



SKIES Unlimited

Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration & Skills



PARENT HANDBOOK

Discover  **SKIES Unlimited...**
Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration & Skills



When I grow up
I want to be. . .

For more information, contact Child & Youth Services 

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Updated April 2010

Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Fort Jackson Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS) *SKIESUnlimited* program. We are pleased that you have decided to enroll your child in our program. The *SKIESUnlimited* faculty and I are excited about the opportunity to work with you and your child. We realize that you have other options available for instructional programming for your child and we will do our best to live up to your expectations.

Our instructional classes are designed with children in mind. We provide a safe, friendly, nurturing environment with caring staff. Our goal is to provide peace of mind when you drop your child off for a *SKIESUnlimited* class with the knowledge that they will receive quality instruction. We also want to expand your child's imagination and creativity in ways that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

Communication is the key to a successful parent and teacher partnership. I encourage you to voice your thoughts, ideas, concerns and questions to the staff or myself whenever necessary. We are here to make your child's instructional experience a pleasant one. Again, welcome to the *SKIESUnlimited* instructional program.

Jeanette C. Dempsey
SKIESUnlimited Administrator

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SKIES*Unlimited* Parent Handbook

SKIES*Unlimited* Program

SKIES stands for Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration, and Skills. The name SKIES*Unlimited* combines the acronym for “Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration, and Skills” with the word “*Unlimited*” for the unlimited learning possibilities this exciting initiative offers children and youth. SKIES*Unlimited* offers instructional classes under four different service areas, or “Schools.” These Schools are:



School of Academic Skills, Mentoring & Intervention

School of Arts, Recreation, & Leisure

School of Life Skills, Citizenship, & Leadership

School of Sports, Fitness & Health

Instructional Program Benefits. SKIES*Unlimited* instructional programs present an opportunity to build individual knowledge and leadership skills, practice social skills and experiment with various activities and programs. There are countless advantages when youth participate in instructional programs. The SKIES*Unlimited* program focuses on the following youth development outcomes:

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Respect for self & others |  Creativity |
|  Teamwork |  Goal-setting |
|  Healthy relationships |  Personal safety |
|  Positive self-identity |  Coordination |
|  Self-motivation |  Appreciation for knowledge |
| |  Discipline |

Mission. To provide children and youth in the Fort Jackson community access to opportunities that expand their knowledge, inspire them, allow them to explore and acquire new skills.

Philosophy. Young people spend as much as 80% of their waking time outside the classroom. When involved in instructional programs, they are less likely to engage in undesirable behavior. Instructional programs foster the development of critical life, leadership and social skills and promote the intellectual and social development of children and youth.

Goals. Provide consistency and predictability within Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS) instructional programming. Make children and youth the focus of all instructional programming. Ensure that faculty are quality champions and excellence is never compromised. Offer two instructional programs year round in each of the four Schools which support child/youth growth and development.

Eligibility. Active duty military personnel, Appropriated Fund (APF) employees, Nonappropriated Fund (NAF) employees, Department of Defense (DoD) civilian employees, Army contractors, National Guard and Reserve personnel are eligible to use the SKIES*Unlimited* program.

Special Needs. Children with special needs may participate in the *SKIESUnlimited* program once a full assessment of the child's needs has been made and a determination that the program can meet the needs of the child with reasonable accommodations. Copies of the medical action plan must be provided to the *SKIESUnlimited* Administrator prior to the child's first day of class. For more information, contact the CYSS Parent Central Services (PCS) at 751-4865 or the Army Community Service Exceptional Family Member Program Coordinator at 751-5256.

Class Locations. *SKIESUnlimited* classes are held at the Joe E. Mann building, Scales Street CDC, Hood Street CDC, Pinckney Annex, Knight Pool, other facilities on Fort Jackson and the local community.

Dress Code. Wondering what to wear? Check out class specific information on our website for updated class dress requirements. www.fortjacksonmwr.com/skies

Class Calendar. Please visit our website for an updated class calendar. www.fortjacksonmwr.com/skies

Preview Class. Parents are encouraged to view a class before making a decision to enroll their child. However, for the benefit of students and instructor, observations should be conducted by video monitoring or from a viewing area when available. Please understand that the instructor has the right to ask parents and siblings to leave the instructional area if their presence is disruptive to the class. Only current students are allowed on the instructional floor during class time. To find the best viewing or waiting area, please ask the *SKIESUnlimited* faculty prior to class.

Enrollments. Before enrolling your child in a *SKIESUnlimited* class, you are encouraged to allow your child to participate in one free trial class and visit with the instructor. Once you pay for a *SKIESUnlimited* class, no refunds will be made except for emergency circumstances. You can now register for various CYSS programs online at <https://webtrac.mwr.army.mil/webtrac/Jacksoncymys.html> or at the PCS Office. Registration in the PCS office is handled by appointment in order to reduce the time you have to wait to be taken care of, however, walk-ins are accepted on a space-available basis.

Parent Orientations. Prior to your child beginning a *SKIESUnlimited* class, we ask that you contact the *SKIESUnlimited* Administrator to schedule a parent orientation. This orientation gives you the opportunity to identify any additional requirements for your child prior to attending their first instructional class. If there are differences between our policies and practices and those of your family, it would be beneficial to discuss them during the parent orientation with the *SKIESUnlimited* Administrator. The *SKIESUnlimited* faculty is committed to providing the best quality childcare possible for your child.

Fees. *SKIESUnlimited* classes are setup for automatic monthly billing (installment billing). All *SKIESUnlimited* classes require fees to be paid at the beginning of each month by the 5th of the month in order to avoid a \$5 late fee. Class fees and late fees will continue to be charged to your household account until a written withdrawal notice is received. Services will be denied beginning the 10th day of the month until all outstanding fees are paid. Services will resume once all *SKIESUnlimited* fees are paid. **No makeup lessons, reduced fees or refunds will be given for missed classes due to late payments.**

Payments. Initial registration and payments can be paid in the Parent Central Services office, Bldg 3392 Magruder Avenue. Fees for all SKIES*Unlimited* classes are determined locally and are based on program operational expenses. Fees are due upon enrollment and the first day of the month thereafter. Payments for continuing classes can be paid at other CYSS facilities excluding the Middle School/Teen program at the Pinckney Annex, Bldg 5614 Hood Street. Payment can also be made online at <https://webtrac.mwr.army.mil/webtrac/Jacksoncyms.html> (login & password required). **Password request instructions can also be found on the above listed webpage.**

Prorated Fees. The SKIES*Unlimited* program allows patrons to enroll at anytime during the month, so the first month's fees are prorated based on the enrollment date. SKIES*Unlimited* provides 4 weeks of instruction for a full month's tuition, except in the case of federal holidays. Make-up classes may result in two or more classes being conducted during the same week (when applicable). SKIES*Unlimited* is not required to prorate tuition for federal holidays. If you are going out of town for two consecutive weeks or more, your tuition can be prorated if you submit a proration request *prior* to your first day of absence. All proration requests must be submitted to and approved by the SKIES*Unlimited* Administrator. Proration request forms can also be submitted online at www.fortjacksonmwr.com/skies.

Credits/Refunds. Credits or refunds should be requested in writing to the SKIES*Unlimited* Administrator by the child's parent/guardian. Valid reasons accepted for refund/credits are: unanticipated PCS orders, family relocation for a TDY or deployment with little or no notice to the sponsor, extended illness or serious injury, and other reasons on a case-by-case basis when submitted to and approved by the SKIES*Unlimited* Administrator. Refunds are not authorized for classes that are held for a specific period (i.e. 2 weeks, 6 weeks) unless extenuating circumstances exist which requires approval by the SKIES*Unlimited* Administrator.

Parents withdrawing their children from Bright SKIES preschool classes after the 10th of the month cannot be granted a refund except in cases of emergency leave or emergency PCS. Refunds for occasional child absences are not authorized. Facility, staffing and program costs continue even when the child is not present.

Attendance. Students are required to provide telephonic notice to the SKIES*Unlimited* Administrator in case of illness or an emergency. Emergencies are defined as accidents, sudden death in the family, injury, etc. Students may receive a credit on their account or makeup lessons - for emergency situations reported to the SKIES*Unlimited* Administrator.

For scheduled absences (i.e., travel, vacation, family affairs, school functions, minor illness, etc.) there will be no refund if a student misses less than two consecutive weeks of lessons. If a student wishes to receive a makeup lesson for scheduled absences, he or she must notify their classroom instructor at least 24 hours prior to the absence. Makeup lessons are not guaranteed for scheduled absences. Students who do not provide prior notification of an absence will be counted as a no-show and will not be eligible for a makeup lesson.

Students are asked to arrive on time for scheduled classes. Students arriving over ten minutes late for a group class may be asked to leave at the discretion of the instructor. Students who are over

10 minutes late to a private lesson without giving prior notification may not receive a lesson as the lesson will be treated as a no-show. The instructor will not extend private lessons past their scheduled time to give students their full 30 minutes when a student is tardy.

Students who fail to attend class for a total of one month without notification to the Instructor or SKIES*Unlimited* Administrator will be automatically withdrawn from the class. All tuition due will be collected and future billing suspended. Families will be required to re-register for the class if they wish to participate.

Child Release. For health and safety purposes, the parent/guardian must sign their child in and out of the SKIES*Unlimited* classes. Only one parent/guardian at a time will be allowed in the Bright SKIES classroom to pick up their children in order to avoid overcrowding and the possibility of a child leaving the classroom without their parent.

Late Pick-up Fees. Parents picking up their children after the instructional period ends will be assessed a late fee after the **first 5 minutes**. The Army-wide family late fee is \$1.00 per minute or a maximum of \$15. Late pick-up fees are assessed by the SKIES*Unlimited* Administrator and paid at any CYSS facility that normally accepts payments. Parent/guardian or designated emergency contact will be called after the first 5 minutes. After 15 minutes, the Military Police will be notified and the child will be transported to an FCC home. An initial fee of \$10.00 will be paid by the parent to the FCC Provider for this service. Current hourly care fees per child per hour will be charged for the length of the stay. The Military Police will be informed of the situation, given the location of the child and informed that the parent/guardian will be contacting them regarding the child. The parent/guardian must contact the Military Police station for information regarding child care arrangements made for their child.

Holidays/Staff Development Days. SKIES*Unlimited* classes will not hold classes on Federal Holidays or School Staff Development days in accordance with the Fort Jackson on post school schedule. **Fees will not be prorated due to federal holidays or staff development day closings.**

Inclement Weather. Your child's instructor will attempt to contact you if inclement weather prevents classes from being conducted, however, classes will definitely not operate when the installation is closed or limited to essential personnel reporting for duty. Please ensure that you provide current contact information to the PCS office as changes occur in your household.

CYSS Parent Central Services

Joe E. Mann Center

3392 Magruder Avenue

0730-1630 Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

0730-1800 Tuesdays and Thursdays

803-751-4869/4865/4824

Field Trips. Excursions away from the SKIES*Unlimited* program are sometimes planned to expose children to a professional performance in their particular area of instruction. Parents/guardians must sign a permission slip in advance for the time, date and destination of each trip. SKIES*Unlimited* faculty are not allowed to transport students in their privately owned vehicles. A CYSS van or bus will be used for field trips when the destination is not within walking distance.

Drop-off/Pick-up. Students are advised to arrive no earlier than 5 minutes before class time and are expected to depart the facility immediately following class, with the exception of time allowed for changing clothes, when required. Students who must change clothes (i.e., dance or gymnastics students) prior to class time are free to use the dressing room/restrooms provided. Children five and under must be accompanied by a parent or guardian while changing clothes. It is either the responsibility of the parent or designated CYSS staff to care for and dress children before and after class. ***Instructors are not responsible for dressing or caring for students before or after class.***

Bright SKIES Program. Children who are 2.5 years old or older and potty trained are eligible for enrollment in the Bright SKIES Preschool program. Preschoolers have a natural curiosity and eagerness to learn. Our goal is to ensure that this eagerness for learning is enhanced through successful experiences and development of socialization skills and a positive self-concept. To reach this objective, the preschool curriculum is based on a solid foundation of scientific research. Children of this age learn through the manipulation of concrete objects and through acting out their new experiences. Therefore, much of the preschooler's day is spent in activity centers that offer a selection of materials.

The Bright SKIES Preschool is designed to meet the needs of families wishing to provide enrichment experiences for their 2.5 to 5 year old children. Classes are 2 ½ hours in length and children can participate in either a 2, 3 or 5 day programs. Each program follows a curriculum of age-appropriate developmental activities in a relaxed environment. Bright SKIES classes follow the local school schedule (August thru May) throughout the school year. Summer classes are also available from June – July. Bright SKIES classes are not in session during Christmas vacation (Exodus), on federal holidays or days that Fort Jackson schools are closed.

Progress Reports (Bright SKIES). SKIES*Unlimited* faculty is always willing to meet with parents individually to discuss their child's progress. Please talk to your child's instructor for available dates and times.

Withdrawals. A **written** withdrawal notice must be submitted at least **two weeks prior** to your child's last day of attendance in SKIES*Unlimited* classes. A child is considered enrolled until a written withdrawal notice is submitted by the parent/guardian. If the SKIES*Unlimited* Administrator does not receive a written notice two weeks prior to the child's last day, the parent/guardian is expected to continue to pay for the enrollment until such notice is received allowing the applicable two weeks' notice.

Withdrawal forms are available online at www.fortjacksonmwr.com/skies or in the PCS office. Failure to provide two weeks written notice of nonattendance in a SKIES*Unlimited* class will result in a non-refundable \$25 late withdrawal fee.

Delinquent Accounts. Late fee notices will be given via phone, via email, via late fee notice slip in the child's classroom cubby or by mail. The SKIES*Unlimited* Administrator will provide at least three forms of documented contact in an attempt to inform the sponsor of the late fees for a particular class when necessary. Failure to pay fees after three attempts have been made to contact the parent/guardian will result in a DD Form 139 (Pay Adjustment Authorization) to be prepared and sent to the Financial Management Office so that all outstanding fees can be

garnished from the sponsor's pay effective the beginning of the month following the initial late payment. All child care services will cease until outstanding fees are paid.

Class Cancellations. In the event that a class cancellation is required, a parent/guardian will be notified at least one week prior to the cancelled class when possible. Makeup classes will be provided for all cancelled classes to ensure that the advertised number of classes is provided to the students.

In the event of a last minute cancellation, the faculty or the *SKIESUnlimited* Administrator will attempt to notify all families using the contact information provided during registration. **Please ensure that your contact information is updated as changes occur in order to avoid not being called when/if class cancellations occur.** If a student is unable to attend makeup lessons no refund is authorized. Emergencies will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Faculty. We are proud of our faculty, their accomplishments and their commitment to providing quality instructional programming for the children of the Fort Jackson community. Each faculty member has had extensive training or experience in their area of instruction. ***SKIESUnlimited* faculty is only responsible for students during class instruction times.** Faculty are not responsible for children before or after classes, are not responsible for dressing or changing children for class, therefore they cannot be held liable for children except during scheduled class time.

All faculties receive training on Identify & Reporting Child Abuse, CPR, First Aid and the Army Touch Policy. They also undergo National Agency Checks with Inquiries (NACI) investigations as well as local background checks prior to instructing children on Fort Jackson. Please contact the *SKIESUnlimited* Administrator for questions.

Discipline. Discipline will be constructive in nature including such methods as diversion, separation of child from situation, praise of appropriate behavior; or gentle, physical restraint such as holding. CYSS personnel will not punish children by:

- a. Spanking, pinching, shaking, or other corporal punishment.
- b. Isolation away from adults sight/contact.
- c. Confinement in closets, boxes, or similar places.
- d. Binding to restrain movement of mouth or limb.
- e. Humiliation or verbal abuse.
- f. Deprivation of meals, snacks, outdoor play opportunities, or other program components.

If a child's behavior becomes momentarily unmanageable, temporary removal from the group is our most effective tool. If a child develops a pattern of unacceptable behavior, the faculty will contact the *SKIESUnlimited* Administrator who will in turn contact the parent/guardian and the CYSS Trainer to schedule a meeting to come up with possible solutions to modify the child's behavior within the existing environment.

The *SKIESUnlimited* Administrator reserves the right, however, to terminate services if a successfully solution is not possible and the child's continued attendance is considered to be a

threat to the child's safety, the safety of others or the child continues to detract from the quality of instruction provided to other children in the class.

Child Abuse/Neglect Identification & Reporting. All SKIES*Unlimited* faculty are trained to recognize signs of child abuse and neglect. CYSS staff is obligated/mandated to report suspected cases of child abuse/neglect. Inappropriate behaviors, suspicious bruises, burns, and/or abrasions are evidence of possible neglect/abuse and will be reported for investigation by the proper authorities. Parent/guardian permission is not required to make these reports. Once reported, investigations are conducted by appropriate installation activities.

The Department of Defense Child Abuse and Safety Violation Hotline telephone number is (800) 336-4592.

Local reporting Point of Contact for Child Abuse and Neglect is the Fort Jackson Military Police at 751-3113/3115.

Child Guidance. If a child develops a pattern of unacceptable behavior, we will contact the parent/guardian in order to work together to modify the behavior within the existing environment. We reserve the right, to terminate services if we cannot successfully resolve the situation and the child's continued attendance is considered to be a threat to the child's safety, the safety of others or continually detracts from the quality of instruction provided to other children enrolled in the class. No refund will be given.

Touch Policy. We recognize the importance of physical contact in the nurturance and positive guidance of children and youth. It is also important to respect personal privacy and personal space of the child/youth.

SKIES*Unlimited* faculty will engage in appropriate and positive touching to include hugs, lap sitting, reassuring touches on the shoulder and nap time back rubs to the child at the child's request.

SKIES*Unlimited* staff working with children over the age of five will engage in appropriate touching to include brief hugs initiated by youth or used in comforting youth, shaking hands and light pats on the shoulder or back.

Our goal is to provide quality care for youth that promotes physical, cognitive, emotional, and social growth. We believe most problems are prevented with a creative, active curriculum in a positive, caring environment. We believe most children come to us wanting to learn and get along with new friends. We strive to give children attention and praise when they behave correctly and to correct in a way that preserves a child's dignity and self-esteem when there is misbehavior.

Transportation. Parents are required to complete a CYSS Sponsor Consent form (DA Form 5222-R) at the time of registration and annually thereafter. This form specifies which routine transportation arrangements parents authorize their child to take part in, such as transportation between child care facilities, to and from school, to and from instructional activities on post.

Family Involvement and Input. The *SKIESUnlimited* offers many opportunities for you, the parent, to become involved in the program. Chaperones are always needed for field trips and certain in-house projects or events. We love sharing authentic cultural celebrations with the children. Please share your heritage with us! It is a learning experience for both the staff and children. Volunteer to teach children a song in your home language, help us do an art project using a theme from your native home, share a favorite recipe or a story about your family traditions.

Are you good at sports, sewing, art, cooking, dancing, music, or do you have a hobby to share? Come share with us! See the *SKIESUnlimited* Administrator for ideas on ways to become involved and enrich the *SKEISUnlimited* program.

Volunteers and Potential Contractors. *SKIESUnlimited* will continue to grow and expand on post and in the local community. If you have a hobby that you would like to share with the Fort Jackson youth, please contact the *SKIESUnlimited* Administrator.

***SKIESUnlimited* Administrator Contact Information.**

Phone: (803) 751-7540 (mornings) or 751-6777 (afternoons)

Fax number: (803) 751- 1442 (ATTN: *SKIESUnlimited* Administrator)

SKIESUnlimited Administrator's e-mail: jeanette.dempsey@conus.army.mil and click on the link "Contact Us" located on the *SKIESUnlimited* website at www.fortjacksonmwr.com/skies.

Concerns. Providing quality programming to *SKIESUnlimited* customers is essential to the success of the *SKIESUnlimited* program. Please contact the *SKIESUnlimited* Administrator if you have any questions, concerns or comments regarding the program at (803) 751-6777 or email. You can also submit an Interactive Evaluation Comment (ICE) online at http://utindpa3.okc.disa.mil/index.cfm?fa=card&service_provider_id=119071&site_id=147&service_category_id=6.