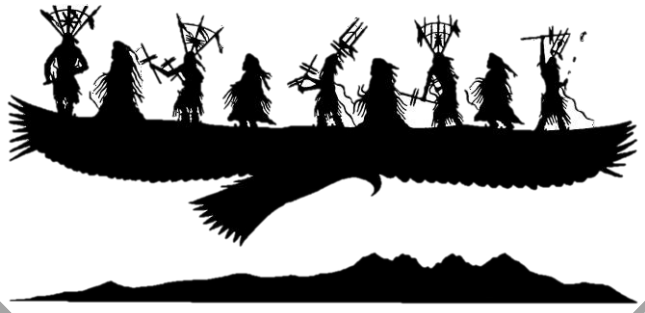
‘Hmañ ’shawa
Early Childhood Development Center

Parent/Student Handbook
2026 2027



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Contact Information

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Fort McDowell AZ 85264
School Office number 480-789-7227,
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation website:
www.fmyn.org

School website: www.ftmcdowellchildhoodcenter.org

ADMINISTRATION

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Welcome

The words ‘Hmañ ’shawa are Yavapai meaning “the little children.” The ‘Hmañ ‘shawa Early Childhood Development Center includes both a Day Care component and a school component. Our Day Care CCDF Grant provides services for infants starting at 6 weeks old through 2 years old, along with before/after school care for school age children up to age 11. Our school offers classes for Preschool (age 3), Pre-kindergarten (age 4) and Kindergarten. The primary focus of ‘Hmañ ’shawa is to prepare students with the necessary skills in reading, writing and mathematics to be successful in their schooling experience wherever they might attend after leaving here. We also believe it is important for the children to have sound values that relate to the Yavapai culture with respect for their elders. To that end we will teach all of the children to have respect for themselves and others. An appreciation of the past will be emphasized with the Yavapai language classes being taught to all the students. In addition to basic classes, we offer physical education. Students with special needs are identified and given the extra help they need by our resource teacher and speech therapist.

As a member school of Cognia, the school is required to monitor annual yearly progress of the students as identified in standardized assessments. We set measurable goals in reading, math and writing.

You as parents and guardians provide an important link in the educational development of your child. We encourage you to become involved in your child’s education and participate in their learning. You make a difference in your student’s life and we as educators seek to assist you in that process.

I hope that this handbook will assist you in understanding the expectations and operation of ‘Hmañ ’shawa ECDC. If you have any questions regarding our center do not hesitate to contact me at any time. Our responsibility is to serve the children and families of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation.

Sincerely,
Michael Brown, Principal

School Information

Hmañ 'shawa ECDC is a privately owned and operated school of the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation. As a private school, the FMYN can accept or deny enrollment to any child.

The school was built to serve all enrolled Tribal Members and their children. Children of non-tribal community members and tribal employees may attend on a space available basis, as determined by the Tribal Council.

Mission Statement

The 'Hmañ 'shawa Early Childhood Development Center (HSECDC) provides a safe environment for children age's birth through school age. HSECDC is dedicated to providing a child centered full day program that develops a healthy self-image, a creative imagination and a social awareness in each child by utilizing culturally and developmentally appropriate programs.

The HSECDC provides a learning environment that supports children to develop necessary skills to construct their own knowledge, prepare them for their next school environment and encourage them to become life-long learners.

School Hours of Operation

Preschool - Kindergarten 8:30 am to 3:00 pm.

Days of operation are Monday-Thursday unless otherwise indicated on the school calendar. HSECDC will be closed on all Tribal Holidays and Early Release Dates.

School Children are not to be dropped off at school before 8:20 am. There is no supervision prior to the start of school on our playground. Incident reports will be filled out if students are too early. Action will be taken if students continue to arrive too early. Students being picked up after school should be picked up by 3:00 pm unless attending Day Care.

School Enrollment Criteria

Children must be 3 before Sept 1 of the enrolling year to be eligible to attend the pre-school. All students must have an up-to-date immunization record and birth certificate on file in the school office. <u>All students must be potty trained before entering school.</u> The child must be four before Sept 1, to enroll in the Pre-Kindergarten program and 5 before Sept 1 to start in the Kindergarten program. No students will be enrolled after March 1st.

Parent Expectations

We believe that the child's first teacher is the parent. With that understanding we will do everything in our power to make sure that we work together with the family in providing the best education possible. We will make every effort to communicate effectively with all parents. Conferences will be held at the end of each quarter. It is expected that all parents attend the conferences each quarter. This is not optional unless parents know in advance that they will need a different time for the scheduled conference. Parents who do not attend conference may have their children dropped from the attendance at Hmañ 'shawa ECDC.

Parents are expected to attend special activities of the school. As a parent of a private school, we expect you to become involved in many ways at our school. A Principal's Advisory Committee (PAC) is an opportunity to serve. You may help out by accompanying the children on field trips. Volunteering in the classroom is a great way to understand what the children are learning in school. All parents are encouraged to give 2 hours a month of volunteer time at the school. This can be accomplished by, but not limited to: Classroom volunteering, serve on a school committee, going on field trips, assisting in the canned food drive, tutoring a student other than your own, help in running the Jump Rope for Heart, assisting on Field Day, helping with Halloween and Spring Carnivals. Parent involvement is critical to student success. We seek your participation.

Do not allow your children to bring toys, guns, knives, candy, etc to school. Children bringing weapons to school are subject to suspension.

School Calendar

An annual calendar of events will be distributed to all parents at the beginning of the school year. Occasionally a change in schedule is needed. We will notify parents as soon as possible if a change is expected to take place and a new calendar will be sent home. Every month a lunch menu is sent home with an update of the calendar of events.

ATTENDANCE

Absences

School Children are expected to attend class every day and be on time. If a child missed school for illness, the absence will be counted as an excused absence. All other absences are considered unexcused. Tribal policy clearly defines the attendance expectations. Parents are encouraged to become familiar with these policies. Parents should call the school office at 480-789-7227 if a child is going to be absent or tardy.

Attendance at school is essential to student success. A child who misses 10 days of school a year is negatively impacted. A child who misses 20 days of school a year negatively impacts all of the children in the class. Therefore, if a child has ten days of unexcused absence during the course of the year, he or she may be removed from the school.

Tardies

School begins at 8:30 am. Students are marked tardy if they arrive after the start of school. Students arriving after the start of school must report to the office for a tardy slip. Tardies cause a disruption in the classroom for other students. All tardies are tracked and when 5 tardies are identified in a single quarter, they will count as one unexcused absence.

We understand that many appointments cannot be made in the hours after school but encourage parents to schedule as many after school appointments to avoid students missing class. For attendance purposes a child must be in school 2/3's of the day to have the day counted as a full day of school. (4 hours)

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Emergency Information

It is essential that the office be informed of address changes, home, and work phone number changes. For minor injuries such as bumps, bruises and scratches, the office will administer first aid and a note will be sent home with the child. For any suspected serious injury the FMYN paramedics will be called first. Every attempt will be made to contact the parents immediately. Incorrect phone numbers or old emergency information delays our notification of parents. Please keep our emergency records up to date.

Medication Policy

The Medication Authorization Form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian in order for the medication to be administered by our staff. All medication must:

Be in original container with the child's name, prescription number and specific instructions for administering the medication, including the dosage amount, times to be administered, method of delivery and reason for medication.

Medication which are no longer to be given, or those that have expired will be returned to the parent/guardian.

All medications will be kept in a locked, leak proof, storage container. Those that need to be refrigerated will be in a locked container in the refrigerator.

Sick Children

Sick children belong at home.

FEVER Students with a fever should not be at school. Students should be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school. A child that is sent home with a fever should not attend school the next day.

STOMACHACHE, VOMITING, DIARRHEA Students that are vomiting or have diarrhea should be kept home until they are symptom free for 24 hours.

COLDS, SORE THROAT, COUGH a child with a mild cold but otherwise feeling well may attend school. A child with a heavy cold or cough should be kept home even if he/she has no fever. A child with a clear runny nose my attend school, but if there is a change in the color of the mucus the child should be kept home.

RASH, OPEN SORES a rash or sores, may be the first sign of one of childhood's many illnesses. Do not send a child with a rash or sores to school until your doctor has said that it is safe to do so.

PAIN, TOOTHACHE a child that complains of pain should be seen by a physician or dentist as soon as possible.

HEADLICE Unfortunately, headlice is a problem in any school. Children found with live lice or nits will be sent home immediately and may not return until they are properly cleaned and rechecked. In addition, children that have chronic head lice (3 or more times) may be referred to Social Services. When your child contracts headlice you are allowed one day as an excused absence to get them cleaned and rechecked, any additional days absent are counted as unexcused. Please refer to the truancy policy for consequences of unexcused absences.

Student Safety

Our school is a safe environment for children. All visitors including parents must check in at the office prior to visiting the classrooms. We work closely with the Police and Fire departments to maintain a safe, secure environment for the children and employees. Safety inspections and monthly fire drills are practiced and the school facilities are kept in good repair.

Hmañ 'shawa ECDC has a plan for school lockdown in case of an unwanted visitor to the school. Our evacuation plan requires that children be bussed to the Parks and Recreation where parents may pick them up by checking with staff prior to their departure.

Students are not allowed to bring knives, guns or other objects to school that can cause harm to others. Students bringing such items are subject to in school or out of school suspension.

School Protocol for Suspected Child Abuse

School personnel are often the source of referral for child abuse allegations because of their extensive contact with children on a daily basis. Tribal policy requires mandatory reporting of any suspected case of child abuse by any school employee. The ‘Hmañ ’shawa faculty and staff will consistently adhere to the following procedures.

When a case of suspected child abuse is brought to an employee’s attention, that employee shall immediately make a report to the Child Protective Services worker at Wassaja Family Services and/or the Fort McDowell Police Department.

Our school will adhere to the Tribal Policies in place for the rights of the child victims and witnesses. This includes but is not limited to having everything explained to the child in an easily understood language that might involve a police investigation. Prevent disclosure of the victims name to anyone other than the proper agencies involved. Finally, to assist agencies in enlisting assistance of other professional personnel, such as a child protective services advocate, in interviewing the child.

It is not the schools responsibility to investigate any case of suspected child abuse. That responsibility is specifically given to CPS and the Police Department. To avoid repeated interviews of the child regarding any case of suspected child abuse, the employee who learns of child abuse must notify the designated child abuse coordinator. At ‘Hmañ ’shawa Early Childhood Development Center that person is the Principal. Upon conferring with the Principal and notification of the proper authorities, the child will go to the school office, with a school employee and wait for CPS or the police to arrive.

School employees are not to contact family members or relatives regarding any information about the suspected victim. The responsibility of talking with parents rests entirely with the police department or CPS. Upon investigating an incident, the designated agencies have the right to remove the child from school.

All persons or agencies reporting in good faith a case of suspected child abuse shall be immune from civil and criminal liability.

RULES

Student Discipline Guidelines

Common sense is usually the best advice for disciplining children. Most behavior problems will be dealt with in the classroom. All teachers at Hmañ 'shawa have a positive rewards system for encouraging good behavior. Students lose points each day that can result in the loss of rewards. Every day is a new day and no points carry over to the next day. Basic rules that we follow are:

a. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
b. Listen
c. Follow directions the teacher gives
d. Show respect for yourself and others
e. Watch what you say, words do hurt
f. Hitting is always in appropriate
g. The school belongs to the Tribe; let's take care of it!

Consequences for inappropriate behavior vary with the offense. Most discipline will be handled in the classroom with time out and/or loss of playtime. More serious offenses will require a trip to the office. If a child is sent to the office a referral will be sent home to you. Usually, every effort is made to contact you by phone so you are aware of the problem. Our goal is to never send a child home. They need to be in school to learn and sending a child home sends the wrong message. When a child is sent to the office the discipline may include time out, conference with the child, detention, and loss of recesses, loss of special classes for the day or suspension. In the most severe cases a parent conference will need to be held.

Playground Guidelines

The safety of the students is a top priority. Guidelines are as follows:

a. No jumping from the top of slides or from swings
b. Show courtesy and respect for your classmates
c. Leave the rocks on the ground and never throw them at anything or anyone
d. Stay in the shade when it is hot
e. Share the toys
f. If someone falls, help them up

Proper Attire for Students

1. Children are expected to come to school clean and with hair clean and combed.
2. Children should wear properly fitting shoes. On PE days tennis shoes are required. High heels, flip flops, or skate shoes are never allowed.
3. If a child has glasses, please encourage them to wear them every day. If possible, leave an extra pair at school.
4. Label jackets and clothing that you want to be returned if lost.
5. Day Care, Preschool and Pre-K students need to have a complete change of clothes in the classroom, preferred labeled with their names. The clothes are used in case the child has an accident. We will send soiled clothing home at the end of the day and request you send a replacement set of clothes the next day.
6. Clothing that advertises gangs, drugs or alcohol are not allowed.
7. Please do not allow your children to bring toys, candy or money to school.

STUDENT SERVICES, ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES, AND RESOURCES

School Curriculum

ʻHmañ ʼshawa Early Childhood Development Center supports the Arizona State Standards. Since most of our students eventually enroll in public schools in Arizona, we teach to the objectives established by the State. State standards may be found by going to the Arizona Department of Education website. (www.ade.az.gov) In addition all students are taught the Yavapai language. The Yavapai culture is an integral part of the total school curriculum. Hman Shawa ECDC utilizes the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, Threes and Fours. The Creative Curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum designed to help educators at all levels of experience to plan and implement a developmentally appropriate, content-rich program for children with diverse backgrounds and skills. The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos align with the content in the Early Head Start-School Readiness Goals for Infants and Toddlers. The Creative Curriculum for Threes and Fours directly align with Arizona State Standards. Kindergarten curriculum is Benchmark Advance for English Language Arts and Literacy and Bridges curriculum for math.

Assessment

As part of our curriculum assessment process, all students will be assessed each quarter with Teaching Strategies Gold materials which directly align with the Creative Curriculum that we utilize through the center. Other assessment materials that will also be used are DRA, Brigance, Acadience (Kindergarten), Peli (Pres & Pre-k), Welch Allyn Spot vison screener, ERO Pro DP hearing screener, dental screenings, and PPVT (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test). The PPVT will only be used for the three- and five-year-old students. The results of these assessments will be presented to the parents each quarter during parent/teacher conferences. The results will be used to formulate an individual learning outcome for each student. The information will be always kept confidential.

ʻHmañ ʻshawa Virtues Program

A virtues program has been implemented into the curriculum of our school. Students are taught a virtue each week and receive recognition each time they demonstrate the virtue. Parents receive a weekly overview of the virtue and if the child demonstrates that virtue at home, may submit a virtue voucher to the school for that student's recognition. Virtues include such topics as sharing, caring, compassion, honesty, integrity, responsibility, loyalty, trustworthiness, etc.

Cultural Activities and Performances

Frequently during the school year the children are asked to perform for various activities. It is an honor for our children to demonstrate the Yavapai culture and traditions. We request that the children dress in traditional Native Attire, thus it would be a good idea that the boys have a ribbon shirt and the girls a camp dress.

School Awards

Students will be recognized for Outstanding Effort, Outstanding Achievement, Citizenship, and Physical Education. The teachers may give classroom awards also.

Procare App

Our digital platform is utilized schoolwide. The Procare mobile app, will allow you to stay up to date on your child's daily activities, milestones, incident reports, direct messages and more! We can send you photos and videos of your child, as well as keep you in the loop on upcoming school and classroom events and time-sensitive information. You will receive an email from Procare with a unique 10-digit code and instructions on how to create an account. To align with individual family confidentiality, only parents/legal guardians will be able to access your child's Procare account.

Cafeteria Services

'Hmañ 'shawa ECDC and your Tribal government provide all students with breakfast and lunch every day at no cost to the families. Milk is served with each meal and children are encouraged to drink it. If your child is allergic to milk or milk products, please let us know and a substitute will be offered. Teachers and/or aides eat meals with the children to model good table manners. Parents are encouraged to join us for a meal occasionally. Please call the office prior to your visit so the lunch count may be adjusted.

Educational Records

You as a parent have the right to review your child's records at any time as governed by federal law in the family educational and privacy rights act of 1974.