

# *Program Name*

## Parent and Program Handbook

*"When I approach a child he inspires  
in me two sentiments:  
tenderness for what he is,  
and respect for what he may become."  
– Louis Pasteur*



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Dear Parent(s),

Welcome to the (PROGRAM NAME). We are delighted that you have chosen our center to provide care for your child and are looking forward to getting to know you and your child better.

We believe that learning and growing for the young child should be a fun experience. Playing is, after all, a child's "work"; so we do everything within our power to create a safe and secure environment in which your child can enjoy learning and developing.

We consider the communication between your family and our staff a vital part of our program that will benefit you and your child. We have developed this handbook to serve as a general guide. We hope it will answer most of your questions and help you in understanding our operational procedures. Please feel free to discuss any other questions or concerns you have with our staff.

The environment and program of (PROGRAM NAME) has been carefully planned to be what you would want for your child...a comfortable, caring environment where children can play, learn, develop and grow safely and happily. Welcome to our family!

Sincerely,

Director

(XXX) XXX-XXXX

[email@emailaddress.com](mailto:email@emailaddress.com)

## Philosophy and Curriculum

Teachers at PROGRAM NAME seek to be in tune to each child's cues and attentive to their needs. Activities are planned to engage the child's interest. Tone of voice is an important consideration in our approach to working with young children. Our classroom environments are set up to be developmentally appropriate for all children that we serve. Our equipment is child friendly and promotes learning through play. We use many sensory activities throughout the day, including child-directed art activities. These activities provide learning approaches aimed at the child's needs. Play is a vital part of your child's day. Play activities influence your child's total growth, including: physical, mental, cognitive, emotional and social development. For children, play is their work. It gives them a sense of accomplishment and purpose. Children's play is an activity; it does not necessarily result in a product. It may be built around toys and tools or it may involve nothing more than the child's imagination.

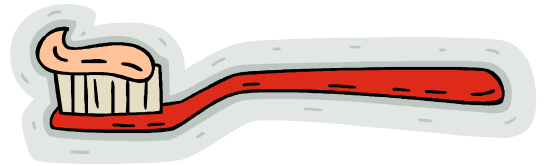


### Our constructive approaches to learning are:

1. The expectation of the child is age appropriate and at their developmental level.
2. Staff recognize that all children are not the same and they implement/adopt learning styles appropriate for each child.
3. Staff use specific age appropriate directions and often use language expansion or sign when giving directions.
4. Staff use encouraging, positive statements.
5. Staff are role models and teach social interactions, manners, etiquette, cleanliness, health, and safety.
6. Staff are consistent in their responses and give the children clear expectations.
7. Staff give children time to talk and listen.
8. Staff attempt to understand the child's feelings and home environment.
9. Staff encourage independence and exploration while maintaining appropriate classroom structure & routine.

### THINGS YOUR CHILD WILL NEED IN THE CENTER BASED PROGRAM:

1. Diapers (if not potty trained) Some parents prefer to send in a package of diapers; some send them daily with their child.
2. Wet Wipes for diapering (if your child is not potty trained)
3. Backpack / tote bag with your **child's name written on it**
4. Change of Clothing appropriate for the season with your **child's name on the tags**
5. Tube of children's toothpaste (We provide the toothbrush)
6. Fitted crib sheet and blanket for nap time (this will be sent home each week for laundering).
7. You may provide a "love-y" if your child needs one to assist with falling asleep (teddy bear, etc...)



PLEASE LABEL ALL OF YOUR CHILD'S BELONGINGS

### **Daily Schedule**

Your child's classroom teacher prepares structured daily lesson plans that address all aspects of children's development. Teachers email this to parents each week and post them inside the classroom so you can stay in touch with the weekly curriculum. Additionally, teachers send home either weekly or monthly newsletters so you are aware of program details. Each day, children will engage in structured plans that address each area of their development: Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Cognitive, Social/ Emotional, Adaptive/ Self-Help, Communication, Language, Art, Music, and more!

### **Arrival and Departure**

Children may be dropped off between 7:00 and 9:00 in the morning. **If your child will be arriving AFTER 9:00, please call the office to let us know that your child will be late, and whether or not to include your child in the lunch count.** Otherwise, we may not have enough lunch for your child. Our classroom teachers work very hard to implement structure and routine for your children and as you can imagine, when children arrive late, the classroom routine is disrupted. Additionally, because our program builds on skills learned, if your child is consistently arriving late they may miss important and valuable classroom instruction or activities. Attendance is not required, but in order for your child to benefit from our program, regular and prompt attendance is necessary. **Please notify the office when your child will not be attending whether due to illness or other family matter.**

Prompt pickup at the time you selected at enrollment is important. Staffing is based on the number of children we expect to have.

When transporting your child, there is a reserved parking area for drop-off/ pick-up around the back of the building. Parking is somewhat limited but feel free to park in any of the open parking spaces.

We ask that parents please ***DO NOT send your child with food, drink or toys.*** Children on special diets are allowed to carry their snack in their backpack. Because our classrooms are well equipped and the program is structured with instructional, interactive, and fun activities for children of all abilities to engage in, we ask that children leave all toys at home. These become a problem when they get lost or broken or when other children want to play with them.

**Attendance:** It is important that your child arrives on time and attends every day that they are scheduled. Attendance is not required, but in order for your child to benefit from the services and instruction we offer, regular and prompt attendance is beneficial. Children respond well to the daily structure and routine and this expectancy allows them to perform at their optimal level. If there is an interruption in the child's daily schedule, they may have a difficult time responding to the daily activities and routines that are provided in the Center Based classrooms. **Please make sure that your child receives a good night's sleep before attending preschool.** Children that are tired do not respond well to our daily activities and routines and do not receive the benefit from the instruction provided.

**Drop-off and Pick-up:** The person dropping your child off in the morning is required to sign the child in. Each class has a notebook that has a page for each child. The person who picks up the child at the end of the day must sign the child out. Children will only be released to their parents/ guardians and other people designated by the parents on the child's application. Please inform the teachers or the director if a new person should be added to that list. Teachers will ask to see a Driver's license of anyone they do not know before releasing the child.

**Release of children to anyone whose behavior may place the children at immediate risk:** If the parent or guardian picking up the child demonstrates behavior that is of concern (appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, exhibits threatening behavior or does not have a car seat in their vehicle), staff must try to

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talk to the parent about making other arrangements, but may not refuse to release the child to his parent or legal guardian. They must inform the person that they will immediately call the police because the child is at risk. If the person with questionable behavior is NOT the parent or guardian, staff must immediately call the police and notify the parent of the concern.

**Transitions to New Classes:** As your child grows and matures he or she will transition from one classroom to another. We strive to make these transitions as stress-free as possible for both you and your child. You will be notified in advance if your child will be transitioning to another room. Both classrooms work together to devise a visitation schedule for your child so that they will not be a stranger when they officially move. You will also receive an information packet from the new teacher in advance of the transition.

**Inclement Weather Policy:** PROGRAM NAME follows the LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM schedule for all weather related closures and delays. However, if they are closed and we feel that it is safe to be open, we may open, so be sure to check the news. We post all closures to NAME OF RADIO/ TV/ WEBSITE

**Snack Time:** Parents take turns providing daily snacks for their child's class. Classroom teachers put sign-up lists in their classrooms. If your **child is on a special diet or has any dietary limitations, please let staff know PRIOR TO ENROLLMENT.**

**Reports/ Parent Notes:** Please check your child's backpack *DAILY!* Daily Reports, Incident Reports, art work and other information will be sent home daily.

**Proper Dress:** Children attending the program should dress appropriately, wearing comfortable, casual clothing they can freely play in. Following the belief that children learn best through active involved play, our teachers plan instructional, play based learning activities using a variety of materials. In addition, we have outdoor play and gross motor play that requires free movement and may involve sand and water play. Please be sure your child is dressed appropriately for the season. We will plan to have some outside time every day, weather permitting. **Flip flops, sandals, and cowboy boots should not be worn. Slip on shoes, tie shoes and Velcro shoes with socks are encouraged.** Please also be sure your child has a change of clothing appropriate for the season in the classroom.

**Discipline:** PROGRAM NAME staff use guidance and positive behavior management/ reinforcement techniques in the classroom. Positive discipline will help your child to manage inappropriate behavior while learning correct responses. The program has a "NO TOUCH" policy. Staff should never use any form of corporal punishment or belittlement with any child. Strict measures will be taken against any staff member found to be using harsh, extreme, or physical methods of punishment. Time out may be an appropriate solution, but it will only be used as a last resort and for a very limited time. When time out is implemented, it will be no longer than one minute for each year of age or developmental level of your child. The staff will explain to the child in terms they can understand why time-out is being used and that the behavior is unacceptable. They will also explain that there are consequences for unacceptable behavior. Our teachers are reminded to maintain a loving tone of voice and to be thoughtful of what each interaction communicates to the child.

**Behavior Plan:** If we find that a child continues to display inappropriate behavior we will, with your help and input, implement a *behavior plan*. A meeting may be required to prepare the plan together, and recommendations for referrals to behavior specialist may be a result of the plan. To ensure the effectiveness of the behavior plan, it should also be implemented in your home.

### **Biting**

Biting occurs in most group settings involving children. While we as educators make every effort to prevent this from happening to your child it is possible that your child will bite or be bitten while in our care. You will always be informed should this occur, whether your child is the victim or perpetrator. Wounds will always be washed with soap and water and if severe the child will be seen by an agency nurse.

### **Illness and Medication**

If your child is ill or has a temporary condition (such as recent surgery) for which he/she does not appear to function well throughout the day (is fussy, irritable, cannot participate and/or is in pain), we request that he/she remain at home for the duration of his/her illness or recovery. If your child has had surgery, they will need a release from the doctor to **return back to school** and provide a **list of limitations**, if any.

### **CONDITIONS THAT REQUIRE TEMPORARY EXCLUSIONS**

- Illness or extreme tiredness which prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities as determined by this program
- Illness resulting in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
- Child appears severely ill
- 100 **degrees** F temperature or higher, taken under the armpit **and behavior changes or symptoms such as sore throat, rash, vomiting, or diarrhea**
- Increased diarrhea (more than two instances) not associated with change in diet, blood in stools
- Vomiting in the previous 24 hours
- Abdominal pain that continues for more than 2 hours
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Rash with fever and behavioral changes
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow mucus drainage, matted eyelids
- Tuberculosis
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment
- STREP until 24 hours after treatment
- Head lice until after two treatments and no lice or nits present
- Scabies until treatment has begun

**Please do not give your child medication to lower their fever and then send them to school. Their fever will come back before the school day is over and they are still contagious.**

**If your child has run a temperature, they must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to the center, OR have a doctor's note.**

### **CONDITIONS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE EXCLUSION**

- colds, runny noses (regardless of color or consistency of discharge) and coughs
- Fever without any signs or symptom of illness in children who are older than four months. Fever is defined as a temperature above 101 **degrees** F when taken orally or 100 **degrees** F or higher when taken under the armpit.
- Watery eye discharge without fever, eye pain, or eyelid redness
- Yellow or white drainage that is not associated with pink eye
- Rash without fever and behavioral changes
- Ringworm (may delay treatment until the end of the day, but **MUST** be kept covered while in care)
- Thrush

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- Fifth Disease (unless child has immune problems)
- Cytomegalovirus infection
- Children with chronic infectious conditions that can be accommodated according to legal requirements (ADA)

### Maintaining a Safe, Healthy Environment

1. All children must have a current health and immunization record on file at our office in order to attend. Records must be current and children must continue to have annual physicals.
2. Children must have at least one phone number in our records for emergencies. Addresses, phone numbers, and guardianship status must be updated in the event of any changes.
3. *STAFF ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REPORT ALL SUSPECTED CASES OF ABUSE/NEGLECT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES.*

Each day your child attends, teachers will make a quick check of your child's physical appearance. If your child had an accident overnight or over the weekend and they have bumps and bruises, or they ran a fever or they had a bad night or weekend, please report this to your child's teacher.

During warmer months, parents are encouraged to provide Sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection of at least SPF 15 or higher. Parents should also provide a written request for sunscreen (forms are available in the office) to be applied and the container should be clearly labeled with their child's name.

PROGRAM NAME takes priority in maintaining a safe and healthy environment. Each staff member is certified in Adult/Child/Infant CPR and First Aid. In addition, comprehensive training is required for all staff in the areas of fire safety, severe weather safety, national alert safety, and blood borne pathogens/infectious and contagious disease control. Monthly fire drills are performed and severe weather drills are practiced once a year. Smoke alarms and emergency lights are checked monthly. Washing hands is an important part of our routine. All children are required to wash their hands upon arrival, before meals, after meals, after outdoor play, and after diapering or potty use. Children are not allowed to walk around in the classroom with food, drink, Sippy cups, or bottles. The use of pacifiers is discouraged.

Staff wash and sanitize toys and all surfaces daily. Dishes are washed in the kitchen following Department of Health guidelines. Each classroom is professionally cleaned each night to prevent the spread of germs and to provide a healthy safe environment for your child. All potentially infectious or contagious diseases that may be an epidemic are reported to the County Health Department and parents are notified. Poison Control numbers are posted and 911 is used in the event of an emergency.

Children's emergency contact numbers are kept readily available in the classrooms and central preschool office. Parents will be notified immediately should an accident occur and an incident report is also completed should an incident occur involving a child. All information involving accidents or incidents is kept confidential.

### Confidentiality and HIPPA/ FERPA

All children's records are maintained in accordance with HIPPA and FERPA regulations and are destroyed after one year from the date the child withdraws from the program.

### **Family Centered Approach**

PROGRAM NAME offers a “family centered” approach to services, meaning the



family is viewed as "the expert" on their child's and family's needs. Families are active participants in all aspects of services and are the ultimate decision makers. PROGRAM NAME's role as professionals is to work together collaboratively with parents/legal guardians to enhance the strengths of the family and to support the child. In order to understand the “Family Centered” approach to services, it is necessary to define what strengths and needs are. All families have strengths that can be simply defined as abilities (things we know), capabilities (things we can do), and values (things that have significant meaning/worth). Strengths are what we use to get needs met. Needs are defined as something that is desired or lacking, but wanted or required in order to achieve a goal or outcome. Having needs is not perceived as a deficiency or weakness. It is being aware that something should or could be different or knowing that there are resources that are available. With that, families truly are the expert in knowing what their strengths and needs are. We hope we can provide assistance to help locate resources that can assist families with their identified needs. If your child needs services that we do not have readily available, we will try to help you find these services. Simply stated, our goal is to help you meet the needs of your family.

We recognize and welcome the diverse community and world in which we live. In efforts to include all families who are served by our program, below, are some of the ways PROGRAM NAME supports English language learners:

- Inviting families to come in to the program to share elements of their culture with the children and staff
- Preparing peers prior to enrollment with discussions about the new child and family enrolling and providing opportunities for the children to learn a few key words of the child’s native language
- Using the classroom visual schedule paired with the English word for activities and routines
- Utilizing peers to help promote assimilation into the program
- Sharing with families some of the English songs that are sung in the classroom so they can participate with their child in their home routine singing their child’s favorite English songs
- Encouraging the English language learner to share their culture with the staff and children (e.g. counting to 5 or 10 in English and allowing the child to count to 5 or 10 in their home language)

### **Staffing, Continued Training, and Enrichment**

Training is an on-going requirement of our staff. **We regularly attend trainings and seminars on topics specifically relating to the field of early childhood education and special needs and may, occasionally, close the Center Based program so we can attend such trainings.** Weekly lesson plans are submitted to the director for review to ensure the appropriateness of all planned activities. Each child will receive a developmental profile every year using the E-LAP (Early Learning Accomplishment Profile) for children from 1-3 years and the LAP-D for children from 4-5 years. The first assessment will be conducted after 45 days of enrollment to ensure the child has had time to settle into a routine and become familiar with program staff. It is our programs goal for all staff to work together as a team and be accommodating to the needs of you and your child.

PROGRAM NAME is comprised of a Director, classroom teachers, assistant teachers, and afternoon staff. All staff are trained and experienced to work directly with your child in the classroom. Each staff person has a complete background check prior to employment including fingerprint, criminal, and sex offender’s registries. New hire orientation, and extensive training sessions to prepare them for their position in the program are also provided. Please see your child's teachers profile for more information.



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**Director:** Oversees all aspects of the Center Based program.

**Classroom Teachers:** Develop and implement classroom programs and curriculum. Document progress and are responsible for the day to day functioning of the preschool classrooms.

**Assistant Teachers:** Assist the teacher in the daily functions of the preschool classroom.

**Afternoon staff:** Work in all classrooms assisting with nap, snack prep, and late day supervision.

**Staff changes:** When a teacher resigns her position or is moved to another class, we try to make the transition as smooth as possible for the children. Parents will be informed of any staffing changes before they take place. The new teacher visits the class while the teacher who is leaving is still there, and every attempt will be made to keep schedule changes to a minimum.

### **Open Door Policy**

Our program has an open door policy. Parents are always welcome to visit and volunteer in their child's classroom. Some of our classrooms are equipped with two-way mirrors and we invite parents to come and observe their child in the classroom.

**NOTE:** PROGRAM NAME respects the rights of EVERY family and child enrolled. Whether observing, volunteering, or visiting your child's classroom, you will also observe other children as well as program staff. Should there be any concern or questions that you have regarding the care or socialization that your child receives while attending, PLEASE DIRECT ANY CONCERNS TO THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR, rather than in conversations with other parents, staff, or in the community. We cannot discuss other children with you.

### **Tuition Policies**

A \$50.00 enrollment fee is due on or before the child's first day of attendance. This fee is non-refundable. A reduced enrollment fee of \$25.00 is extended to families receiving financial assistance through the child care subsidy program.

Tuition, fees, and conditions are subject to change. Written notice of a change in tuition or fees will be provided by PROGRAM NAME at least 30 days before any change will take effect.

Payments for each month are due by 5:00 p.m. on or before the 5<sup>th</sup> of that month.

Delinquent accounts: Payments are due in full by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Any account that is two weeks past due may be subject to a charge of \$10.00 for each week that the account is delinquent. If tuition is not paid by the end of the month, the child may be dismissed from the program, and her/his space will be forfeited. A child dismissed from the program for non-payment will be "wait-listed" and allowed to return to the program only after all account balances and all late fees have been paid in full and space is available.

Methods of payment accepted: Checks, money orders, or cash. Payment with credit cards or PayPal is available through our website. Checks and money orders should be made out to PROGRAM NAME. Cash payments need to be for the exact amount (change will not be given; if change is due, it will be applied as a credit to the next month's tuition). Returned checks are subject to a returned check fee in the amount of the fee charged by the bank. Two returned checks may result in the account being termed "cash only" and checks will no longer be accepted.

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To pay by credit card or PayPal go to our website, [www.PROGRAMNAME.com](http://www.PROGRAMNAME.com) Under *Children*, click on *Early Learning Center*. Scroll to the bottom of the page, and click on *Buy Now*. You will need to reference your invoice number.

Tuition pays for enrollment, not attendance, so there is no refund, credit, or reduction in tuition costs for absences, vacations, snow days, illnesses, holidays or other instances that a child is not in attendance during her/his regularly scheduled days and times

Two week's notice must be given if a child is to be withdrawn. If notice is not given, families are responsible for the regular tuition for those weeks.

PROGRAM NAME is unable to make changes to tuition invoice statements mid-invoice cycle. If a family wishes to change their child's schedule notice must be given before the end of the month preceding the planned change.

All tuition payments, enrollment fees, delinquent service charges, and returned check fees are the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian entering into this contract with PROGRAM NAME as evidenced by the signature on the next page.

When enrollment allows, it may be possible for parents of children already enrolled in PROGRAM NAME to extend their child's day (due to family emergencies, work schedules, etc...) providing at least 1 day's notice is given. Families may extend their child's day at a "drop in" rate of \$5.00 per hour.

There is a late pick up charge for any child who is not picked up by their designated dismissal time. Out of consideration that things may happen beyond one's control, there will be a five minute grace period; beyond that, for every minute that a child is late being picked (e.g. after 5:05), there will be a \$1.00 per minute fee payable in cash to the staff person who is staying late with the child due on or prior to the next attendance day. The "After Hours" phone line for parents to call after 4:30 p.m. is: (XXX) XXX\_XXXX.