

# LITTLE LEARNERS PARENT HANDBOOK



Updated August 2016

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## **PURPOSE AND PROGRAM GOALS**

All programs are designed to meet the individual needs of each student. This includes a social, as well as academic environment. The Tuesday/Thursday preschool program provides a variety of activities to encourage positive and appropriate peer interaction.

Also included in the curriculum, are opportunities for academic growth in upper and lower case letter identification, numeral identification, number quantities, colors, shapes, and self-help skills. The



Monday/Wednesday/Friday preschool curriculum also provides opportunities for peer interaction along with phonics, pre-reading, writing, numerical concepts, science, geography, music, and kindergarten readiness. Each child care program provides a relaxed learning environment filled with many enrichment activities, using primarily High Reach Curriculum.

Every program includes a daily Bible emphasis.

It is our goal to provide quality childcare and academic excellence in a Christian environment.

## **FACULTY**

All teachers and assistants meet the licensing requirements established by the Department of Human Services, State of Iowa. Every staff member completes an orientation program and participates in ongoing continuing education while employed. Each staff member is also certified in CPR/First Aid/Universal Precautions.

## **LICENSING**

The center is licensed by the Department of Human Services, State of Iowa and this license is displayed in the center foyer. The licensing procedure requires a bi-annual on-site, unannounced inspection of the facility, programs, files and faculty by state officials. On our non licensing year, DHS officials make an unannounced visit to randomly check files and do a walk through of the building. A copy of Form SS-0711, Childcare Centers and Preschools Licensing Standards and Procedures is available for your review upon request.

## ADMISSION POLICY

1. Children, who are three or four years of age by September 15, may enroll in the appropriate preschool class. It is desired that all children be toilet trained prior to the start of the preschool year. Childcare is available for infants through school age children. Before and after school care is also available for school age children.
2. Students will be accepted into preschool programs based on the date that the application and registration fee are received and according to classroom capacity. Applications for preschool will be accepted beginning in January of the year prior to September start date. Applications for childcare will be accepted anytime during the year.
3. There is a **non-refundable registration and materials fee**, which is to accompany the application form.
4. It is our desire that each student has the best possible educational opportunity. We therefore, reserve the right to deny admission to a student whose needs we are unable or unequipped to meet.

***Once a student has been accepted into a program, the following forms are required by law and must be on file the first day of attendance. Failure to comply will result in forfeiture of your child's class placement.***

1. A physical exam, signed by a physician, is required of all new students. Returning students need a completed child medical update form.
2. An **original** signed and dated certificate of immunization card is required to be on file.
3. A parental emergency medical consent form, pick up and travel/activity authorization and picture and audio release form are required for each student. Forms **must** have the complete address (i.e.: building number, street name and number). On the parental emergency medical consent form, **two** emergency contacts are required.

The center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its education policies, admission policies, or other center-administered programs.



## **DISCHARGE POLICY**

Center programs may not be appropriate for every child. Both the center and/or parents may request that a child withdrawal from class if it is found that the child may benefit from attending another program. Students may be discharged from Little Learners and some of the possible reasons for dismissal are:

- Excessive biting – please see biting policy.
- Continued aggressive behavior or abusive language
- Willful destruction of school property
- Any behavior that is harmful to themselves, teachers or other students

Before any child is discharged, a conference will be held with parents and together with the teacher; every effort will be made to resolve the problem before the student is dismissed. Parental input for specific ideas on dealing with certain behaviors will be sought and employed before a child is dismissed.

## **BITING POLICY**

Biting is a recurring issue in early childhood and most biting is a result of a child's need. Often knowing the reason behind the biting helps to define what to do about the behavior. Children may bite because they are:

- teething
- hungry
- imitating
- exploring
- frustrated
- asserting control
- unable to communicate verbally
- impulsive

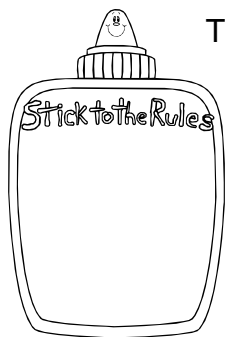
The center attempts to be proactive in preventing biting before it occurs by providing a developmentally appropriate environment that includes a schedule of activities and routines. This helps caregivers anticipate behaviors that are likely to occur so that they can redirect. Caregivers will also assess the context in which biting is occurring and look for patterns. Assessment will involve:

1. Was the space too crowded?
2. Were there too few toys?
3. Was there too little to do?
4. Was there too much waiting time?
5. Is the biting child getting enough attention at other times, other than when he/she is biting?

When a biting incident occurs, the child that was bitten will be immediately cared for. The affected area will be cleaned thoroughly and ice applied. The child that did the biting will be removed from the situation and taught in a caring but firm way that the behavior is not acceptable. Caregivers will talk with the biting child about strategies that can be used instead of biting. An incident report will be completed for the child that was bitten and a copy will be retained at the school. If the skin was broken, an incident report will also be completed for the child that did the biting.

## **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

Positive discipline techniques are used by all teachers and care givers. Corporal or physical punishment is forbidden; behavioral limits that are developmentally age appropriate are consistently employed.



The center uses a modified version of the 1-2-3 Magic behavior management program. This program involves three steps, which the child can easily understand. Steps one and two are verbal warnings given by the adult stating that the child is misbehaving. The adult clarifies what the expected behavior is after each of these warnings. Step three is time-out. Children will be placed in an area away from other students or adults, but always within view. Time out is very effective in both stopping an undesirable behavior from continuing and allowing the child some time to refocus on other activities.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

The center will be open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. A \$15.00 late pick-up fee will be charged for each 15 minutes or portion thereof beyond the designated closing time of 6:00 p.m.; however we ask that all children be picked up by 5:30 p.m. in order to allow our teachers to begin daily classroom cleaning.

Preschool students will attend either a two or three half-day program per week. The schedule is as follows:

MWF 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. (Four & Five-year-olds)  
T-TH 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. (Three-year-olds)

Childcare is available Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. The childcare center will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

When one of the preceding holidays falls on a Saturday, the childcare center will be closed on the Friday prior to the holiday. When one of the preceding holidays falls on a Sunday, the childcare center will be closed on the Monday following the holiday. Little Learners offers a limited number of part-time child care spaces. This is determined by current full-time enrollment and our ability to staff classrooms appropriately within ratio.

## FEES

### **Registration for Childcare**

There is a one time registration fee due at the time application is made and is non-refundable. Please see tuition sheet for specific fee information.

### **Tuition**

Preschool tuition is due the first Friday of every month. Full payment for the current week of childcare is due on or before 5:30 p.m., Friday of the current week. Your account will incur a \$25.00 late payment fee if payment is received after the due date and service will be terminated at the end of the week unless the account is paid in full.

***Unless due to illness on the tuition due date, which has been reported to the school office on the day of absence, there will be no waiving of late payment fees.*** Rate changes as a result of a birthday will take effect on the Monday following the birthday. For a comprehensive list of payment policies, please see our current tuition sheet.

### **Materials/Registration**

This is a one time yearly fee, for T-TH, MWF Preschool and summer school age students. This covers a variety of expenses including snacks, special projects, field trips, etc.

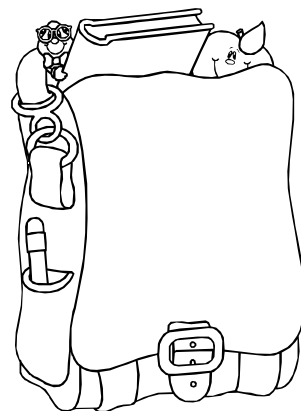
### **Returned checks**

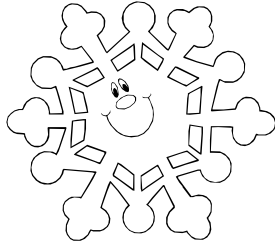
A \$30.00 fee will be charged for any returned check. The center reserves the right to refuse payment by check.

### **Withdrawal**

Two weeks written notice of withdrawal from any program is required. All outstanding tuition will be collected at the time of withdrawal.

All fees will be evaluated annually and proposed rate increases will go into effect in June of each year. The center reserves the right to increase tuition at any time, but will give parents notice of impending increase. Preschool tuition will be collected for nine months beginning in September and concluding in May.





## **CANCELLATIONS FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Little Learners preschool programs follow the Linn-Mar school district when deciding whether to close due to inclement weather. ***Morning preschool classes are canceled when Linn-Mar has a late arrival or closes due to inclement weather. This policy is for the preschool programs only.***

Every attempt is made to keep the childcare portion of Little Learners open. There may however, be circumstances which prove to put the children and/or staff in danger and therefore the entire center will be closed. ***Announcement of cancellation of Little Learners child care is made on television station KCRG channel 9.*** If we find it necessary to cancel after children have already arrived, one parent of each child that has been signed in will be notified by phone and/or by email to come pick their child up as soon as possible.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS/SECURITY MEASURES/SAFETY POLICIES**

It is required that fire drills be practiced monthly. Procedures for fire drills are written and posted at each exit and will be carefully outlined by the teacher to all students.

It is also required that tornado or take shelter drills be practiced monthly. The teacher will carefully explain the tornado drill procedure to all students and a drill will follow. Procedures for tornado drills are written and posted at each exit.

### **Earthquake or Structural Damage**

In the event of earthquake or structural damage, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Children will be calmly gathered together.
2. Children will take cover under tables or desks near interior walls away from glass.
3. The director will make any necessary phone calls to alert parents.

### **Building Evacuation**

In the event that evacuation from the building because of flood, blizzard, power failure, bomb threat or chemical spill is necessary, the following procedure will be followed:

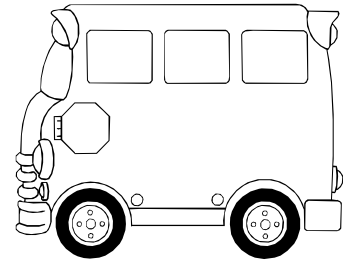
1. Children will be prepared for departure and gathered together in the foyer.
2. All necessary items will be gathered. Emergency consents, class lists, first aid kits, children's medication, infant food and formula, snack food, water and any additional equipment necessary.
3. Children will be placed in evacuation vehicles and seat belted. Infant seats will be used if available.
4. If time allows and there is staff available, parents will be notified of the evacuation by phone.
5. Children will be evacuated to Community Savings Bank (101 Robins Square Court, Robins).



## Area Evacuation

In the event that evacuation from the Robins area because of nuclear or other disaster is necessary, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Children will be prepared for departure and gathered together in the foyer.
2. All necessary items will be gathered. Emergency consents, class lists, first aid kits, children's medication, infant food and formula, snack food, water and any additional equipment necessary.
3. Children will be placed in evacuation vehicles and seat belted. Infant seats will be used if available.
4. If time allows and there is staff available, parents will be notified of the evacuation by phone.
5. Children will be evacuated to SE Jr High Iowa City (2501 Bradford Drive • Iowa City, IA 52240). (Evacuate via I-380 south to US 218 to Iowa City **OR** US 151B (1<sup>st</sup> Avenue) west to I-380, south to US 218 to Iowa City **OR** US 151/Iowa 13 south to US 30/151, west to I-380, south to US 218 to Iowa City.



## Emergency Medical Procedure

In the event of accident or injury the following procedure will be followed:

1. If necessary, call 911.
2. If emergency medical or dental care is needed, the child's parent or guardian will be notified immediately. Emergency phone numbers for each child are located next to the phone at the front reception area.
3. The emergency medical/dental consent form will be retrieved from the child's file and will accompany the child.
4. A staff member will accompany the child to the medical facility.
5. At least one staff member will always remain with the child needing medical care.
6. All staff will be instructed as to special medical requirements of individual students.
7. For minor medical emergencies there is a first aid kit located in the reception area and each classroom. The staff member who witnesses the incident will complete an incident report form. Whenever there is an injury to the child's head, parents will be called and briefed about the incident.
8. Medication Dispensing—All prescription and non-prescription medication will be dispensed by the center director or his/her designee. The parent or guardian must complete a medication release form before any medication is given.

## Procedure for Infectious Disease Control

All Little Learners employees are responsible for knowing the exposure plan, and are required to attend an annual universal precautions class. The following methods will be used to care for contaminated or potentially infectious items.

- A. Contaminated sharp objects such as broken glass must be placed in a clearly labeled, puncture-resistant, leak proof container. A dustpan and brush is used to clean up broken glass—never use your hands.

- B. To clean blood or other infectious material from a floor or other surface, employees will first put on gloves and wipe the spill with a paper towel, disposing of the towel in a biohazard labeled bag. The area will be disinfected with a bleach and water solution. Followed by hand washing.
- C. Gloves will be worn when preparing breast milk for infant feeding. All leftover milk will be disposed of in the sink and plastic bottle liners will be placed in a biohazard labeled bag.
- D. Disposable gloves are required during diaper, pull-up and/or clothing changes because of toileting accidents
- E. Soiled clothes will be placed in a sealable plastic bag and given to parents to care for. This bag will be clearly labeled with the child's name and content.
- F. Regulated waste container (those containing items contaminated with blood or other infectious materials) is required to be labeled with biohazard labels, which are clearly visible. These containers will be picked up by the hazardous waste management center.

### **Missing Child**

If it is determined that a child is missing, the director will be notified immediately. If necessary, children will be moved together to allow additional staff to search for the missing child, both inside and outside of the building. If the child is not located immediately, 911 will be called, and the child's parent or guardian will be notified.

### **Center/Property Intruder**

All Little Learners employees must be alert to unrecognized persons entering the center building or premises. If an unauthorized person is determined to be present the following steps will be taken:

1. Gather children and take them to individual classrooms.
2. Alert the director or his/her designee. Staff will be notified using the intercom system.
3. The director will gather information and determine the reason for being on site.
4. If reasons are not legitimate, the individual will be asked to leave.
5. If necessary, 911 will be called.

### **Parental Intoxication Emergency Steps**

If a parent arrives to pick up a child and is obviously intoxicated or under the influence of any substance that impairs their ability to safely take their child from the center, the following steps will be taken:

1. Alert the director or his/her designee.
2. Do not leave the child alone with the parents.
3. Ask the parent to allow you to call the spouse or other designated authorized pick up person.
4. If the parent refuses or becomes threatening:
  - a. Call 911. Give as much information as possible—vehicle description, license number, parent's name and description.

- b. The director will take steps to prevent the parent from putting the child in the vehicle.
- c. The director will contact the Department of Human Services to inform them of probable child endangerment.

### **UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS POLICY**

Little Learners has an open door policy with regard to all parents who have children enrolled in one of our programs; this allows you access to your child at any time. However, in cases of parental custody matters, the center's open door policy applies only to the custodial parent.

Any volunteers, substitutes or persons who may enter the facility, must first check in at the front reception desk. Once they have clearance, they may proceed to appropriate classrooms. Clearance includes verification of identity by photo id.

Any adult that may be counted in ratio, or be charged with the care, supervision and or guidance of a child (supervision) will be required to complete the formal records check process. This includes a state and national criminal records check. Any adult that will not be counted in ratio, or be charged with the care, supervision and or guidance of a child (monitoring) while in the building will be under the direct supervision of individual classroom lead teachers, or his/her designee. In the event there is a conflict of interest regarding direct supervision, the director will fulfill this responsibility.

Any persons who are listed on the sex offender registry shall only have access, with written permission from the director, relating to their own minor child coming to and or leaving the facility. They will only be allowed to enter the building under the direct supervision of the director, or her designee, for the purpose of dropping off or picking up their child. They will be allowed to remain at the center only for the time reasonably necessary to drop off/or pick up their own minor child. At no time will this person be unsupervised while on the premises.

### **ATTENDANCE**

At the front reception area, parents of childcare students (toddler age and older), will complete a sign in/out sheet daily. Infant children will sign in/out in the classroom. This will include the time each child arrives and departs from the center. It will also document who picked the child up and be used to calculate your weekly statement. Classroom teachers will record attendance daily. Children enrolled in preschool programs are not required to sign in/out daily.

## **PRESCHOOL FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are included in the curriculum for children enrolled in the T-TH and MWF preschool programs to further develop a particular area of study and to provide a fun time of socialization together.

A travel and activity release form must be completed and on file to allow your child to accompany us on any off site trips. You will be notified in advance of each field trip in writing. Children are responsible to the classroom teacher and any chaperoning adults while on field trips.

For all off site trips, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Parents will be notified in writing by way of the newsletter of upcoming field trips. Driver sign up is in the preschool classroom. It is a DHS requirement that drivers sign a release verifying a valid driver's license, full coverage insurance and no convictions, as well as completion of a criminal records check form.
2. All children must be in a child booster seat with seat belt fastened.
3. A clearly labeled first aid kit will be taken along on all center sponsored field trips.
4. Emergency medical/dental consent forms for each child will be taken on all field trips.



## **ILLNESS OR INJURY**

Parents are asked to consider the other children and are encouraged to keep children home when they are ill. When it is necessary for your child to be absent for any reason, please call the center. We have no nurse on staff, so only emergency first aid can be administered. Children who are ill should not remain at school because of the risk of exposure to other students. The center will notify parents to pick up their child when he/she becomes ill.

1. Every effort will be made to make the ill child comfortable until the parent arrives.
2. All prescribed medication and over the counter medication, including aspirin, to be taken by the child during the day, must have a Medication Permission Slip on file and must be sent in the original container. Center personnel will dispense medication.
3. For your child to experience the greatest benefit from classroom activities, adequate rest is a must. If your child is up late at night for special reasons, it may be to his/her advantage to stay home from school the following day.
4. In the event of accident or injury, every effort will be made to notify parents. If emergency care is deemed necessary, your child will be taken for treatment in accordance with the emergency medical/dental consent form.

5. Children should not be brought to the center, if during the previous 24 hours; they have exhibited any of the following symptoms.
  - A. Temperature of 100 degrees or more
  - B. Vomiting or diarrhea
  - C. Unusual or unexplained rash
  - D. Unusual or severe coughing
  - E. Extreme tiredness or irritability of unexplained nature
6. In the event your child is diagnosed as having a communicable disease, other than a cold, a notice will be posted in the center to alert all parents of exposure. Students should not return to the center until his/her doctor gives permission.
7. Please alert school personnel to any allergies your child may have. This helps us to take appropriate measures in preparing meals and snacks.
8. First aid kits are located in each classroom.



## IMMUNIZATIONS

The following table shows immunizations required for children in childcare centers and schools:

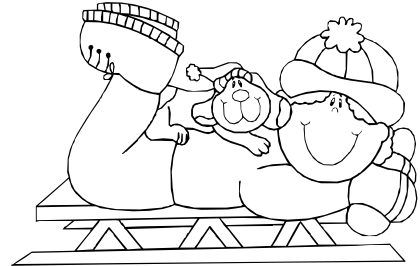
<b>LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER</b>	
<b>2 through 5 Months</b>	
Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis	1 dose
Polio	1 dose
Hib	1 dose
<b>6 through 14 Months</b>	
Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis	2 doses
Polio	2 doses
Hib	2 doses
<b>15 through 18 Months</b>	
Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis	3 doses
Polio	3 doses
Hib	3 doses with the final dose $\geq$ 12 months of age, or 1 dose $\geq$ 15 months of age
Measles/Rubella	1 dose $\geq$ 12 months of age
<b>19 Months and Older</b>	
Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis	3 doses
Polio	3 doses
Hib	3 doses with the final dose $\geq$ 12 months of age, or 1 dose $\geq$ 15 months of age
Measles/Rubella	1 dose $\geq$ 12 months of age
Varicella	1 dose $\geq$ 12 months of age if born on or after September 15, 1997, or a reliable history of natural disease
<b>Elementary/Secondary School</b>	
Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis	4 doses if born after September 15, 2000; or 3 doses if born on or before September 15, 2000. One of these doses must be received on or after four years of age.
Polio	3 doses with 1 dose $\geq$ 4 years of age
Measles Rubella	2 doses. First dose $\geq$ 12 months of age, second dose no less than 28 days after the first dose
Hepatitis B	3 doses if born on or after July 1, 1994
Varicella	1 dose $\geq$ 12 months of age if born on or after September 15, 1997, or a reliable history of natural disease

## **HEALTH - HYGIENE - SAFETY**

The health and safety of all children is important. In order to help prevent the spread of germs, all tables are sanitized throughout the day and after each snack and meal time.

### **Clothing**

Children will be using a variety of materials including sand, paint, water, glue, markers etc. Play clothes are appropriate. During the winter months, children will go outside for recess when the temperature is 10 degrees or higher. Appropriate outside clothing is necessary and everything should be labeled. On days that weather does not permit us to go outside, recess will be in the multi-purpose room.



### **Hand Washing**

Students and staff will wash hands before all snacks, meals and after using the toilet or handling animals.

### **Toilet Training**

It is desired that any child enrolled in the T-TH or MWF Preschool programs be toilet trained. However, if this is not accomplished prior to school starting, we are happy to work with you in achieving this goal. For younger children enrolled in childcare, every effort will be made to coordinate toilet training with what is being done at home. Please be sure to communicate information to your child's classroom teacher that will help in this phase of development. We ask that you provide at least two complete changes of clothing, disposable diapers and training pants. All soiled clothing will be put in a separate bag and sent home. Staff will not rinse or wash clothing.

### **Rest Periods**

Students in childcare will have a scheduled rest time each day. Children are encouraged to rest quietly during this time and soft music will be played. Each child will be given a cot and personal blankets and one washable stuffed animal is welcome. Each child will need to purchase a nap mat to be used on the cot. Please remember to label each item and all these items must be taken home weekly for laundering.

### **First Aid Kits**

First aid kits are located in each classroom and at the front reception area. Kits are taken outside when the children have recess and taken on all off site field trips, including walks in the neighborhood.

Other safety policies are addressed throughout the handbook.

## NUTRITION

All children will be expected to have eaten breakfast prior to arrival at the center each morning. Children enrolled in the T-TH and MWF Preschool programs will be served a mid-morning snack.



Children enrolled in the childcare programs will be served a morning snack between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. Lunch is served between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Afternoon snack is served between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. All school age children are served an afternoon snack when they arrive at the center from school. All children at the center at 5:00 p.m. will be served a light snack.

Menus are planned in accordance with state guidelines and posted outside the kitchen, and copies are placed in parent mailboxes. You are asked to provide food for infants and toddlers not yet on table food. Parents who would prefer to send a cold lunch may do so, but please keep in mind nutritional guidelines when packing lunches. We will not be able to heat personal food items unless there is a medical reason for sending a lunch. If your child has any known food allergies, please alert your child's teacher as well as indicate that on your intake form. You will also be asked to complete an allergy care plan form.

Birthday or holiday treats are always welcome. Please coordinate this with your child's classroom teacher.

## SCHOOL PORTRAITS

Pictures for the T-TH and MWF preschool classes will be taken in the fall each year by Read Photography.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

For safety and continuity, please drop off and pick up children in their individual classrooms each day. Childcare children enrolled in a preschool program, will be brought to the classroom by center staff.

Transportation to and from the center is the responsibility of each family, but we will assist in any way possible to help arrange adequate transportation or help with carpool arrangements.

The Cedar Rapids School system does provide bus service to some Cedar Rapids District schools. Parents are responsible for notifying the transportation department of drop off and pick up needs, and to verify eligibility.



The center provides transportation to some Linn-Mar schools for students enrolled in our Before and After program.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is extremely important to adequately meet the needs of the children. Sources of communication throughout the year will be the monthly preschool newsletters, parent mailboxes (located in the foyer), parent emails, bulletin boards located in the hallways outside classrooms and the white boards located by each classroom door. Information of interest to you and center announcements will be displayed on the bulletin board located in the front foyer and/or in your mailbox. Please check them often. Please be watchful of your children during drop off and pick up times and do not allow them to pull papers from the mailboxes.

Conferences will be scheduled twice yearly for preschool students. Dates will be published in the newsletter and specific times will be set up for parents. Come prepared with questions or observations you may have about your child. Written progress reports will also be given to parents.

Children enrolled in our infant/toddler programs will be given monthly milestones in development checklists and students in our two-year old through five-year-old child care program will be given a fall and spring written assessment.

Anytime you have questions or concerns regarding your child and his/her progress, please call to make an appointment with individual teachers or the director.

Please notify the center to report any change of address or phone number. This would include business as well as, home and emergency numbers.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

The success of any program depends on many facets. One area that we feel is of extreme importance is the involvement of our parents. We welcome your input and invite you to be a part of your child's day anytime you can. There are many volunteer opportunities available in each classroom. Please ask your child's teacher for specific information about volunteering.

In cases of parental custody matters, our open door policy applies only to the custodial parent. Parents are afforded unlimited access to their children and to the provider caring for their children during normal hours of operation. For obvious security reasons, no child will be released to any person who is not listed on the pick up authorization form. The center is required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.