, please contact the Foundation office, or speak with your Site Director. Any change request not completed by an authorized parent/guardian through the Parent Portal will require written or email confirmation of the request from a legal parent/guardian.

The Millard Public Schools Foundation will not assume responsibility for children released to unauthorized individuals if we do not have the proper documentation on file.

Health & Safety

Illness policy: Spark cannot accept any child who has a contagious illness or any of the following:

- Fever: Any child with a temperature of 100 degrees or above
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Contagious skin or eye infection

If any of the above occurs at Spark, parents will be called to pick up their child. The child must be picked up within one hour of being notified. If we cannot reach you, we will contact the authorized individuals on your child’s/children(s) registration form.

Please let the Site Director know if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness. Notice will be posted to all families within the site, letting them know that their child has been exposed to a contagious illness/disease. For confidentiality reasons, the name of the child with the confirmed illness will never be released.

Common colds and allergies should not, unless causing the child to feel too uncomfortable, prohibit attendance. It is our policy to have conditions that encourage cleanliness and good health practices among both staff and children. Please refer to the health exclusion policy for additional information.

Exclusion Policy:

EXCLUDE IF:	READMIT IF:
1. Temperature of 100°F orally, or 99°F axillaries, or higher.	1. Free of fever for 24 hours.
2. Temperature of 100°F orally, 101°F rectally or 99°F auxiliary or higher, plus one of the following: a) severe cold with yellow-green nasal discharge b) cough c) sore throat d) sneezing e) swollen glands, or f) skin rash other than mild diaper rash.	2. a) Free of fever for 24 hours and b) Note is required from a physician or nurse practitioner stating that the child is not communicable.
3. Red, watery or draining eye(s).	3. All discharge has ceased.
4. Drainage from the ear(s).	4. a) All drainage from the ear(s) has ceased, or b) Note is required from a physician or nurse practitioner stating that the child is not communicable.
5. Lice.	5. After treatment, free of lice and nits.

6. Skin lesions, i.e., impetigo, ringworm, and scabies.	6. a) Skin sores are healed, or b) Note is required from a physician or nurse practitioner stating that the child is not communicable.
7. Vomiting.	7. Free of upset stomach and vomiting for 24 hours.
8. Diarrhea (2 or more loose, watery stools per day).	8. Diarrhea free for 24 hours.
9. Fainting or seizures or general signs of listlessness, weakness, drowsiness, flushed face, headache, or stiff neck.	9. a) Free of symptoms, or b) Note is required from a physician or nurse practitioner stating that the child is not communicable.
10. Fever with any specific signs and symptoms of a communicable disease to which the child has been exposed.	10. Free of fever for 24 hours.
11. Any combination of symptoms for consecutive days of attendance.	11. Free of symptoms.

HEAD LICE: If head lice or nits are found on your child, you will be called to pick up the child and given information on treatment. The child will be checked upon their return and may stay if the child is “nit free”.

CHRONIC AND SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS: At the time of registration, parents are expected to indicate on their child’s registration form if their child has chronic or special health needs that require special attention. Parents are expected to provide the Site Director of any procedures or accommodations that may need to be taken. Staff within your child’s program will be properly trained in the procedures outlined for children who have special accommodations, needs or medical conditions listed.

STORING AND ADMINISTERING MEDICATION: Medication can be stored and administered at Spark under the following guidelines which are set forth by the Nebraska Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure division. Spark requests that all medication be delivered directly to Site Directors and that proper documentation is completed. Spark will not store nor administer any medication that has not been delivered to the Site Director by parent/guardian, accompanying proper completed documentation. Expired medication will not be kept on site as it is a violation of our licensing agreement with the State of Nebraska. All expired medication will be returned directly to a parent/guardian. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to supply Spark with non-expired medication, accompanying completed proper documentation to administer any prescription or non-prescription medication on site.

- **8-016.03 Delivery of Medication:** Any child care provider, center, or preschool staff person who gives or applies medication shall do so in accordance with the “5 Rights” as required in Nebraska Statutes 71-6718 through 6742. These are:
 1. The right drug;
 2. The right recipient;

3. In the right dose;
 4. By the right route;
 5. At the right time;
- 8-016.04 Parental Responsibility: Parents or any licensed health care professional shall determine if child care providers or center and preschool staff are competent to give or apply medication. Center and preschool directors have the responsibility to assess the ability of staff to give or apply medication safely.
 - 8-016.05 Confidentiality: Any child care provider, center, or preschool staff who gives or applies medication shall not disclose information about a child's medication unless such information is needed to protect the health of other children or staff.
 - 8-016.06 Written Permission and Instructions: All child care providers, center or preschool staff shall give or apply medication, both prescription and non-prescription, only with prior written permission and written instructions from a parent. Child care providers, center or preschool staff shall comply with the instructions provided by the parent. Medication shall be in the original container, stored according to instructions, clearly labeled for a named child, and returned to the parent when no longer needed. The dosage will not exceed that which is printed on the label. Expired medication shall not be given or applied to a child and shall be returned to the parent.
 - 8-016.06A Report to Parents: Any error the giving or applying medication shall be reported to the parent.
 - 8-016.07 Unusual Circumstances: There must be a written statement from the licensed health care professional who prescribed the medication allowing the provider to give the medication when:
 1. Any prescription medication is given or applied as needed (PRN); or
 2. By route other than oral, topical, inhalant, or instillation.
 - 8-016.09 Hand washing: All child care providers, center and preschool staff shall wash hands before giving or applying any medication. If handling any bodily fluids is involved, caregivers must also wash hands after giving or applying medication.

MEDICATION LOG: Each site has a designated medication binder for children enrolled receiving medication. Information within the binder is kept confidential. For each child receiving medication there must be a completed medication log sheet signed by a parent or guardian which includes a competency statement permitting Spark to administer medication to your child. If medication is to be given on an 'as needed' basis, prescription or non-prescription, a note from a licensed health care professional indicating that Spark can administer the medication on an 'as needed' basis is required. Medication log forms are required to be updated each summer, at the beginning of each school year, and at any time medication type, dose, route, and/or time of administration is modified.

MEDICATION STORAGE/FIRST AID KIT: All medications and first aid supplies are kept on site and stored in an area that can be always locked. An additional locked box is provided for medications that may need to be refrigerated. The following first aid supplies are always available: fever thermometer and covers, band-aids, sterile gauze pads, gloves, scissors, soap, and tape.

EPI-PEN: If your child has an allergy that may require the use of an Epi-pen, Spark will require their own Epi-pen kept on site which will be provided by the parent or guardian. If your child would require the use of the Epi-pen while in attendance the following steps will be taken:

1. The Epi-pen would be injected by a staff member.
2. 911 would be called after the Epi-pen is injected.
3. The parent or guardian would then be contacted and given further information.

NON-LATEX GLOVES: Non-latex gloves are worn by staff when administering medication and first aid.

SUNSCREEN & BUG SPRAY: For Spark to administer sunscreen and/or to a child during school year operations, a medication log must be completed by parents/guardians. A doctor's note is not required in this case. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide sunscreen and/or bug spray that is labeled with the child's name. During summer operations, we do not require that a medication log be completed, nor do we require a doctor's note; however, we do require that families agree to the terms of the sunscreen and bug spray permission statements completed during the summer registration process. The statements reads as follows:

Sunscreen

I understand that if I have chosen to enroll my child/ren into the summer program, that sunscreen will be provided for all children. I understand that if I prefer my child to use a specific type of sunscreen, other than what is being provided, that it is my responsibility to inform site staff of this request and I will provide my sunscreen of choice. I understand it is my responsibility to administer sunscreen to my child/ren prior to dropping them off to the program each morning.

Bug Spray

I understand that if I have chosen to enroll my child/ren into the summer program that bug spray may be administered to my child. I understand that if I do not wish my child to receive bug spray that I will notify site staff of this request.

MINOR AND SERIOUS ACCIDENTS: In case of an accident at Spark, emergency first aid will be administered, and parents or guardians will be notified. If the Site Director is unable to reach the parent or guardian, emergency phone numbers will be used. An emergency unit will be called when needed. These units are dispatched by city or county officials according to the location of the school and are usually required to take patients to the nearest hospital. A staff member would accompany any child being transported to a local hospital and remain with the child until the parent or guardian has arrived. At the time of enrollment parents give the Millard Public Schools Foundation Spark program permission to transport and treat in the event a medical emergency arises. A copy of the child's registration form and immunization records would be brought to the hospital with the staff member.

An accident report outlining the care and procedures administered to the child will be completed and placed in the child's file. A copy will also be given to the parent and the Foundation office. The accident report must be signed by the parent or guardian before the child will be allowed to return to Spark. Parents or Guardians are responsible for any expenses incurred due to an injury.

General Guidelines Used for Administering First Aid

1. Staff will not move the child until we determine the extent of the injury.
2. Any mild cut or abrasion will be washed with warm water and a bandage will be applied. Salves, ointments, or creams will not be applied or kept on site, unless an 'as needed' script is provided by a licensed health care professional and the parent or guardian has supplied the medication.
3. In case of deeper cuts possibly requiring sutures, staff will call the parent or guardian immediately. If we are unable to reach the parent or guardian, we will contact another authorized person on the child's registration form or notify the child's listed physician for medical advice.
4. If a limb is visibly distorted, we will contact the parent or guardian immediately. The parent or guardian can then make the recommendation as to having 911 dispatched, or if the parent would prefer to transport. If we are unable to get in contact with the parent or guardian staff will call 911 immediately. If a child is transported to a local hospital, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and remain with the child until the parent or guardian has arrived.
5. If a child becomes unconscious 911 will be called immediately.
6. In case of a head injury of any kind, staff will apply a cold compress to the injured area and call the parent or guardian.

CPR/FIRST AID: Spark employees receive CPR/FA certification within 60 days of employment. Employees are required to keep an active CPR/FA certification thereafter.

MANDATED REPORTING: According to Nebraska law, Spark employees and all other persons are required to notify Child Protective Services and law enforcement officials if they suspect a child has been subject to abuse or neglect to include but not limited to:

- Endangerment of physical or mental health.
- Deprivation of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or care.
- Minor child six years of age or younger left unattended in a motor vehicle.
- Suspected sexual abuse and/or exposure to sexual situations/materials.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS: Fire and tornado drills are conducted and documented monthly. Monthly fire and tornado drills are completed in am and pm sessions, so all children are familiar

with evacuation procedures. A written record of fire and tornado drills, along with a map showing proper evacuation routes, is posted at each Spark site.

NUTRITION: Breakfast and afternoon snack is provided each day by the Millard Public Schools Food Service Program. There are no additional fees charged to families for breakfast or afternoon snack. MFS also provides lunch on non-school days. Lunch is included as part of non-school day charges.

Behavior Management

DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN: As stated in the 'Child Care Center Standards' regulation book distributed by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure for Child Care Licensing: The center shall ensure that no child is left alone, pinched, punched, shaken, struck with any object, bitten, or spanked by staff; a brief, supervised separation from the group may be used. Staff shall not discipline children: by denial of food, by forced napping, for a toileting accident, or with subjection to derogatory remarks about themselves or their family, abusive or profane language, yelling or screaming, or threats of physical punishment. Parents will be informed if the child's behavior becomes unmanageable.

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINE: Fighting, hitting, kicking, abusive language, signs or expressions, back talk, disrespect, not obeying the rules, hurting another child or staff, and repetitive negative behaviors will not be tolerated.

If any of the above behaviors occur, the discipline guidelines below will be followed.

- The child will be immediately separated from the situation.
- The child will be given a cooling down period of 3-5 minutes. The separation will be brief, but the goal is for the child to regain enough self-control to rejoin the group or activity. Isolating the child in any area where the child cannot be seen and supervised by a staff member is prohibited.
- Depending on the behavior, it may be necessary for the **Site Director** to complete a 'Child Disciplinary Report'. Although not all behaviors will warrant a Child Disciplinary report, it is important for the Site Director to communicate to the parent or guardian any serious or repetitive behavior issues or incidents.
- In extreme situations, it may be necessary to immediately contact the parents or guardians.

DISCIPLINE POLICY: If an inappropriate behavior does occur, we will use a positive approach by encouraging the child's good behavior and redirecting his/her activity. If the behavior continues, the child will be removed from the total situation, or given "time out". We will also consult with parents regarding any serious problem. Each consultation is documented and placed in the child's file.

When, in the judgment of the Site Director, the inappropriate behavior is serious enough to warrant further action but not serious enough to warrant immediate suspension from Spark, the Site Director will complete a 'Child Disciplinary Report' (CDR). A copy of the CDR will be given to the child and parent/guardian, and the child may not return to Spark until both the parent/guardian and the child sign the CDR. After three (3) CDR's, the child will be suspended from the program for three (3) school days. Following the suspension, three (3) additional CDR's will result in suspension from the program for ten (10) school days. Following the 10-day suspension, any behavior serious enough to warrant a CDR will result in immediate and permanent removal from Spark.

If the inappropriate behavior is of a serious nature, the Site Director and Spark Administration may determine that it is necessary to immediately suspend for a determined period, or permanently remove a child from the Spark program. This decision would be made after the Site Director and Spark Administration have investigated the facts and given the child oral and written notice of the charges against him/her and notifying the parent or guardian of the final decision being made. Disciplinary decisions are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. All disciplinary actions are final for the best interest of the Spark program.

The Foundation reserves the right to hold families responsible for all charges accruing during any period in which a child is suspended from the Spark program.

Examples of behavior which may result in immediate suspension for a period, or permanent removal from Spark include, but are not limited to:

- Intentionally striking or injuring another child or a staff person
- Intentionally damaging school or Spark property
- Threatening another child or a staff person
- Repeated occurrences of a behavior which might otherwise result in a written warning

INAPPROPRIATE FORMS OF DISCIPLINE: The following are inappropriate forms of discipline that will not be used by staff at the Spark program:

- Restraints
- Profane or abusive language
- Isolation without supervision
- Placing a child in a dark area
- Inflicting physical pain
- Forced physical activity, such as running laps, doing push-ups, etc.
- Verbal abuse or loud voice tones directed in a derogatory manner
- Writing sentences

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT: The above discipline guideline and policy has been established to provide consistency throughout the Spark program. The lists below are other appropriate procedures that the Spark program has in place to aid in behavior management:

- Children within the program will have a clear understanding of the rules and expectations of the program.
- Children in the program may help in determining some program rules.
- A variety of daily activities and routines are established that allow children to make choices.
- Praising acceptable and appropriate behaviors.
- Actively listening to children about their feelings and frustrations.
- Redirecting negative behaviors and suggest appropriate behavior.
- Employ staff that model appropriate behavior to the children.
- Allow children to resolve conflicts with staff supervision.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR: We find it helpful to provide an outline of the expected standards of behavior for families enrolled in Spark. Please take a few minutes to review these statements with your child.

1. The rights, property, and dignity of each person in and around the school are to be always safeguarded.
 - No abusive language, signs or expressions will be allowed.
 - No theft of any kind will be tolerated.
2. Authority in the program is established for the health, safety, and well-being of all members of the program. No child will be allowed to undermine that authority.
 - Conditions do not exist which allow for continued "back talk" from students when reasonable requests are made. Abusive language or signs will not be acceptable.
3. School facilities are the property of all residents in the Millard School District. Day to day abuse of any part of the facility cannot be allowed to occur.
4. Each child needs a few minutes to "cool down" after an exciting day in school. Children should put belongings in designated areas, sit on "midline", take attendance, and be served after school snack.
5. Children are expected to demonstrate a responsibility of respect for: themselves, other children, Spark staff, parents, and for the space and materials we utilize for operations.

Consolidation Days, Inclement Weather Days & Summer (Spark & Spark UP)

CONSOLIDATION DAYS: The program will operate during vacations, staff development days, parent-teacher conference days, teacher conventions, and early release days. Consolidated sites are used during the days school is not in session. On consolidation days, Spark personnel from multiple locations operate schools one site. Your child may attend operations at any consolidation location. A schedule of the consolidation dates and locations will be distributed in August for the entire school year. Building selection is based on availability, and maintenance work that may need to be done at the school. During consolidation days, Spark operates from 6:30 am – 6:00 pm.

To use consolidation days, pre-registration for these days is required. Registration for non-school days will be completed through the Parent Portal accessed through our website. Email and text communication will notify families when consolidation registration is available. Once the registration deadline has occurred, days cannot be added, changed, or removed. Charges are based on the days for which you pre-register, are assessed regardless of attendance, and are non-refundable. Consolidation charges are in addition to your regular bi-weekly tuition deduction. Specific charges and deduction information is available on the school-year fee schedule.

Each Spark site participates in the school lunch program provided by Millard Public Schools during consolidation, inclement weather days, and during our summer program. All lunch meals meet USDA requirements under the National School Lunch Program. The cost of the lunch program is paid by the Millard Public Schools Foundation. Weekly menus are posted at each site which is provided by the Millard Public Schools Food Service Department. Menus and times that lunch is served may vary at each location.

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR CONSOLIDATION DAYS/INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS/SUMMER

AM Schedule

6:30	Site Opens
6:30-7:30	Free choice time or table games
7:30-7:45	Restroom & hand washing
7:45-8:15	Breakfast
8:15-9:15	Enrichment Activity/STEM, Math/Literacy or Makerspace cart
9:15-9:30	Clean-up and AM Attendance
9:30-10:00	Group Game/Gross Motor Activity/Outdoor Play
10:00-11:00	Enrichment Activity/STEM, Math/Literacy or Makerspace cart
11:00-11:30	Clean-up, Restroom, & Hand Washing
11:30-12:00	Lunch

PM Schedule

12:00–12:30	Group Game/Gross Motor Activity/Outdoor Play
12:30–12:45	PM Attendance
12:45–1:15	Reading/Literacy/Math Activity
1:15–2:15	Enrichment Activity/STEM, Math/Literacy or Makerspace cart
2:15–3:00	Wellness/Team Building/SEL Activity/Service Project
2:45–3:30	Clean-up, Restroom, Hand Washing and Attendance
3:30–4:00	Afternoon Snack
4:00–6:00	Free Choice Time/Table Games/Group Game/Outdoor Play
6:00	Site Closes

FIELD TRIPS: Field trips are an intricate part of the Spark and Spark UP summer programs. Each summer site is given designated days in which they will be allowed to leave the site for scheduled field trips. Children in attendance during scheduled field trip times are requested to attend the field trip as all on-site staff will be assisting with field trip operations. We always welcome parent or guardian volunteers on field trips. If at any time you are interested in attending a scheduled field trip, please let your home Site Director know.

The following is a list of field trip safety procedures that is used for staff and children within the program.

FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES:

Staff Procedures:

- Prior to a scheduled field trip, staff is informed of important details of the trip (example: prohibited areas, meeting locations, times, cell phone numbers, etc.)
- Staff will wear a designated Spark uniform.
- Each staff member will keep a list of children’s names in their designated group.
- Each staff member will carry a first-aid kit.
- Staff will accompany children to and from the bathroom.
- During the field trip, staff will count their group before moving to another designated area.
- Fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled departure time, staff will meet at a designated location. Site Directors will then complete an initial attendance and an additional head count prior to departure.
- Accountability: The ultimate accountability of children will be done in writing, on a field trip tracking sheet, by name as each child loads the bus.
- One staff member will be assigned to complete a final check of the bus after arrival back at the site. This will serve as added safety to make sure all children have departed the bus.

Procedures Established for the Children:

- A buddy system will be established for each child.
- Children must wear a designated Spark field trip t-shirt.
- Prior to departing the site, the following will be reviewed with the children:
 1. Bus rules
 2. Field trip rules and safety procedures

3. Safety procedures for crossing the street

Children are taught the following steps indicated below, to take if for any reason they are to get separated from their group. We feel it is important to teach children the appropriate steps to take should such incident occur. Upon arrival at the field trip location, a "lost child" area is identified.

We teach children to:

1. Remain in the area where they last saw their group or go to the "lost child" area.
2. Ask for help in an open visible place from someone in charge.
3. NEVER leave the area with an unidentified person.
4. Teach children to tell a staff member immediately if their buddy is missing.

TRANSPORTATION FOR FIELD TRIPS: The Spark program uses Student Transportation of America, Inc., for field trip transportation.

BUS RULES: The following are bus rules that children are expected to follow:

- Children must stay seated and always facing front.
- If windows are down, hands must remain inside the bus.
- Feet must be kept out of the aisle.
- Voice levels must be kept to a minimum while on the bus.

SUMMER SPARK: During summer, Spark and Spark UP operates from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm at selected sites. Summer rates will apply. Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack will be provided daily for the summer program at no additional charge, as it is included in your child care tuition. A calendar of summer activities will be created prior to the start of summer. Most activities on the calendar are included in the tuition. However, there may be additional activities or lunches that may require additional payment at your child's site, if your child participates.

Children must have completed their first year of kindergarten before being eligible to attend the Spark summer program. Children must be entering grades 5 or 6 to be eligible for the Spark UP program. While the Spark program at Montclair does provide services to Pre-K children during the school-year, Spark does not offer care to Pre-K children during the summer program.

Our Spark UP summer program is exclusively designed with the older elementary child in mind. Children eligible to attend Spark UP summer programming must be entering grades 5 or 6.

Our Spark Adventure summer camps are available to children that have completed their first year of kindergarten and have not yet begun grade 6.

Children permitted to sign up for services weekly services. A one-week minimum is required to enroll for summer. Children are permitted to attend any of the summer site locations. A summer activity fee of \$50.00 for each child register will be collected, regardless of the number of weeks attended.

INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS: If school is cancelled due to weather conditions, Spark will make every effort to open, however there are many factors we must take into consideration. First and foremost is safety, the district's ability to remove inclement weather at the designated sites, or other conditions that could pose a danger to the children, staff, or facility. If Spark is closed, the Foundation will communicate operational details via email and text alerts. You may also seek this information on our website and social media. For more information regarding communication with families, please refer to 'FAMILY COMMUNICATION' on page 10. **Always call ahead, as our voice messaging system would reflect whether Spark will be open or closed.**

If school is closed due to weather conditions, the decision will usually be made by Millard Public School District officials before 6:30 am. If Spark is operating full-day services, operations will be held at the designated inclement weather sites listed in this section. Children are eligible to attend any of these designated inclement weather sites. (Should there be inclement weather during consolidation services, services would always be held at the consolidation location if we are open for services).

The hours of operation would be from 6:30 am until 6:00 pm. Inclement weather days will be pre-register days, similar to consolidation registration processes. Parents will register their child/ren through our Parent Portal. Families may choose to utilize any of the locations listed below. Breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack will be provided at no additional charge as it is included in the full day rate. The full-day rate will apply on inclement weather days and will be deducted in addition to your regular tuition on the date communicated by email.

Designated Inclement weather Sites:

- Black Elk – 6708 S 161 Ave; phone - 402-991-6722
- Montclair - 2405 S 138 St; phone - 402-991-6745

School closings announced during the school day

If school is closed due to weather conditions during the school day, all Spark sites will be open as soon as staff arrives.

Partnership with Families

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: Parental involvement is a very important part of our program. Parents and children working together with staff members is an important element in a quality child care program. Visitation is encouraged by parents and other interested parties who wish to visit the site. A solid relationship with the Spark employees at your school, built on mutual trust and respect, is key in making your child care arrangement work well for everyone. Keep these tips in mind as you begin to build your relationship:

- ✓ Always keep the lines of communication open. Let your provider know if there is something going on in your child's life that may be affecting behavior.
- ✓ Be aware of program policies and honor them. Respect drop-off and pick-up times, and call if you are going to be late for any reason.
- ✓ Get involved with the program. The more you participate, the more dedicated you will feel.

There are bound to be certain topics or situations that are difficult to talk about with Spark employees. If you have developed an honest, open way of communicating with one another, discussing these issues as they arise will not be as difficult. Things to consider when discussing difficult issues:

- ✓ Raise issues when they first develop. If you put off a discussion, it may be more difficult to address later.
- ✓ Avoid confronting Spark employees in front of other parents or children. Set up a time to speak privately, in person, or over the phone.
- ✓ Think about what you want to discuss ahead of time, and even practice how you want to say it.
- ✓ Be specific about your concerns. Give examples of things that have happened or observations you have made.
- ✓ Never discuss a problem when you are feeling angry or not in control of your emotions.
- ✓ Remember that conflicts are normal and part of most relationships. They can usually be resolved when both parties can see the other's views and are willing to compromise.

SPARK COMMITMENT TO FAMILY FRIENDLY SERVICE:

To keep our commitment, we need your help throughout the year!

Help us "stay in tune" with your needs and interests!

- Tell us about your day when you pick up your child.
- Help us learn about your child's special talents and strengths.
- Tell us when your child needs extra help or support.
- Keep us informed about any important changes we need to know about to serve you well.
- Let us know about your family and cultural traditions.
- Make suggestions when you think we could serve you better.

- Ask questions if you don't understand our policies or procedures.
- Tell us the best ways for you to connect with your child's experience in our program.

Visit whenever you can – You are always welcome!!

We want to build positive relationships with all of our families; help us achieve this goal!

COMMUNICATION TOOLS: The list below indicates strategies which the Spark program feels are helpful in communicating with families.

- A parent bulletin board is posted at each site with reminders, policies, and general information specific to your child's site.
- Daily activities will be posted near the program sign-in/out area so you can learn about your child's day.
- Our website www.mpsfoundation.org, Facebook [@mpsfspark](https://www.facebook.com/mpsfspark); Twitter [@MPS_Foundation](https://twitter.com/MPS_Foundation) are excellent internet tools for our families to access general information regarding Spark policies and procedures, contact information, current happenings, weather-related operations and much more.
- Email communication and text messages are other tools we use to connect with and update our families.
- Ideas, Suggestions & Feedback? Feel free to contact us at spark@mpsfoundation.org.

VISITORS: Spark welcomes you to visit the site at any time and wants you to feel free to ask questions. Please consult with the Site Director should any problems arise concerning your child, whether at home, school, or Spark. Visits are also conducted by Program Administrators and State licensing officials.

FAMILY INFORMATION: It is the responsibility of parents to notify Spark of any changes in employment, address, phone numbers, care and/or custody arrangements, and any other important information regarding the child or family situation. Parents will update this account information through the Parent Portal. If you require assistance in updating your electronic records, your Site Director will be able to assist. Please note that any information update request must be submitted in writing or via email to the site email address.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Call your child's site or speak to the Site Director if your child will not be attending.
- Notify the site in advance if anyone other than the parent or guardian will pick the child up.
- Notify your Site Director of any special needs your child may have. The information must also be listed on your child's enrollment form.
- Sign your child in/out daily.
- Honor Spark operating hours by not dropping your child off before 6:30 am and picking your child up by 6:00 pm.
- Update your child's records as changes occur.
- Notify the Site Director in the event of questions or concerns with Spark staff or policies.
- Have an active auto-pay account on file and keep the account current.

- Request changes to your child's enrollment status or submit intention to withdraw from the Spark program through the Parent Portal if needs have changed.

PARENT PROGRAM EVALUATIONS: Year-end program evaluations will be provided for the parents to complete. Evaluations will be made available online. Once the evaluations are completed, evaluations are reported to the Foundation office.