



Brookings School District Preschool Program FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024-2025 School Year

Brookings School District Preschool Program

WELCOME

Dear Family,

Welcome letter from the director.

Thank you for choosing the **Brookings School District Preschool Program**. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

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ABOUT US

Vision

Empowering all learners to embrace and be inspired to realize their potential.

Certification

Licensed Facility

Collaboration with Boys and Girls Club for extended day program.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

Hours of Operation

Preschool hours are from 8:15am to 3:00pm Monday through Friday according to the Brookings School District Calendar.

Child care services are provided from 6am - 8am and 3pm – 6pm Monday through Friday.

Child care services will be provided on non-school days and throughout the summer for an additional fee.

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed, and enrollment fee and first tuition payment paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$100 is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

Based on the availability and openings, our facility admits children from 4 to 5 years of age.

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate based on special needs.

Non-Discrimination/Inclusion

At Brookings School District Preschool Program equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

The Brookings School District Preschool Program believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

Family Activities

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be

involved in the program, visit children’s classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released apart from that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Staff Qualifications

Our preschool staff members are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

Caregivers participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We discourage families from entering employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected with or sanctioned by Brookings School District Preschool Program.

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios:

Age	Child to Staff
4 year-olds	<u>10 to 1</u>
5 year-olds	<u>15 to 1</u>

Communication & Family Partnership

Bulletin Boards. Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Email. We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters, and general updates.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor’s badge while on the premises and sign-out upon leaving.

Family Night. Family nights are scheduled regularly. These nights may include snacks, drinks, and fun-filled age-appropriate activities for families. Family Nights allow families and children time to share, learn, and have fun. Families have an opportunity to be a part of their child’s learning experience and connect with other families.

Conferences. Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences, we will discuss your child’s strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child’s growth and development. You may request additional

conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours.

Open Door Policy does not mean the doors will be unlocked. For the safety and protection of the children, external doors will be kept locked.

Our team will always do their best to speak with parents/guardians. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment.

Publicity

Occasionally, photos will be taken of the children at the center for use within the center or on our website. Written permission will be obtained before using photographs.

Unless the family indicates that they want their child to participate, we will not use pictures and names of children for publicity.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible daily routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: literacy, math, creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Curricula & Assessment

Brookings School District Preschool Program uses the Waterford, Heggerty and **name of other main curriculum purchase**. As part of our curriculum, we gather information about each child's developmental abilities and evaluate progress so we can modify and adjust what we are doing in our classroom to deliver the best instruction for each child. This evaluation is communicated to families periodically during the school year using various formal and informal tools, forms, and resources.

For information about your child's day, please see copies of daily schedules posted in each classroom.

Developmental Screening

Brookings School District Preschool Program uses the Waterford screener to coincide with curriculum-based assessment(s), we monitor each child's achievement of developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as

needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. The developmental screening process is collaborative, involving parents/guardians and done with the child's primary care provider and health, education, and early intervention consultants. Developmental screening is conducted with written consent from the child's parent/guardian(s).

Outings and Field Trips

Weather permitting, we conduct supervised outdoor play and/or walking trips around the neighborhood at time during the day for all children. Children are always accounted for. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package.

Sometimes, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child's family.

For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of child care programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the child care program as well as during field trips.

Transitions

Your child's transition in child care should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

Transition from home to center.

Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. Please share the best communication methods the teacher may use to reach you.

Transition for extended enrichment care.

Children who are in our program may continue with before/after school care at our center through the Boys and Girls Club for an additional fee. The Supplemental Enrollment Form must be completed and on file with the center in order to be eligible for this service.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Celebrations

Our holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for diverse cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff, and community.

Toilet Training

The most crucial factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months (about 2 years)

of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to ensure that toilet learning is done consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Brookings School District Preschool Program is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving helps children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at Brookings School District Preschool Program has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place.
- Be treated with respect.
- Receive the help and support of caring adults.

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent, and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

-
- A child is a danger to others.
 - Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
 - Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

TUITION AND FEES

Important Notice

All payment and fee processing will be completed by our director and business office. They will collect tuition and other fees and contact families about payment issues. If you have a question or concern regarding a payment or fee, please contact the Director of the Center.

Tuition Rates

Full-Time Rate: \$500 per month

Families contract for a specific monthly schedule as indicated on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every month from September to June whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every month throughout the year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather.

Payment

Payment is always made in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due monthly by 8 AM on the first of the month, as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

A non-refundable registration fee of \$100 is due annually upon registration. This fee will not be pro-rated.

Methods of Payment

Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Families can pay by cash, check, money order, automatic electronic funds transfer or credit card. To set up automatic, recurring payments, please contact the director or the business office.

Late Payment Charges

Past due payments can pose serious problems for our program, so the business cannot allow families to accrue a balance equal to more than one week of tuition. Past due payments will result in the imposition of past due payment fees. Failure to pay child care payments will result in child care services being terminated.

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee of \$15 will be added to your next tuition payment for each day that it is late. Repeated past due payments will result in your family being required to set up automatic payments or credit card payments.

Any payments made will be applied to the oldest charges and late fees may still apply if the account is not paid in full by the next tuition due date.

If payment is more than **30 business days** past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be **charged a fee of \$50**. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Repeated late pick up may result in child care services being terminated.

Other Fees

- Breakfast and lunch: Breakfast can be purchased to be eaten between 7:30 and 8:00. Lunch can be purchased to be eaten between 11:15 and 1:00.
- Sometimes there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity, or trip.
- A non-refundable enrollment/ registration fee of \$100 is due annually upon registration.

Credits & No Credits

- Families contract for a specific monthly schedule as completed on the *Enrollment Agreement* Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every month from September to June whether your child attends or not; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every month. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather, infectious disease (except as noted below), or weather-related or environmental issues.
- Credit may be given for Serious Illness/Injury – In the unfortunate event of extenuating circumstances such as your child is hospitalized, absent due to a

serious contagious disease or serious illness or injury, credit may be issued. A written doctor's note is required to receive a credit.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 8am, please call us. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

Vacation

While we recognize the value of family vacations, the center does not provide credit for vacation days.

Withdrawal

A written notice, two weeks in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn.

Transfer of Records

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on local news and radio stations and social media.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

Extended care opens at 6 AM at an additional cost.

Teachers will be available at 8:00am for those not enrolled in extended care. Please do not drop-off your child prior to opening. Parents are expected to accompany their children and sign them in.

The preschool day ends at 3:00pm for those not enrolled in extended day.

Extended care closes at 6pm. Please allow enough time to arrive, sign your child out, and leave by closing time.

Cell Phone Usage

The times you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with you about your child. To make the best use of these opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child and other children, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

In order to safeguard your child, we will need copies of any court ordered custody agreements. Without a custody agreement, we are not able to prevent the release of your child to a parent.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 1 hour we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child, or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

- At least one change of clothes, socks, and shoes.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Any soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby/mailbox." These will be labeled with your child's name and photo. Please check your child's cubby/mailbox daily for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located at the front entrance. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

NUTRITION

Foods Brought from Home

We request that you do not bring food from home into our center.

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family unless it is intended for sharing with all the children.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially wrapped package that was never opened.

Good Lunch Box Suggestions for a Balanced, Nutritional Lunch.	
Bean & cheese dip Tortilla chips/crackers Tropical fruit salad Broccoli Milk	Chicken strips Whole Wheat Roll Orange wedges Broccoli Milk
Cheese quiche Fresh fruit cup Broccoli Milk	Whole Wheat Macaroni & Tuna Salad Green Beans Carrots Milk

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Food prepared for or at school will be properly planned, prepared, and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Meal Time

At mealtime, the children will be served in the school lunchroom. Everyone sits at the same table. Children are encouraged to serve themselves from food lines. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. Monthly menus are posted for viewing by parents/caregivers.

A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

Extended Enrichment Participants

- Before and after school child care participants will be offered a light snack at each session. These snacks are not a meal. If your child will be arriving before 8:00am, arrangements can be made to serve your child breakfast. Otherwise, please make sure your child has had breakfast before arriving at preschool and is supplied with an adequate lunch if required for school.

HEALTH

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every July, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

All caregivers, teachers, and staff must be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received before but must be received no later than 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

Illness

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable, but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spreading harmful diseases to others.
- Fever (100°F or higher under the arm, 101°F or higher in the mouth, 102°F or higher in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.

- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.
- Tuberculosis, until a health professional indicates the child is not infectious.
- Rubella, until 6 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps, until 5 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash.
- Has a physician or other health professional written order that child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours.
- They can participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.
 - If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us with a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care. A list of the children's allergies will be posted in the main area and kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Medications

- (A) Our center does not administer prescription or over-the-counter medication to children.
- (B) All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific written instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure the medication is recorded along with the directions and dispense it as directed.
 - Prescription medications require a note signed by the family and a written order from the child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication

must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.

- Non-prescription medications require written permission and instructions signed by the child's primary care physician. The written permission must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and all medications must be in the original container. Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.
- (C) Non-prescription topical ointments (e.g., diaper cream or teething gel), sunscreen and insect repellent require a note signed by the family, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered as well as the length of time the authorization is valid which cannot exceed 12 months.

Communicable Diseases

When an enrolled child or an employee of the center has a (suspected) reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- COVID-19
- Diphtheria
- Hemophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness
- Tuberculosis

SAFETY

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 100°F or less than 0°F degrees.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions will be taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver if your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, so the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are always non-smoking areas. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances must leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, can inflict bodily harm. Families, children, staff, or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called, and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may investigate. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within 15 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with alarms, lights and sprinkler systems.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed quarterly with the children and staff.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for your acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I received the Early Childhood Education Program Family Handbook and reviewed it with a member of the Early Childhood Education Program staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the Early Childhood Education Program Family Handbook that I do not understand.

Recipient Signature

Date

Center Staff Signature

Date

