



# CONNECTIONS

CENTER-BASED AUTISM TREATMENT PROVIDERS

## Parent Handbook

2017-2018

### *Introduction to Connections, LLC.*

This Handbook is designed to familiarize families with policies and practices and to provide general information about learner enrollment at Connections, LLC. (Connections) This Handbook does not constitute a contract for services or enrollment, either expressed or implied, nor conditions of enrollment, between Connections and its learners.

Learners and/or the learner's family are required to read, understand, and comply with provisions of this Handbook.

Circumstance will require that the policies and practices described in the Handbook change from time to time. Accordingly, Connections reserves the right to interpret guidelines as may be appropriate under the particular facts and circumstances and to revise, modify, rescind, delete or add to the provision of the Handbook from time to time and in its sole discretion.

Enrollment at Connections is at-will. This means that a learner's enrollment can be terminated at any time by the learner or Connections, with or without advance notice, and without cause. Nothing in any document or statement now in existence or hereafter created shall limit the right to terminate the enrollment at-will except pursuant to a written enrollment agreement signed by the Executive Director of Connections and the learner and/or learner family. No other officer, agent, or employee of Connections has the authority to revise, waive, or alter this at-will enrollment policy, which cannot be altered other than pursuant to a written agreement signed by the Executive Director and the learner family.

This Handbook, and the policies and procedures contained in it, supersede any and all prior past practice, written representations or statements regarding the terms and conditions of your enrollment, except as may be stated in a fully signed and written enrollment contract. Any and all previous handbooks are specifically revoked.

Please contact the Executive Director if you have any questions on any matter covered in this Handbook.

# **Table Of Contents**

## **About Connections**

Pages 4-6

## **Getting Started**

Pages 7-9

## **Funding**

Pages 10-12

## **Scheduling- How It Works**

Pages 13-16

## **Arrival & Departure Regulations**

Pages 17-18

## **Attendance**

Pages 19-20

## **Sickness**

Pages 21-22

## **Administrative Considerations**

Pages 23-31

## **Clinical Considerations**

Pages 32-35

# About Connections

## **Our Mission**

To be a leader in utilizing the principles of behavior analysis and internal organizational culture pillars to benefit the entire scope of practice- ensuring sound environments and successful outcomes for children, families and staff.

## **Our Vision**

Taking action steps to evolve in a changing field while maintaining the delivery of quality & effective treatment.

## **Our Culture**

We identify with 4 organizational culture pillars within our environment including, integrity, creativity, determination and passion.

## **Our Goals**

Connections, LLC. is a center-based autism therapy clinic with the majority of treatment conducted within the clinic setting.

In order to best serve our learners we offer parent training and generalization sessions in the home and/or community to offer parent support in other environments, to promote generalization and to transfer compliance.

Our primary goal is to serve our learners by providing the following:

- ✓ A pleasant and safe place to learn and play
- ✓ Intensive Table Teaching (ITT) rooms, specific to each learner, and designed to effectively teach skills one-on-one.
- ✓ Natural Environment Teaching (NET) opportunities to increase socialization skills and generalize skills taught in ITT.
- ✓ One-on-one Large Group therapy to learner's who meet the goals required to participate.
- ✓ Generalization of skills taught at Connections to the home and community by providing Behavioral Treatment Therapist staff who manage the learner's treatment
- ✓ Resource nights for parents to answer questions and gain knowledge about techniques used to treat autism spectrum disorders (ASD).
- ✓ Appropriate training and resources for parents to work on skills and/or reduce problem behavior with their children at home.

## **Our Staff**

Connections commitment to our learners starts with our qualified staff. There are many levels of supervision to ensure quality management and effective treatment. Additional to the qualifications for each position, investments are made in staff to ensure that Connections is the best it can be, based on where it starts- with our employees.

Some aspects of quality is in education and certification. Connections employees the most Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT) in the state, which are those that provide direct services to the children. In addition, Connections also employs several Board Certified Assistant Analysts (BCaBA), Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) and even at the management level- an Organizational Behavior Management (OBM) certificate holder. All aspects of Connections contains the scientific, evidence-based principles of Behavior Analysis.

As of July 2017, 43% of employees are board certified. In our commitment strategy, Connections' goal is to employ a minimum of 85% of BACB certificate holders by 2019. This will provide our staff with career growth opportunities for themselves as well as directly ensure quality treatment for our learners.

In addition to our external certification policies, we also provide on-site, direct training for our staff using Behavior Skills Training, Active Student Responding and Pre and Post-Test assessments to ensure continued knowledge and fluency.

Lastly, the requirements for each position are as follows:

### **Behavioral Treatment Licensed Supervisor**

Must be a Wisconsin licensed, Board Certified Behavior Analyst and attest to 4,000 hours experience of supervising less experienced clinicians delivering the approved model for the target population.

### **Program Supervisor**

Must have a minimum of two years of BCBA supervised experienced overseeing treatment teams as Behavioral Treatment Therapist. They are Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts (BCaBA), holds a Master's Degree, or working towards a Master's Degree in Behavior Analysis or a related field.

### **Behavioral Treatment Therapist**

Hold a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in a human services or behavioral sciences discipline and have at least 2,000 hours of documented training and supervised experience delivering a Wisconsin-approved treatment model. All Behavioral Treatment Therapists employed with Connections must complete coursework and obtain their BCaBA by 2019.

### **Behavioral Treatment Technician**

Must be at least 18 years old and earned a High School Diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. They are also required to have a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) certificate or

receive 40 hours of training administered by a supervising provider. All technicians employed by Connections must be pursuing a degree in a related field, complete RBT competencies or become certified as an RBT within the first 6 months of hire.

### **Generalization Staff**

Generalization sessions take place in the child's community or home along with their parents and their Behavioral Treatment Therapist (BTT).

After parent training, the BTT conducts team meetings, generalization sessions and mini or formal progress reviews with the parents to allow for generalization opportunities as well additional training opportunities with the parents or other caregivers.

## Getting Started

It is an overwhelming process from diagnosis to getting to know treatment standards. We are here for you! Connections offers many different ways to support you through this Autism Journey. Please refer to our website [www.connectionswi.com](http://www.connectionswi.com) for a list of external resources that you may be able to utilize in addition to what we offer internally. If there is something more that you need but do not have information about, do not hesitate to let us know what you need and we will try our hardest to get that information for you quickly as possible.

The number one factor that plays a major part in treatment is communication. Communication is at the very core of understanding and we want to ensure that we have the best communication systems available to be successful. At no point do we want you to feel too overwhelmed to continue or feel alone. Our focus is to communicate as effectively as possible to ensure that our relationship with you remains intact.

### ***Definitions:***

Mandatory: required by law or rules

Non-Compliance- failure to act in accordance with a command

In Advance- notice made more than 24 hours prior to the event or action

Listed below are the many methods to share information and understanding:

### Parent Meetings

#### ***\*Plan Of Care Meeting***

The first meeting with a treatment team will be the Plan of Care Meeting. This meeting is scheduled within two (2) weeks following the child's start date and will usually occur within the child's first month of treatment. Formal meetings will be scheduled beginning at the Plan of Care meeting and subsequently at additional meetings as they occur.

Note: This meeting only takes place at the initiation of services.

#### ***\*Mini Progress Reviews***

Mini Progress reviews occur every month unless a formal Progress Review is scheduled that month. Mini Progress Reviews give the Behavioral Treatment Therapist (BTT) the opportunity to review the child's monthly summary regarding progress with parents/caregivers as well as review monthly newsletters, and other materials.

#### ***\*Formal Progress Reviews***

Formal Progress Reviews occur once every 3 months for a child who receives intensive ABA services (20+ hours per week) and every 6 months for a child who receives non-intensive ABA services (19 or fewer hours per week). Flexibility options can be granted if a parent wishes to have formal progress reviews

every other month. Formal Progress Reviews provide the parent with an opportunity to witness their child responding appropriately to programs designed within their Plan of Care, receive a detailed analysis of skill acquisition and also an analysis of problem behavior reduction. The Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and the Behavioral Treatment Therapist (BTT) attend these meetings to give the most appropriate guidance and training with parents.

### ***Team Meetings***

Team Meetings are also available two (2) to three (3) times per month. Additionally, other professionals can be contacted during these meetings to ensure that coordination of care is established with other services the child may be receiving.

### ***\*Generalization Sessions***

Generalization Sessions occur at least once per month at a maximum of two times per month outside of the center either in the child's home or community setting to review data collection procedures in regards to problem behavior as well as the continuation of parent training.

\*The headings with the asterisk are mandatory for continuation of treatment. This is established by the funding sources as a way to continuously train and develop teaching skills and problem behavior reduction with parents on an ongoing basis. This is to ensure that when services are no longer available to the child for various reasons, parents are able to maintain treatment results within the child's home and community environments.

Non-compliance with these meetings could result in termination of services due to non-compliance with funding requirements and compliance.

### **Permanent Product Communication**

#### ***Parent Information Board***

The information board, located in the main front entrance, serves as a place to post weekly newsletters and happenings of interest to children and families. All necessary forms needed by the parent are also located in the appropriate folders in the main front entrance.

#### ***Daily Clinical Reports***

Clinical reports are completed daily by each child's technician staff or when appropriate, in addition, the Licensed Supervisor or Behavioral Treatment Therapist, advising parents of important information regarding their child's day. These reports contain the same notes that funding sources can request during an audit. Therefore, all notes are clinically written. If you have any questions regarding the content within the clinical report notes, please ask your BTT.

### ***Monthly Newsletters***

Newsletters will be sent home with the learner each month. The newsletter contains information that will be helpful regarding closings due to holidays, star employees for the month, or other happenings around Connections.

### **Written and Oral Communication Systems**

#### ***Electronic Mail (e-mail)***

Behavioral Treatment Therapist email addresses will be provided to each parent upon starting at Connections. Parents should understand that, at times, staff is very busy and may not be able to respond promptly. Staff will do their best to respond to any inquiry within 24 business hours, unless otherwise stated in an automatic-reply message. If parents would like to set up consistent communication with the assigned Behavioral Treatment Therapist (BTT) arrangements will need to be made in advance.

- **Consistent information that is expected to become part of the child's routine is required to be communicated to the child's BTT in order to then be communicated to the child's team of staff through their Weekly BTT Notes. It is important to note that parents should give enough advanced notice to the BTT as BTT Notes are only updated weekly.**

#### ***Phone Calls***

Parents may contact Connections at any time; however, please note that during therapy times, staff may not be available. Staff will respond with a corresponding phone call immediately when becoming available. If more consistent phone call arrangements is expected, arrangements are required to be made in advance.

### **Scheduling of Meetings**

Mandatory meetings of Generalization Sessions, Mini-Progress Reviews/Formal Progress Reviews and the elected Team Meetings are all scheduled by the center's scheduler in which your child attends.

The center's scheduler will contact you to schedule upcoming meetings as they approach their due date, but arrangements for consistent schedules of those meetings can also take place.

Once scheduled, it is important to advise the scheduler immediately if the appointment will need to be rescheduled if other commitments were not considered when the appointment was made. It is crucial that all cancellations or reschedule notifications are made to the scheduler in advance.

Chronic cancellations by parents is deemed policy non-compliance and will be subject to termination of services due to the requirements set forth internally and as deemed necessary by the funding source.

All appointments are made through the scheduler and cannot be modified by the BTT. Please contact your scheduler via phone if less than 24 hours' notice and by phone or email when notification is more than 24 hours in advance.

## **Funding**

As like other medical or behavioral treatment providers, Connections work can only take place when a funding source is established. Funding sources for this type of treatment can occur through both private commercial insurance and State funded (Medicaid) services.

Funding sources dictate a lot of what we can do and what we are allowed to do at Connections. Policies may change constantly because of the changes at the funding level. Connections strives to interpret those policy changes and create new internal policies quickly so that we can continue to remain in compliance while also providing families with enough notice about changes that will affect their child's overall treatment.

### ***Definitions:***

Katie Beckett Program- a special eligibility process that allows certain children with long-term disabilities, mental illness, or complex medical needs, living at home with their families, to obtain a Wisconsin ForwardHealth Medicaid card. Children who are not eligible for other Medicaid programs because of the income or assets of their parents are too high may be eligible for Medicaid through Katie Beckett. A child may be eligible for this source of Medicaid even if they are currently covered under a private health insurance policy.

For more information about Katie Beckett, please refer to this link:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/kbp/index.htm>

Primary Insurance- The insurance that is required to pay first by law, if multiple insurances coverages are established. Otherwise, it is simply your insurance coverage that will provide payment for services rendered.

Prior Authorization- the process of obtaining authorization prior to rendering services to determine eligibility, benefit coverage, medical necessity and appropriateness of services.

Secondary Insurance- The insurance provider that gets billed second. The primary payer pays what it owes on your bill first and then sends the rest to the secondary payer to pay.

### **Established In-Network Funding**

Connections has in-network coverage through multiple insurance providers. We will work with families to gain in-network coverage through their already established insurance companies, if we are not in-network currently. Although, every effort will be made to gain access within those insurance companies, Connections cannot guarantee insurance acceptance.

Insurance companies that will not accept in-network status with Connections because of its commitment to center-based approaches locally in our state are:

- Network Health Plans
- Arise Health Plans

Most other local or national insurance plans are in-network with Connections at this time.

### **Insurance Changes**

Connections does not have the ability to be automatically notified when family's insurance policies change. Through the billing process, it can take weeks to receive a denial to advise us of coverage loss.

Parents are required to notify the Assistant Director immediately upon cancellation, loss or change in coverages.

It is important to know that with ABA in particular, not all insurance companies will fund this type of therapy. Therefore, if insurance plans change, there could be a loss in coverage. To eliminate the possibility of hefty out-of-pocket expenses, parents are encouraged to be proactive with insurance updates.

### **Primary vs. Secondary Coverages**

#### ***How Does this Affect Us at Connections?***

Upon receiving the phone call from parents wanting to begin services, Connections runs a policy check to ensure that there is coverage on your policy to begin treatment. When verification is received, the intake process begins.

We establish if families have only a primary insurance or both primary and secondary. If families have only a commercial primary insurance, our Assistant Directors will inform parents of the possibility of going through the Katie Beckett process in order to become eligible for Medicaid as a secondary insurance. Why? This is because families who have a commercial primary insurance often times have high deductibles, co-payments or co-insurance. When having Medicaid as a secondary insurance, after the primary insurance is billed, the amount that is not paid can then be re-billed through the secondary insurance; therefore, families do not incur an out-of-pocket cost.

Those families who use Medicaid as a primary insurance do not have a secondary insurance, but still do not incur any out-of-pocket costs.

#### ***What if my Commercial Primary Insurance Does Not Cover ABA Treatment?***

If you have a commercial primary insurance that does not cover treatment, the denial will be kept on file and your secondary insurance will then cover the cost of treatment.

If your commercial insurance denies coverage, and you do not yet have secondary insurance, then families will be required to go through the Katie Beckett Program process to establish a funding source (Medicaid).

#### ***Are There Other Ways That Having A Primary and Secondary Insurance Affect My Child's Treatment?***

Yes.

Rules and regulations for each insurance company are generally not the same. Sometimes they are similar, but sometimes they are very different from one another. Connections establishes internal rules and regulations based off of the strictest company's rules and regulations. This is so that when using the strictest rules and regulations, your child will have a much easier time to continue receiving benefits.

If parents refuse to comply with Connections clinical rules and regulations, this is a direct reflection of non-compliance of the rules and regulations established by your funding sources; therefore, increasing the likelihood that your child will not be approved through the Prior Authorization Process for initial or subsequent treatment.

## **Scheduling – How It Works**

Scheduling is a very important piece of the consistency of work flow at Connections. The more consistent, we can be, the better it is for everyone. The work environment can become very chaotic quickly with call ins, late notice schedule changes, late or early pickups, late or early drop offs, etc. Not only can it become stressful for staff, but also for learners as many changes occur in a short amount of time.

In the best interest of everyone involved, it is important to give advanced notice (in non-emergency situations) and select appropriate consistent schedules for your child(ren) from the onset of treatment.

### ***Definitions:***

Early Intensive Intervention Learners: Learners who are prescribed 30 or more hours per week.

Intensive Learners: Learners who are prescribed between 20 and 29 hours per week

Non-Intensive Learners: Learners who are prescribed 19 hours or less per week.

Transitional Learners: Learners who are attending Intensive or Early Intensive intervention and will be transitioning to non-intensive level services.

Day Time Learners: Learners who attend morning hours through afternoon hours, completing prior to 3:30 or 4:00 pm (depending on the center). Exclusions exist for napping children.

After School Learners: Learners who attend Connections after a full day of school, beginning around 3:00-4:00 pm.

Ramp Up Period: A period of time established to gradually increase hours (ramp up) until meeting the goal or prescribed hours.

Rests- A quiet and demand free time when learners lie down and potentially fall asleep for 30 minutes or less.

Naps- A quiet and demand free time when learners lie down and potentially fall asleep for 31 or more minutes.

## **Schedule Options**

### **Operating Times**

Connections' center-based facilities are open Monday through Friday, with available hours of service from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm Central Standard Time as well as Saturdays during the school year months, September through May, from 8:00a-1:00p. Support Services are also offered on Saturdays for those who have exhausted their ABA treatment hours during the work week. From the end of school through the summer, Connections is open from 7:30 am-5:30pm Monday through Friday.

### **Scheduling Considerations**

As with a center-based facility, we can only take on as many children as there are private/ITT cubbies. Therefore many children "share" cubbies when not in use by any one child. Therefore, daytime children's sessions that do not exceed 25 hours per week are required to end by the arrival of after

school learners. The arrival times of after school learners varies based on location. Please see your center's scheduler for more information.

All sessions must be a minimum of 3 hours in duration. The only exception is for after school children whose transportation cannot get them to Connections until a later time or the school's dismissal time will not allow for a minimum of 3 hours per day.

All children must attend Connections a minimum of 10 hours per week. Due to Medical Necessity Standards, any child who would benefit from less than 10 hours per week can receive support services or parent-led therapy and could potentially be discharged or denied benefits from the funding source. To set up successful situations for our learners and their families, Connections requires that all learners receive the minimum of 10 hours per week unless transitioning to another level of care based on medical necessity.

Children who are identified as Early Intensive Intervention learners must attend Connections within 5 hours of their prescription as indicated on the Behavioral Treatment Request & Prescription Form. Hours under that range will not promote successful outcomes for learners to allow request approvals for continued treatment with Prior Authorizations. Upon initial authorizations and services, "ramp up" periods are allowed for up to 3 months (90 days) where the hours requested and prescribed are not required to be met to benefit individual learners in adapting to the environment and expectations; however, consistent and gradual increases in hours is required to be scheduled until the maximized hours are met within the 3 month/90 day period.

### **Early Intervention vs. After-School Non-Intensive Intervention Considerations**

Connections staff attempts to identify possible "transitional children" by January 1 of each year and communication efforts with families will be made to identify if the child will be transitioning from early intensive treatment to non-intensive level of treatment due to upcoming full- day school participation.

It is important to communicate with Connections staff as early as possible if decisions are made earlier than January 1 for the next school year to allow Connections to place the child on a priority wait list, if applicable. This is because Connections is a primary after-school referred provider.

Many other providers do not take after-school learners, advising parents there is a wait time of 2 or more years, simply because in-home companies cannot take on as many after school learners due to time constraints and travel time between learner's homes. Therefore, Connections has a waiting list for after-school learners because of the heavy need as well. Therefore, Connections wait list advisement will increase or decrease in wait times if children already established in our program as early intervention learners will be transitioning into the non-intensive, after-school level of care.

## ABA Services vs. Support Services Considerations

A child's routine schedule must maximize their intensive, non-intensive or focused 1:1 ABA Treatment to the minimum standard each week. Support Services can be utilized as a supplement to their treatment, not to replace any 1:1 intensive treatment.

## Schedule Option Breakdowns

The chart below describes schedule options for 1:1 ABA treatment only. Schedules may vary within a maximum of one ½ hour. When deciding on the best schedule for your child, please reference this chart.

### **The following scheduling options are available to Connections families for Intensive ABA Treatment**

8 hours per day	7 hours per day	6 hours per day	5 hours per day	4 hours per day	3 hours per day or after school	Children who require naps
7:30a-3:30p	7:30a-2:30p	7:30a-1:30p	7:30a-12:30p	8:00a-12:00p	Upon arrival until 6:00p	8:00a-5:30p
8:00a-4:00p	8:00a-3:00p	8:00a-2:00p	12:30p-5:30p	12:00p-4:00p		<b>Nap times</b>
9:00a-5:00p	9:00a-4:00p	9:00a-3:00p		2:00p-6:00p		11:30a-1:00p
9:30a-5:30p	9:30a-4:30p	9:30a-3:30p				12:00p-1:30p

## Other Scheduled Events

### Rest or naptime

Rest or naps will be provided for all children younger than five years of age who are in care for more than four consecutive hours based on parent's preference or other regulations.

Connections will send bedding home to be laundered after every five uses, or sooner if necessary.

Children who are awake after 30 minutes of resting will be allowed the opportunity for quiet play if one-on-one technician or 1:1 treatment will begin after the 30 minute rest period.

Parents will be charged a fee for nap time as insurance providers cannot be charged for non-treatment time. Short 14 minute breaks can be given; however anything exceeding that amount of time will acquire a fee.

The fee for napping is \$8.75 per hour as a staff is still assigned during this time to keep the child attended.

Children will sleep on sleeping bags provided by the parents.

### No School Days or School Early Release Days

Connections understands that many school districts have scheduled “no school days” or “early release days”. With that said, Connections cannot accommodate the change of schedule in this regard because of maximizing treatment sessions based on staff availability in correlation with the child’s normal school and therapy schedules.

The exception for district scheduled “no school days” where Connections will accommodate a change in schedule is during winter (Christmas) break as most of our staff who are also college students are off of school at that time and additional hours can be provided.

Change in schedules during winter break can only be granted if parents complete the appropriate Change of Schedule form located in the front entrance and submit with a 2 weeks’ advanced notice.

Granting of change of schedules occur on a first come, first serve basis on the desired treatment hours for that week. Parents will still need to abide by the scheduling options provided by Connections as can be found on the preceding page (page 15). Any scheduling questions can be directed to and answered by the scheduling specialist.

\*\*\* Special Accommodation Exceptions may be made for children who struggle with transitions in general or struggle with more early unstructured- limited demand days to later parts of the day which contain structure- high demands, only if staffing permits. Staffing always take precedence because if we do not have staff, we cannot have therapy.

## **Arrival & Departure Regulations**

As noted in the scheduling section of this handbook, all early or late pickups or drop offs affect the schedule and the work flow of the environment, also affecting the other learners. Policies have been developed in order ensure that chronic situations do not develop.

### ***Definitions***

Consistently Scheduled: The schedule chosen by the parents and confirmed by the center's scheduler for consistent attendance.

On Time: at the exact time or time prior to the exact time according to the center's staff's tablet.

Grace Period: A period of time in which there is no penalty.

Late: A period of time after the scheduled completion time by one or more minutes.

### **Arrival**

Clients must arrive at the time for which they are consistently scheduled. It is important that the client arrive on time as this will help create a smoother transition into therapy. This will also ensure that all information provided from the parent to the technician can be clearly communicated.

#### Late Fees

If a client will be arriving late to Connections' center, beyond five (5) minutes, a courtesy phone call will need to be made.

A grace period of five (5) minutes will be given; however, late arrivals between five and fifteen minutes (5-15) will acquire a \$10.00 late charge. If past 15 minutes (16-30), another \$10.00 fee will be acquired and so on.

A phone call will be made to parents after 10 minutes of no-arrival. If the child is sick or will not arrive at all and no call was made to Connections, the \$10.00 fee will still be acquired as a "no show". Time will be kept according to the staff's tablet.

The late fees are acquired as technician staff are scheduled and arrive at the child's scheduled time and are "on the clock" for that start time.

### **Departure**

Parents will need to arrive to Connections five to ten (5-10) minutes prior to the learner's day end. Parents are discouraged to arrive earlier than that allotted time as many times learners can become distracted from treatment by seeing their parent(s) or parent(s) vehicles.

At Connections, we believe that communication is key in creating a positive and successful working relationship. During this time, Behavioral Treatment Therapists and/or Technicians will provide information regarding the child's day including, but not limited to, progress in programs, achievements and concerns.

### Late Fees

A client left at Connections after his or her scheduled end time is considered late.

A warning will be issued after the first occurrence; however, for any successive late pick-ups, parents will be charged a \$10.00 fee for any time after the scheduled pick up or drop off time within 15 minutes.

If past 15 minutes after the scheduled pick up time (16-30 minutes), another \$10.00 late fee will be acquired and so on.

Time will be kept from the time set on the staff's tablet.

The late fees are acquired due to staff's need to keep the child safe and attended.

## Attendance

Attendance is the key to promote successful outcomes. This is because when a learner first arrives for their intake assessment and follow up assessments, our staff completes a variety of assessments to determine the level of intervention required to support and promote progress. When those hours are not met because of lack of attendance, potential progress opportunities decrease, while we want to see potential progress opportunities to increase; the number of hours of intervention directly affects progress.

Unfortunately many children are diagnosed with Autism every day, looking for somewhere to go for services. Because of the amount of kids seeking these opportunities, often times there is a wait for services. When children are consistently absent, this is taking away from other children who may not be absent and truly will see an impact on progress for the learner and their families.

Additionally, Connections undergoes a process about every 6 months called a Prior Authorization Process. This analytical process is solely through permanent products including the Plan of Care, Updated Progress Charts and some additional required paperwork. These Prior Authorization (PA) teams make decisions solely upon what they see on paper. What they see on paper is either 1) lack of progress or 2) progress. If progress is not shown through these permanent products, they typically send the PA back requesting additional information on why the learner is not demonstrating progress. Sometimes we are forced to state attendance issues. If the attendance issues are not related to other medical issues, the PA will most likely become denied.

All of these reasons are why attendance is so crucial and why a policy is in place to ensure that we will continue to promote progress with each one of our learners.

### ***Definitions:***

Absence: being away or not attending treatment as scheduled.

Excused Absences: Absences that are planned and are advised to schedulers through the Change of Schedule Request Form, a minimum of 2 weeks in advance.

Unexcused Absences: Absences that are not planned or are not advised to schedulers in advance, but are advised within one (1) hour prior to scheduled treatment.

No Call/No Show Absences: Absences that are not advised to the center's scheduler at all and the learner does not arrive to treatment as scheduled.

## Policy

Type of Absence	Number of Days or % of Hours of Absences Allowed	Duration	Reason
Excused Absences	14 days allowed	Per Calendar Year	To promote family time and community involvement
Unexcused Absences	7% allowed	Per Authorization	To account for child sick days or other last minute commitments
No Call/No Show	1 allowed	Per Calendar Year	To account for chaotic times or emergency situations

## Absence Meetings

Meetings will be scheduled with families whose child's absences exceed:

- 1) 14 excused absences for the year
- 2) 7% of unexcused absences in an authorization period
- 3) 1 no call/no show absences within an authorization period

Continued Treatment Requirements: Continued treatment for learners on or after these absences are exceeded is contingent upon meeting attendance. Therefore, learner's treatment hours are put on hold following the initially scheduled meeting date if parents do not attend. Hours will be put back onto the schedule within 2 weeks following a concluded meeting taking place if services were temporarily put on hold.

Meetings will discuss potential barriers for compliance as well as possible solutions to eliminate or reduce additional absences from occurring within the same duration.

Families whose non-compliance of allowed absences reach levels that negatively affect the work environment or the learner's progress will be terminated from the program. This is defined as:

Negative Absence Levels- Absences that exceed 17 excused absences in a calendar year, absences that exceed 10% of unexcused absences within an authorization period, absences that exceed 3 no call/no show absences within a calendar year and/or a combination of these absences.

**\*Exclusions:** The only exclusion is when a child is medically incapable of attending as verified by a Medical Doctor. In these circumstances the Medical Doctor must write a physician's note that states the learner's name, reason for the absence and the duration of the absence. Only **one** absence infraction would count toward either an excused or unexcused absence depending on the advancement of notice when days are consecutive and would involve longer durations due to medically related situations.

# Sickness

## ***Definitions:***

Sickness: The state of being ill; feeling or fact of being affected with nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or fever.

Communicable Disease: an illness resulting from an infection that can be transmitted to others.

## **Policy**

Please do not bring your child to Connections or hold generalization sessions at your home if he/she or anyone in the household is displaying sickness or has a fever.

If your child is sent home from school or does not attend school because of illness they should not attend Connections. Please respect the staff's judgment when they determine that a child should not attend Connections because of sickness.

These limits are designed to help sick children recover and to avoid the spread of disease. Listlessness, diarrhea, fever, or crankiness may all be symptoms of illness, and it is our policy to isolate children showing such symptoms.

If a child is sick, parents must contact Connections one (1) hour or more before the scheduled therapy session so that staff can be called off.

Parents must also pick up their child promptly, within one half (1/2) hour if he/she is ill as Connections is not licensed to provide care for mildly ill children. If parents do not pick up their child within 30 minutes, the emergency contact will then be contacted for them to come and pick up the ill child.

If the child becomes sick while at the Connections, the child must be isolated from other children in therapy (in our sick child room) and the parent called immediately. Connections must exclude a child:

- Who has a reportable illness or condition that is contagious  
Parents must inform us within 24 hours if their child has a contagious disease
- With chicken pox until the child is no longer infectious or until the lesions are crusted over;
- Who has vomited **one (1) time** since arriving that day;
- Who has had any abnormally loose stools **on two (2) occasions** since arriving that day;
- Who has contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye (pink eye);
- Who has a bacterial infection and has not completed 24 hours of antibiotics
- Who has unexplained lethargy and is unable to participate in all the regular activities of the day;
- Who has a 100 degree Fahrenheit temperature or above before fever reducing medication is given;
- Whose temperature has not been below 100 degrees for 24 hours
- Who has an undiagnosed rash or a rash attributable to a contagious illness or condition;

## Notes

- If a child has a tendency to have loose stool due to medications or other complications, then a doctor's note **must** be provided to Connections so staff know the cause of the symptom. On the doctor's note it will need to indicate how staff will know whether or not the loose stool is due to illness or due to the medications. If Connections does not have a doctor's note then the policy above will be enforced.
- If a child has a tendency to vomit due to gag reflexes or other complications then a doctor's note **must** be provided to Connections so that staff know the cause of the symptom. On the doctor's note it will need to indicate how staff will know whether or not the vomiting is due to the complications or an illness. If Connections does not have a doctor's note, then the policy above will be enforced.
- Although limited, if parents/learners would like make-up sessions to occur because of an absence, parents should advise Connections scheduling specialist of this and scheduling arrangements will be made if possible. If make-up sessions are unavailable, please note that if anything becomes available in the future, arrangements can still be made if parents show continued interest. Make-up sessions most likely will not be available before 2 weeks from the time of the absence as schedules are made ahead of time based on staff availability.

### **Communicable Disease Absences**

A child who has a communicable disease will not be allowed within the center once the communicable disease has been confirmed. Connections follows guidance from State and Federal Guidelines regarding the length of time the child must be absent after symptoms have ceased.

Please also note that all parents will be informed of an exposure their child has to a communicable disease. This information will be posted on the white board in the main front entrance/waiting room areas. *This would relate to the medically related absences as described on page 20.*

### **Connections Policy Regarding Lice**

Connections has a strict no-nit policy. Even if nits (eggs) have not hatched, Connections will not allow a child who has nits within the Connections environment. Please see your physician for guidance on methods to remove nits. *This would relate to the medically related absences as described on page 20.*

## **Administrative Considerations**

### **Additional Paperwork Requests**

All enrollment paperwork is due on the child's first day of attendance with heavy emphasis on receipt during follow-up assessments.

Documents required for prior authorization with the child's funding source is a requirement of the funding source and therefore needs to be received during the follow-up assessment process.

Medical information such as health history reports or well check visit notes sometimes takes longer to receive from the physicians. In those circumstances, the formal paperwork will need to be received within the child's first 30 days of enrollment.

When submitting the additional documents, parents should submit the forms via the secured mailbox at the front entrance labeled "Completed Forms". The forms should not be given to technicians to pass along to the correct parties as the forms could get lost.

Technicians will not accept the paperwork, and parents will be directed to use the secured mailbox.

### **Inclement Weather**

Parents should not take undue risks and are expected to use good judgment getting safely to and from Connections during inclement weather, including, but not limited to, snow, storms, icy roads, and storm warnings. Parents who believe they cannot safely reach the site should notify Connections prior to the regularly scheduled starting time with a minimum of one (1) hour in advance. This will still count toward an unexcused absence, but will be logged with a reason to note the circumstance.

Connections parallels closures, late starts or early closures based on three area school districts depending on the therapy location: Brillion School District for our Brillion location, Kimberly School District for our Kimberly location and Appleton School District for our Appleton location. Therefore, if that school district closes due to inclement weather, Connections center-based therapy is closed for that location.

When generalization sessions are scheduled and a Behavioral Treatment Therapist (BTT) is to be in the home or community environment, if the individual client's school district is closed, the generalization session will be cancelled as well. If Connections is serving children from a particular school district for a school contract, that child will need to follow their own school district's closures as well.

Connections may, on its own, decide weather is too risky to continue services, especially when weather takes a turn for the worst after school hours. We will notify parents as quickly as possible by phone, text messaging and/or email.

## **Days Closed**

### **Holidays**

Connections recognizes 6 Holidays each year: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day in which Connections is closed.

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday will be observed as the recognized Holiday.

When a holiday falls on a Sunday, the Monday following will be observed as the recognized Holiday.

### **Low Census:**

To be proactive for holiday weeks where census of learner's is typically down, the scheduler will survey parents on plans of attendance for those times. These times usually precede and follow a Holiday, especially when the Holiday falls in the middle of a week.

In the event of a low census, Connections will close. Low census means the expected learner's will be at 25% or fewer of the center's typical census.

### **Special Events**

Connections supports local charities and outreach programs that raise awareness and funds for those with Autism and their families.

Connections will close its doors when supporting these local organizations. Currently, Connections will close to support Friends of Autism's annual Autism Walk that usually occurs on a Saturday in late April in Kimberly.

### **Medications**

Connections, LLC will administer medications under the following conditions:

- Prescriptive and non-prescriptive medication will only be given to children if parents have completed the authorization form provided.
- All medicine must be in its original container, bearing the label with child's name, dosage and administration directions. It will be stored in a medication box that is inaccessible to children. Medicine requiring refrigeration will be kept in a covered, labeled and locked container in the refrigerator.
- We will not exceed the age-related dosage on the label of any medication without a written doctor's authorization.
- All medication administered, accidents or injuries occurring on-site, marked change in behavior or appearance, or any observation of injuries to a child's body received outside of center care will be entered into the center's medical logbook.
- Connections, LLC will maintain a medical log where we will document the administration of medication. Parents will have access to entries regarding their child.

- If there is a delayed or missed dosage or if there are other errors in distribution, parents will be notified immediately and may be asked to contact their doctor for recommendations.

### **Non-medicinal products**

Sun screen, insect repellent, lip balm, diaper creams and other non-medicinal products will only be used on a child when signed authorization is on file, and the specific products are supplied by the parent and labeled with the child's name. These authorizations should be returned with the rest of the completed enrollment documents.

### **Items from Home**

Connections provides many items for a child to play, learn and grow from. If a parent allows their child to bring an item from home, it is with risk outside of Connections responsibilities. We understand that some learners may bring items from home that improves sight, communication, etc. but this is still at the risk of the parent. Connections will not reimburse parents for items that may have broken at Connections. In severe unusual circumstances, Connections may meet with parents to discuss reimbursement for some items in question. All items from home must be labeled to help prevent items being returned to the wrong person.

### **Arrival of Goods**

When parents are transporting edible goods to Connections, we cannot have plastic bags. Please place goods in a brown paper bag/baggie or a regular cloth lunch bag. Please also have these items marked with the child's name.

Snacks can be stored at Connections for continued use. Staff will communicate with parents when those snack items have either expired or have been consumed in its entirety and more snack food items are needed. Children's snacks are kept in their individual snack containers and additionally in a designated interior cupboard space and can be left at the center. All opened dry items will be placed in a Ziploc bags.

Lunches need to be packed daily for the child. Additional garnishments or food items cannot be stored at Connections. Parents need to send lunches in a labeled lunch bag so that the proper food items can be given to each child.

After eating main meals, the child's food items will be placed back into their brown paper bag and/or cloth lunch bag and hung in their cubby to ensure these items are sent back home. If your child does not usually finish their entire meal and you would like to save this for at home, it may be a good idea to also place a cold pack in the lunch bag to keep things cool if they would otherwise spoil. For the duration before eating their meals, food items will be kept in the refrigerator provided in the children's lunch room. All Tupperware/glass containers will be rinsed out, not washed when placing them back into their

proper bags if all food was consumed by the learner. Staff will not throw out food not eaten in case parents would like to keep that food for later use.

## **Nutrition Policy**

All snacks and meal items are provided by parents for daily use. Many children enrolled at the center have different diets and tolerances, therefore, parents supply all snacks and meals for their child to eat while they are at Connections, LLC. Children will not share food items.

If your child has special dietary needs or has food allergies parents must notify the center in writing. Food allergies will be posted in their file accessible on their data tablets and in eating areas for staff to view.

Birthday and holiday treats are not allowed because of potential allergies and specific child diets. A holiday party without treats may be scheduled instead if parents want to supply a special toy/activity.

Food will be stored up off of the floor and once opened, in airtight containers.

Refrigerator (40 degrees or colder) and freezer temperatures (0 degrees or colder) will be properly maintained.

Dishes will be washed and sanitized in accordance with licensing regulation. At Connections we use a home-type dishwashing machine to clean dishes and utensils. After washing, dishes and utensils are submerged for at least 2 minutes in 1 ½ teaspoons of bleach per gallon of water.

## **Accident And Emergency Procedures**

### **Contingency Plans For Fire/Tornado And Other Emergencies**

Attendance will be kept and arrival/departure times recorded. Because most of our children have one-on-one staff assigned to them, staff will be kept aware of children they're responsible for. Staff who are assigned with children with physical or more intrusive cognitive disabilities will receive priority assistance from supervisors or additional staff members.

Fire and Tornado evacuation plans will be practiced monthly. Tornado drills are practiced between the months of April and October. The Assistant Director will document dates of fire and tornado drills and will check the smoke detectors monthly on a form provided by the state.

In case of an emergency that would require an evacuation, children will be evacuated by all available staff through the nearest exit. The attendance form and list of phone numbers for parents and emergency contacts will be taken out by the staff member designated to be "in charge" to assure that all children are accounted for and all families can be notified.

A fire emergency bag is kept in the front waiting room next to the Scheduling Specialist's desk as well as an additional Fire Emergency Bag that is located by the back entrances. The bag is labeled and contains

flashlights, batteries, a first aid kit and the Emergency Contact Binder that contains all learner's emergency information.

Children will be assembled behind or inside the neighboring building of each location. For Kimberly, the neighboring building, Badger Bay, located at 563 Carter Court. For Appleton, the neighboring building Pyromatic, located at 2185 W Pershing Street and in Brillion the Brillion Elementary /Middle School back parking lot located at 315 S. Main Street.

The Assistant Director or person in charge will call the fire department for Kimberly and Brillion locations and the Fire Department is automatically contacted for Appleton based on the fire system requirements for that location.

Parents will also be contacted after the fire departments have been contacted and all children and staff are accounted for.

If we are unable to return to the building following an evacuation, the children will be taken to Childcare Resource and Referral at 1001 W. Kennedy Ave for the Kimberly Location, to All-Lift Systems at 2146 West Pershing Street for Appleton and the Brillion Community Center on Center Street until parents or other authorized adult can be reached and come for them.

In the event of a tornado warning, the children will be taken to center/interior rooms of the center by all staff members. Blankets, a portable radio and flashlight, with extra batteries for both, are kept in the tornado shelter area at all times. The attendance form and emergency contact information will be brought along by the staff member designated to be "in charge". Staff will engage the children in activities until we are assured by the authorities that the danger has passed.

In the event of a lost child, staff will check all areas of the center. If the child cannot be found, the child's parents and/or emergency contact and the police will be immediately notified.

If the center should lose the use of heat, water or electricity before the center opens; parents will be notified a minimum of 1/2 hour before their scheduled time and will be asked to not bring their child that day.

If the center should lose the use of heat, water or electricity while children are in attendance, the Assistant Director will call the parents of all children and ask them to pick them up within 1 hour(s).

There will never be less than 2 people on-site including at least 1 supervisor.

In the event of an emergency closing, we will contact news stations and call parents to pick up their child(ren).

In the event that the Executive Director is not or cannot be present, her emergency back -up is Krysta Matter in Kimberly and Rissa Pierce in Appleton and her number is posted by all phones. She will be available to the facility within 5 minutes of the call.

In the event that power fails within the facility, emergency lighting exists around the center with additional lighting provided by flashlights with back up batteries.

All emergency phone numbers including the Executive Director, emergency back -up, Fire Department, Police Department, Ambulance, Poison Control, WPS (Electric) and Child Protective Services for Outagamie County are listed and posted at all phones.

In the event of custodial issues, we ask that we have a copy of all legal documents affecting custodial rights including but not limited to, restraining orders issued by the court that relate to the child, the enrolling parent, or to other family members. We must know who the child is living with as we will release the child to the parent with physical custody or only persons listed on the enrollment documents as persons we are able to release the child to.

All staff will have training in child CPR/AED and first aid. First aid supplies will be stored in the office area and brought along on community generalization sessions (field trips).

If an emergency vehicle is needed and an ambulance is not readily available, supervisors are required to have their vehicle available for use in the case of an emergency as at least 1 supervisor is always on site. In the event that a call to Child Protective Services is needed, the person who has witnessed or suspected the neglect or abuse will contact the department directly. After the report has been made, the staff member will notify the director of the report.

### **Non-Toilet Trained Children**

Diapering: Before changing a diaper, the staff person involved will wash his/her hands. Following the diaper change, the soiled diaper will be bagged and disposed of in a plastic-lined, foot-activated diaper pail. Hands of both the child and the staff member will be washed. The changing pad will be cleaned and disinfected. Any wet or soiled clothing will be put into a plastic bag and tied.

If the child's clothes are wet or dirty, fresh/clean clothes are placed on the child from their back-up bin. In the event this happens, it is important to send a new set or more of clean clothes in case this happens again. Connections does have some additional back-ups on hand, but since a lot of children may need them, we might not always have the proper size or seasonal selection available at the time; therefore, it is important that a child always has back up clothes in their bin at Connections. If we use the last set of clean clothes, it will be communicated with parents that more is needed on their daily clinical report.

Toys: Toys used by toddlers will primarily be ones that may be washed and sanitized. Any toy that has been in a child's mouth will be picked up as soon as the child lets go of it, and placed into a basket to be washed, sanitized and air dried. Toys requiring laundering, such as stuffed dolls or animals, will be laundered weekly, or sooner if needed.

Proper hand washing procedures will be followed to prevent the spread of disease. Hand washing procedures will be posted at all of the sinks.

All children will need to have a Health Report on file. This document can be replaced with the often required Medical Evaluation form. The report cannot be dated more than 12 months prior to the date of enrollment.

Children who have been immunized will need to be immunized properly and an immunization record will need to be on file within 30 days of the first day of attendance. Those that have chosen not to immunize their child will need to have a proper waiver signed that indicates their decision and will be kept in their file.

### **Biting**

We will document occurrences of biting in the medical log book. Parents will also receive an Incident Report form. The child or staff that is bitten will be treated with washing with soap and water, covering with a band aid if needed and then applying ice if that is needed as well. If the bite is more serious, parents may be notified and/or staff sent home.

### **Snack & Meal Schedule**

Snacks will be provided every 3 hours that a child is at Connections, LLC. Since children arrive at different times of the day, we do not have formal snack times. Snacks can be given upon request of the child.

Allowance on the number of snack breaks if becomes excessive can be discussed at progress reviews or other team meetings.

Lunch sessions will be given to children in ½ hour time allotments. Lunch times are designated at 11:30a and 12p. If learners will be leaving the center prior to the group scheduled time, a lone lunch will be offered earlier if that child is not going home immediately after and food needs to be consumed before they begin their next activity.

### **Transportation Policy**

Our center does provide transportation for community generalization sessions/camps but not to and from school or to and from home.

When community generalization sessions are scheduled, the required registration forms must be completed and signed by a parent during the registration period but no later than two (2) weeks prior to the camp. A child will not be able to leave Connections' premises if written permission is not granted prior to the community outing.

Chartered vehicles must have the proper child safety restraints.

Connections will transport children in staff cars for specific program situations when approved by parents and supervisors. Approval comes in the form of completion of the Alternate Arrival & Departure Form.

Staff vehicles must have child safety restraints and if applicable, parents will need to provide appropriate car seats.

To be sure no child is left unattended in a vehicle, an attendance form will be carried along, with children checked whenever they board the vehicle and whenever they exit. Teachers are with the children at all times. General emergency numbers, emergency contact information for all children and a cell phone will be carried along by the teacher(s) in charge. A first aid kit will always be in the vehicle. The vehicle(s) will be kept clean and uncluttered, with the aisle open for quick exiting.

Smoking is prohibited in the vehicle.

Should there be an accident, the Executive Director must verbally inform the licensing office within 24 hours, and provide a written report within 5 business days after the incident, when applicable.

Children may not be left unattended in a vehicle. A second adult, in addition to the driver, must be present if more than 5 children under age 5 are in the vehicle, or if more than 3 children have a handicap that limits their ability to respond in an emergency.

## Professionalism

Connections follows standards established by the BACB which is our certification board for many of our employees. Therefore, we have to follow ethical guidelines to prevent loss of licensure or our ability to provide services. The full list of our ethical guidelines can be found at <http://bacb.com/ethics-code/>. Some particular guidelines that we have come across in the past that Connections cannot do are:

- Accept gifts from families for certain staff or as a group
- Cannot give gifts of money to families
- Parents provide services in exchange for services at Connections

We understand that many families want to thank our staff or our group for the services they have provided to their child(ren) but we cannot accept gifts. If you would like to Thank Us, please send a homemade card, a personal note, write a good review, refer a family or tell us in person! We truly appreciate your support and love to hear positive reviews!

## Fee payment and Refunds

Families are asked to pay invoices within 3 days after its receipt; however, are provided a **15 day** grace period for payment to be received by Connections. Any payment that is **16 days** late or more, without prior consent of Connections, LLC, will incur a 1% late fee and suspension of services. The suspension of services can last anywhere from 2 weeks to 1 month depending on scheduling. Repeat offenders will be required to put down a deposit of 10% of the total balance due in addition to their missed payment to resume/continue services.

Payment can be made via personal check, debit/credit card, HSA or cash. If there will be a third party payment, as from an employer or the county, a special payment schedule will be arranged and detailed in the contract.

#### Other Payment Policies

- Our treatment's pay schedule is a fee for service; therefore, parents will not be billed for days when children do not attend as long as the arrival regulations are followed with adequate notice.
- There will be no reductions for additional children from one family.
- NSF Checks will result in a \$25.00 fee to the parents
- All cash or check payments can be placed in the secured mailbox labeled "Completed Forms". All payments made by HAS or debit/credit card need to be made with the Assistant Director, Executive Director or Office Manager via iPad Square.

#### **Parents who will be utilizing the Private Pay option will receive the current fees as they appear on the Private Pay Rate Sheet and are given to parents upon enrollment**

Connections offers monthly community generalization sessions or camps during the school year and weekly community generalization sessions or camps during the summer. If a parent wishes their child to attend for community generalization sessions, there will be an additional cost dependent on the transportation needed and event scheduled. Parents will be notified of upcoming community generalization sessions and their specific costs through the program brochure and a registration form will be sent home for a parent's election of participation. All registration forms must be received within the registration period as indicated on the program brochure.

Refunds will be made to parents when necessary. These may typically include community generalization refunds or overpayments for deductibles when a secondary funder is retroactive. If a refund is necessary, payment will be made to the parents within 1 week after the missed community generalization session by sending a check via the U.S. Postal Service to the child's primary residence unless parents request to transfer the funds over to future community generalization session attendance. If the refund is for overpayment due to retroactive enrollment, a check will be mailed within 90 days following the reimbursement by the secondary payer.

If a child will not attend on a regularly scheduled day due to illness, parents should notify the Scheduling Specialist a minimum of one (1) hour in advance to prevent late fees.

There are no discounts.

## **Clinical Considerations**

### **Toilet training**

We will systematically develop a program to begin toilet training children. We will begin by bringing them to the bathroom on a regular schedule to encourage elimination on the toilet. Rewards will be given for effort and success. We will speak with families before implementing this program so that toilet training can be consistent between environments and people. Toilet Training is different for each child so the specificity of the program is established by the Behavioral Treatment Therapist and other Supervisors.

### **Property Destruction Parent Responsibility**

A child who causes repeated environmental damage at Connections will have a tracking implemented for property destruction.

If a child's damage exceeds \$50 within 1 year, a meeting will be held with the Assistant Director and parents. During this meeting strategies for property destruction reduction will be communicated and a payment reimbursement schedule will be put in place for the property destruction's increase to \$75 worth of damage.

After one year, the tracking will start over and Connections will be responsible for the first \$75 worth of damage if property destruction behavior continues.

### **Mealtimes**

Supervision is provided during all mealtimes to provide guidance and to make sure eating skills are being taught to children with that need. Children eat with each other to promote socialization among the children present. Children are encouraged to be as independent as possible.

Children work on daily living skills when developmentally appropriate by helping the technicians clean the kitchen area on a regular basis including sweeping up residual food on the floor, placing dishes in the dishwasher, etc. Staff is responsible for oversight and supervision during practicing these skills.

## **Termination Notice, Grievances, Schedule Changes & Fees/Refunds**

### **Therapy Session Schedule Changes**

As staff are employed based on the need of multiple clients and the availability of the staff, schedule changes are difficult for Connections to arrange. However, if schedule changes are required, Connections will do anything at all possible within reason to have this change be made. Changes will need to be arranged with the scheduling specialist and the parent request will need to be communicated to Connections by using the proper Change of Schedule forms at least two (2) or more weeks prior to the prospective date of change. These Schedule Change Request forms are available in the main front entrance of Connections. Once completed, they need to be placed in the secured mailbox labeled "Completed Forms."

## **Grievances**

In the event of misunderstandings, personality conflicts, or specific complaints against Connections and/or its staff, parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the Assistant Director and/or its supervising staff to remedy such problems. Complaints must be aired at parent's meetings in order to work on positive solutions. Good communication and interpersonal relationships make problem solving much easier. In escalated situations, meetings may involve the Executive Director.

## **Parent Conduct**

It is deemed inappropriate to raise voices at staff in waiting rooms or other areas when having dissatisfaction or a miscommunication existed. We need to treat each other with respect and dignity at all times. If a situation like this occurs, follow up will be made by the Assistant Director to encourage appropriate demeanor in the future and may require a meeting to be scheduled.

Inappropriate uncomfortable comments, harassing comments or sexually-natured comments made to or about staff, by parents is prohibited. Staff are required to report to supervisors when these comments occur as well as provide the commenter with neutral feedback of the inappropriateness of the comment. Please respect all individual's feelings and opinions regarding the inappropriate nature of the comment. The Assistant Director and/or Director may need to follow up with the parent during a meeting to discuss the comments depending on the level of severity. However, all comments are documented for future reference and are time stamped if further, future investigation is conducted.

Scheduled meetings initiated by Connections staff that is not regularly scheduled is still mandatory, whether involving parent-conduct issues or other concerns. We will work with families on the days and times that will best fit into schedules of parents and families; however, emergency meetings such as this are essential to create effective lines of communication or address potentially serious issues in the future. Therefore, parents must attend these meetings when scheduled or services will be put on hold until the meeting occurs. Please note that our schedules are completed 2 weeks in advance, and therefore if services are temporarily put on hold, it may take up to 2 weeks for the learner to become rescheduled.

Multiple meetings (more than 2) regarding any parent-conduct issues will unfortunately result in termination of services. The third meeting will involve discharge discussion and date of when discharge will be completed.

## **Termination/ Discharge of Enrolled Children**

In general, a child may be discharged from Connections, LLC when they no longer meet the diagnostic criteria for their admitting condition or when they are assessed to be displaying skills that are consistent with their current age level or typical peers. Additionally, the child should no longer display barriers, as measured by assessment, which would interfere with learning in a typical classroom environment or obstruct progress with acquiring life skills from his/her natural environment. A child may be discharged for the following **clinical** reasons:

- Has not demonstrated progress toward goals after 18 months of treatment
- Family wishes to discontinue services
- Irreconcilable differences between the family and provider concerning important issues in treatment planning and delivery
- Inability for the child to regularly participate effectively in treatment
- Lack of parental cooperation for the Parent Involvement Training and meeting requirements
- Lack of sufficiently skilled staff for 3 consecutive months that cannot be corrected within a month,
- Level of care required is not offered by Connections, LLC or is out of their scope of practice.

A child may also be discharged from the center for reasons such as, but not limited to:

- Property destruction by intent when the behavior occurs more than 2 times per month unless parents pay for damages to that property. Fees will need to be paid in full within 30 days of billed invoice.
- Repeated failure to pick up the child at scheduled time.
- Failure to complete and return required forms.
- Problem Behavior from a child that consistently injure other peers or is a significant safety concern

A child will never be discharged due to discrimination. Connections is committed to complying with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”).

Parents must give a 2 week written notice of their intent to withdraw the child(ren). A follow up exit consultation may be scheduled depending on the circumstances.

We will give a minimum 2 weeks written notice of our intent to discharge a child.

Communication about possible discharge due to graduating a program will be utilized with several discussions that will take place during regularly scheduled meetings. Upon discharge, if resources are available, Connections will inform parents about those local resources that may be of help to them via our referral worksheet.

If a parent feels an appeal is necessary, they may submit a written appeal and a consultation will be scheduled within 2 business days to review the intended discharge. The Executive Director will make the final decision.

If the discharge is a mutual decision by both Connections and the parents, a termination date will be agreed upon on by both parties while utilizing a transition plan as part of our discharge planning.