



EDUCATIONAL PLAYCARE

Childcare and Schools for Young Children

Parent Handbook

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1.0 Our Mission

Our mission is to provide the children in our care with the highest quality developmental and educational programs in a nurturing, safe and supportive environment, and to facilitate and enrich the childcare experience of our families.

2.0 WELCOME LETTER

Dear Parent,

Welcome to Educational Playcare! Choosing a childcare center for your child is one of the most difficult and important decisions that you will make. We are pleased that you have chosen us, and will work very hard to provide the highest quality program for you and your child.

Educational Playcare was established in 1986 to provide full and part-time educational programs for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years. All our programs are accredited by the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs. Our Simsbury programs will work towards achieving Accreditation upon completion of the mandatory one year waiting period.

As Founder and President of Educational Playcare, I am committed to the profession of early childhood education. I hold a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education. I have served as a Validator and a Mentor for the NAEYC as well as an educational consultant for other programs. I hold active memberships in several professional organizations including the Hartford Association for the Education of Young Children, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the National Association of Child Care Professionals and the Hartford Area Child Care Collaborative.

As you've already read, our mission is simple, and we will assert 100% of our efforts each day to accomplish it. The following material and information will hopefully provide you with a better perspective about our program, commitment and philosophies.

We look forward to working with you to provide the best program for your child. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Jane Porterfield
Founder & President

JPorterfield@EducationalPlaycare.com

3.0 PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

We believe that young children learn through direct experience. Our objective is to provide an enriching environment in which children can gain these experiences while feeling safe and secure.

One of the hallmarks of high quality childcare is communication between faculty and parents. We place great emphasis on integrating the family into the educational process. You will be provided with a detailed overview of our curriculum, daily updates and monthly newsletters. In addition to extensive informal interaction, formal Parent-Teacher conferences are conducted twice each year. Parents are always welcome in our classrooms to read a story, share a special interest, or just to visit.

Play is the work of children, for it is through play that the children develop concepts about themselves and the world around them. At Educational Playcare, we provide a joyful, nurturing, and secure environment that supports the work of children.

3.1 STAFF PHILOSOPHY

One of the most critical components to accomplishing our mission and successfully implementing our philosophy is maintaining the highest quality staff possible and providing them with the resources and support to be successful. A child's first school experience is very special and very important. For many, it will dictate how they view learning for many years to come. The faculty and staff at Educational Playcare understand how crucial the first years of life and learning are. Our faculty is made up of dedicated and caring professionals who welcome the opportunity and challenge of educating your children. We are confident that our faculty and staff will provide your child with superior nurturing and guidance while they are under our care. Many of our preschool and many of our toddler/infant teachers hold four-year degrees in Early Childhood Education or a related field. Of those that don't, many are actively engaged in Early Childhood Education classes through our tuition reimbursement program. In addition to formal education, all our staff have a genuine love for young children and a commitment to high quality education. All our staff participate in continuing education and are certified in First Aid & CPR.

Our teachers are always available to meet with parents regarding questions and concerns. Please arrange a mutually convenient time with your child's teacher. (Teachers can frequently arrange telephone conferences during the middle of the day—drop off and pick-up times are not good for lengthy conversations.)

We have a directory in our Center with pictures of all our staff, with their names and titles. Please refer to it. Except for infants and toddlers, all children are required to address the faculty and staff by their proper titles (i.e. Mrs., Miss, Ms., Mr.) and their last names. Please help us to maintain this standard.

4.0 ACCREDITATION

We strongly support and endorse the values and philosophy underlying The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC accredited programs have demonstrated a commitment to providing a high-quality program for young children and their families. While the accreditation process examines the total program, the greatest emphasis is placed on the quality of interactions between staff and children, and the developmental appropriateness of the curriculum. Health and safety, staffing, staff qualifications, physical environment, and administration are all reviewed during accreditation; but primary consideration is given to the nature of the child's experience.

As an accredited center, Educational Playcare has been recognized as an early care and education program that exemplifies excellence in the care of young children. NAEYC accreditation benefits everyone involved. Parents can be assured that Educational Playcare has met standards that exceed the minimum necessary for licensing. The staff of Educational Playcare has benefited from professional development and the children enrolled at Educational Playcare have an environment that is conducive to their individual growth and development.

The accreditation process includes a self-study, observation by an early childhood professional, and evaluation by national commissioners.

5.0 CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is based upon The Creative Curriculum, developed by Teaching Strategies Inc. It is based upon the most recent educational research and is generally recognized as the state of the art approach to educating young children.

The core of the Creative Curriculum is to balance both teacher-directed and child-initiated learning, with an emphasis on responding to children's learning styles and building on their strengths and interests. All of this is done through well-planned learning and activity centers including: Library (language), Blocks (construction), Music and Movement, Art, Sand & Water (Sensory), Outdoor Learning, Cooking, Science and Math.

Each group has a defined, age appropriate curriculum (even infants). Weekly summaries are posted in the classrooms. Teachers have detailed plans for each day.

Each day brings new learning opportunities as children are provided a framework within which they will make both self-directed and guided choices.

6.0 ENROLLMENT

Enrollment at Educational Playcare is open to children from ages 6 weeks to 12 years. Enrollment is granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or special needs; and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy or special needs.

Parents can apply for enrollment of their child in Educational Playcare by completing the Enrollment Application, paying the \$100 Application Fee and the deposit equaling two weeks tuition. The Application Fee and tuition are non-refundable.

Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment application, signed fee agreement, registration fee, deposit and signed Parent Handbook receipt. In addition, all children must have a health form prepared by the child's physician on record that documents a physical examination within the previous 12 months, as well as up-to-date immunizations.

The Enrollment Application and Fee Agreements are not meant to serve as contracts guaranteeing service for any duration.

Educational Playcare reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause.

There must be at least two emergency numbers on file that we may call if your child becomes ill and you are unreachable. Emergency contacts must have the ability to transport the children if necessary.

Parents are required to notify Educational Playcare immediately should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change.

Physical Examination - The Connecticut State Department of Health requires that each child admitted to the Center be examined by a licensed physician and have a signed certificate indicating the date of the exam. Yearly updates on exams are needed for all children, as well as documentation of updated immunizations.

Prior to starting, parents are welcome to attend the center with their children to facilitate a smoother transition.

7.0 FINANCIAL POLICIES

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Fee Agreement prior to enrollment of their child. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed.

7.1 PAYMENTS

A non-refundable deposit equal to 2 week's tuition is required to reserve space. This deposit will be applied to your final two weeks of care. The first month's tuition is due by the first day of attendance. If the child does not attend, for any reason, the deposit is forfeited.

Tuitions must be paid via EFT from your bank account or recurring credit card payments. Payments made by EFT will receive the discounted rate. The normal rate will be applied to payments made by credit card.

Tuitions are collected monthly in advance and must be paid by the 25th of the month prior to the month of care.

Tuitions may be paid bi-weekly or weekly if pre-approved by the Center Director. In these cases, a \$10 charge will be added to each payment.

If payment by check has been authorized, there will be a \$25 fee charged for tuition checks returned by the bank. Parents are responsible for issuing a second check in the case that the first one bounces. If at any future time the bank returns a parent's check, all future tuition payments must be made by cash, certified check, or money order.

Tuition does not include fees for field trips and extracurricular activities such as swimming, dance lessons, etc. (where applicable).

Tuitions are based upon actual age, not group placement. Fees change beginning the month after a child's birthday.

We do not automatically issue receipts. If you need a receipt, please fill out a form (located next to the check box) and place it in the box. It will be signed and returned to you within 48 hours.

There is no credit given for vacations, scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations or inclement weather.

7.2 LATE TUITION POLICY

A \$5 per day charge will apply for each day payment is late. This includes Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays.

If a family leaves Educational Playcare owing money, the \$5 per day charge will continue to accumulate.

Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at Educational Playcare, however, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Center Director immediately. If alternative arrangements for payment are approved, you will be notified by the Center Director.

7.3 SUBSIDIZED CARE

Educational Playcare does accept Care-4-Kids childcare subsidies. Parents of a subsidized child must complete all required paperwork on time. Parents of subsidized children are also required to sign a fee agreement, agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of tuition in the event they become ineligible to receive childcare subsidies or their subsidy is modified. Parents are responsible for the difference between our tuitions and the amount paid by Care-4-Kids.

7.4 MULTIPLE CHILD DISCOUNTS

Educational Playcare offers a 10% multi-child discount when more than one child from the same household is attending simultaneously. Children enrolled in our before and after school programs only count toward this benefit if they are enrolled for before AND after school care 5 days per week. Summer Campers enrolled in at least 7 weeks of our summer camp program count toward this benefit which will be applied only during the weeks that both the summer camper and the younger sibling are in attendance.

7.5 INJURIES

Families are responsible for any medical expenses incurred as a result of an injury sustained while under our care.

8.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

Within Educational Playcare, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of Educational Playcare who have a “need to know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as Educational Playcare strives to protect everyone’s right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, special needs information, or health related information of anyone associated with Educational Playcare. Regulatory authorities with legal rights may review children's files upon request.

Additionally, Educational Playcare uses both audio and video surveillance for the purposes of observation and security. As these audio/video recordings may contain confidential information, access to families is restricted except where required by legal authorities.

Outside of Educational Playcare, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of Educational Playcare, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

You may observe children at our center who have special needs or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of Educational Playcare are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

9.0 PARENTS RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at Educational Playcare, as provided by law. In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Educational Playcare must be provided with a Certified Copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file with Educational Playcare, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Educational Playcare cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Educational Playcare suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Educational Playcare staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the Center Director, and are allowed in the childcare facility only at the discretion of the Center Director. An employee of Educational Playcare will accompany visitors at all times, throughout the center.

10.0 DISMISSAL

Educational Playcare reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause. Parents will be refunded any unused tuition within two weeks of the dismissal. An Educational Playcare check will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week of the dismissal.

11.0 WITHDRAWAL

30 days written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is given, any unused tuition will be refunded within thirty days of the withdrawal. If the required notice is not given, parents will be charged tuition for two additional weeks.

12.0 SCHEDULES

When you enroll your child, you will establish a full or part time schedule. We have many different options available that you can discuss with the director. Parents who wish to change their child's days or times of enrollment at

Educational Playcare, must submit a request to do so two weeks in advance of the proposed change. Schedule changes are subject to a change fee of \$15.

13.0 ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Children are required to be escorted by their parent or the adult dropping them off, to their designated classroom. The teacher for the classroom will sign the child into care on I-Pad located in their classroom. Parents must make sure that a teacher is aware of their child's presence before leaving. Parents are responsible for helping their children put away their outerwear and get settled for the day.

Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or Center Director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. The parent must present the special instructions in writing and verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher or Center Director. These special instructions include but are not limited to: Early Pick Up, Alternative Pick Up Person, health issues over the previous night which need to be observed and/or any general issues of concern which the child care providers should be aware to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

Educational Playcare does not serve or provide breakfast in the morning. Parents are required to feed their child (including infants) a nutritious and filling breakfast prior to arriving at Educational Playcare.

13.1 NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

Parents should inform the center by 9am if a child will not be at the center on a scheduled day. This will enable the center to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the center director not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis. If your child has a communicable illness, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the Center Director, so that the parents of the children in the school maybe notified that a communicable illness is present. Once again, only the communicable illness information will be shared. Educational Playcare will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality.

Parents who know in advance that a child will be late, are requested to notify the center as soon as possible so that we can maintain proper staffing when the child arrives to school.

14.0 PICKUP PROCEDURES

When a parent or otherwise authorized adult picks up their child, the lead teacher must be notified and check the child out of the classroom i-Pad. Once a child is signed out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on Educational Playcare premises. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground. Parents should handle all business issues prior to signing out their child.

Nobody under the age of 18 can be authorized to escort a child off the premises.

Please note that our closing time of 6:00 is not the time you must arrive to pick up your child, but the time by which you must have exited the premises.

Parents should take home all papers in the child's cubby or school bag each day. Cubbies should be thoroughly cleaned out each Friday so that we can clean more thoroughly over the weekend.

14.1 LATE PICK-UP

There will be a \$20.00 charge (per child) for the first fifteen minutes or fraction thereof that a parent is late, and a \$15.00 charge for every five minutes thereafter. This charge is based upon the scheduled hours per the financial agreement. Late fees must be paid within 5 days from the date they are assessed.

Please understand that our staff is only scheduled until closing time. Like you, they have family and other obligations when their day is done. Your courtesy in considering this will be greatly appreciated.

14.2 EMERGENCY/ALTERNATE PICK-UP CARDS

At enrollment, parents will be presented with an Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form. Parents are encouraged to include on this form any, and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child from Educational Playcare. In an emergency situation the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached staff will call the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list.

The persons on the Emergency/Alternate pick-up form will be required to provide a photo ID prior to the Educational Playcare releasing the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

All changes and/or additions to the Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form. Please understand that we will be absolute in this rule. It's the law.

15.0 SCHOOL CALENDAR

The center is closed on the following national holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday (Spring in-service training)
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day (Fall in-service training)
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Christmas Day

For specific closing dates, please see our calendar in the Parent's Corner of our website.

If Christmas and New Year's fall on a Thursday, the center will also be closed the Friday after. If Christmas and New Year's fall on a Tuesday, the center will be closed all day on Monday and Tuesday. If Christmas and New Year's fall on a Wednesday or a Friday, we will close at 12:30pm on Christmas Eve and 3:00pm on New Year's Eve.

If Christmas, New Year's, or the 4th of July fall on a Saturday, we will be closed the Friday before. If these holidays fall on a Sunday, we will be closed the following Monday.

Our "West Hartford on Fennway" location is also closed on the following Jewish holidays and closes at 4:00pm on the night preceding the holiday, except where the holiday falls on a Saturday or a Sunday.

- Rosh Hashanah
- Yom Kippur

16.0 EMERGENCY CLOSING AND INCLIMATE WEATHER PROCEDURES

In consideration of the needs of our working families, we take great efforts to remain open under almost all situations. However, on occasion, like everybody else, we must give in to the weather or some other emergency situation.

Should the school need to close in the middle of the day, the school staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify the parents or emergency contact person at the time of the call, of the pickup location should the children need to be evacuated from the child care center. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

Should the center need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures of three consecutive school days or less. If the closure extends beyond 3 consecutive school days, parents will be refunded their tuition for the time that exceeds 3 days.

17.0 CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

17.1 DAILY SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

A sample daily schedule for your child's group was enclosed in your enrollment packet. You can also find this on the bulletin board outside of your child's classroom.

17.2 CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

We have named each of our classrooms using bird names. At Educational Playcare we do not assign children to classrooms based strictly upon their age, but subscribe to developmentally appropriate placement. However, the approximate ages of children in each classroom is indicated.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Chickadees – ages 6 weeks to 1 year | • Bluebirds – 3 year olds |
| • Parrots – 1 year olds | • Canaries – 4 year olds |
| • Flamingoes – 2 year olds | • Owls – school age children |

17.3 NAP/REST TIME

Infants and younger toddlers nap each day according to their own schedules. Older toddlers and preschoolers take naps during the early afternoon.

We provide cribs/cots for all the children to rest on. Children may bring a small blanket and stuffed animal to rest with.

Please speak with your child's teacher if you have special requests regarding naptime.

17.4 THINGS TO BRING

Notes:

All items must be labeled and seasonally appropriate.

All children must wear comfortable play clothes to EPC. Keep in mind that many of our activities are messy.

Chickadees (Infants)

- Large Box of Diapers*
- Diapering Wipes*
- 1-2 sleep sacks (no pillows or blankets)
- 2 sheets (porta-crib or pack 'n' play size)
- 10 bibs
- Prepared bottles of formula or breast milk (breast milk bottles must include the date on which the milk was expressed)
- Diaper cream, if needed (signed authorization required)
- 3 complete changes of clothes
- Pacifier (if used) - must have no attachments
- In the spring and summer months, please provide a sunhat and sunscreen (signed authorization required)
- In the fall and winter months, please provide a warm hat and a coat or sweatshirt

*EPC provides diapers and wipes at no additional charge to infants under the age of one.

Parrots (Young Toddlers)

- Large box of diapers
- Diapering wipes
- Diaper cream, if needed (signed authorization required)
- 3 complete changes of clothes
- 4 empty sippy cups each day
- 1 pair of slippers or shoes exclusively for indoor use
- 1 thin blanket (no pillows)
- 2 sheets (porta-crib or pack 'n' play size)
- Comfort items such as a stuffed animal or blankie
- In the summer months, please provide a bathing suit, towel, sunhat, water shoes, and sunscreen (signed authorization required)
- In the winter months, please provide a warm hat, mittens, a coat, boots, and snow pants

Flamingos (Older Toddlers)

- Large box of diapers or plenty of underwear
- Diapering wipes
- Diaper cream, if needed (signed authorization required)
- 3 complete changes of clothes
- 1 pair of slippers or shoes exclusively for indoor use
- 1 thin blanket (no pillows)
- 2 sheets (porta-crib or pack 'n' play size)
- Comfort items such as a stuffed animal or blankie
- In the spring and summer months, please provide a bathing suit, towel, water shoes, and sunscreen (signed authorization required)
- In the fall and winter months, please provide a warm hat, mittens, a coat, boots, and snow pants

Bluebirds and Canaries (Preschoolers)

- 2 complete changes of clothes
- 1 thin blanket (no pillows)
- Comfort items such as a stuffed animal or blankie
- In the spring and summer months, please provide a bathing suit, towel, water shoes, and sunscreen (signed authorization required)
- In the fall and winter months, please provide a warm hat, mittens, a coat, boots, and snow pants

Kindergarteners & School Ageds

- 2 complete changes of clothes
- In the spring and summer months, please provide a bathing suit, towel, water shoes, and sunscreen (signed authorization required)
- In the fall and winter months, please provide a warm hat, mittens, a coat, boots, and snow pants.

17.5 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Due to the severity of food-related allergies, we do not allow families to provide food for children to share with their classmates. Instead, we take the work out of planning your child's in-school birthday celebration by providing them with a birthday crown and special snack to share with their friends!

All treats provided by EPC are free of nuts, milk, gluten, and eggs so that all of our students can participate and anyone with a severe food allergy will be safe during these fun celebrations.

Please feel free to come join us for your child's special afternoon celebration.

If you are having a birthday party for your child at home, invitations passed out at Educational Playcare must include all the children in your child's group. If you plan to invite only a few children from Educational Playcare, the invitations need to be mailed.

17.6 PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent conferences will be scheduled twice a year. A written notice indicating the exact dates and times will be sent home when the conferences are approaching. The conferences are a time when teachers can discuss your child's developmental progress with you at length. Parents are always welcome to request a conference at any time during the year if they feel it is warranted.

The Parents' Bulletin Board is in the hallway. Please check the bulletin board frequently. We post all social functions, parent meetings, conferences, timely news issues, etc. on the bulletin board.

17.7 CELEBRATION/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HOLIDAYS

Educational Playcare does not celebrate, discuss or otherwise acknowledge any holidays that are religious in nature. The following is a list of holidays that we generally do celebrate or acknowledge:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Valentine's Day
- Presidents' Day
- St. Patrick's Day
- First Day of Spring
- May Day
- Summer Solstice
- 4th of July
- First Day of Fall
- Halloween
- Thanksgiving
- Winter Solstice

17.8 SPECIALIZED CONSULTANTS

If a parent has concerns about their child they should first consult with the lead teacher in their child's room. There are many resources available in such situations, including the state birth to three program, public school screening, and our social worker consultant amongst others. Parents are responsible for initiating these services, however Educational Playcare staff will work collaboratively with parents and outside parties to achieved desired goals.

17.9 PARENT COMMUNICATIONS

Educational Playcare will use electronic media to communicate daily summaries of each child's activities. The same media will also be used for sending pictures and videos as well as classroom announcements. General documents (eg. Family Meal menus, Lunch menus, curriculum summaries, etc.) will also be communicated via electronic media.

In the event a parent does not have access to email, or otherwise wishes to receive printed copies of communications, you will need to communicate this to your Center Director.

At minimum, annual parent questionnaires will be solicited via online surveys. These are a VERY IMPORTANT source for us to maintain the quality of our programs and we urge you to participate when requested. However, we seek your input at any time and urge you to communicate any concerns or problems to your Center Director or Assistant Director immediately. Should you feel this leaves your concerns or problems unresolved, please do not hesitate to email Nancy Walsh, Executive Director at NWalsh@EducationalPlaycare.com.

18.0 DISCIPLINE

The goal of discipline is to help children to develop self-control; therefore, it is necessary for children to understand rules and the reasons for them, and to understand the consequences of their own actions. Preventing problems is essential to good discipline. The following techniques are used to establish discipline at Educational Playcare:

- Distracting Children from potential problems
- Reminding children of the rules
- Helping children to solve problems and to make choices
- Allowing children to take time away from the group to regain control
- Ignoring inappropriate behavior

- Noticing and reinforcing appropriate behavior
- Helping children to articulate their feelings
- Helping children to understand the consequences of their actions.

At Educational Playcare, we do not use abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating or frightening punishment under any circumstances. Children are not physically restrained in any manner, unless it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or others.

We may remove a child from a situation and redirect them to more appropriate behavior, however we do not practice “time out” as we believe isolation of a child is inappropriate and harsh at any time.

19.0 TOYS FROM HOME

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are discouraged from bringing in toys from home, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum. Parents are responsible for enforcing this policy with their child. Parents are encouraged to consult the classroom teacher should they find their child is having difficulty with this policy.

Under no circumstances may children bring toys/items that depict weapons, violent or aggressive characters (i.e. super heroes, power rangers etc.). This includes clothing and backpacks.

20.0 DRESS CODE

We have a shoeless policy in the infant and toddler rooms. Children in these age groups spend most of their time on the floor, therefore we require that all children and parents take their shoes off when entering these rooms.

Children are engaged in various activities during the day; some of these activities can be messy, and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children should be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable, clothing.

Parents are requested not to dress children who are toilet training in overalls, onesies, or clothing with difficult closures.

Coats, hats, gloves, snow pants, scarves and winter boots must be provided in the winter months. It is not necessary for the children to wear their winter boots to school. Teachers will change the children into their winter boots when they go outdoors.

Children are not permitted to wear open toed, and/or open backed shoes. No sandals, please. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled, sneakers/tennis shoes.

Children ages 3 through 5 should have one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center at all times. Children under 3 years of age should have two seasonably and size appropriate, complete changes of clothing at the center at all times. A complete change of clothing includes, shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. We will post reminders for parents to update changes of clothing as the weather begins to change.

All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child’s first and last name. This includes, coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots. Educational Playcare is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

Children are discouraged from wearing jewelry of any kind. It is a safety hazard for your child as well as the other children enrolled in the program. In addition, Educational Playcare will not be responsible for lost or stolen valuables.

Hair beads, barrettes, bobby pins, etc. are also discouraged. These accessories are considered to be safety hazards...i.e. choking. When choosing accessories for your children be mindful of the potential safety issues they present not only for your child, but also for other children attending Educational Playcare.

21.0 FIELD TRIPS

Educational Playcare frequently supplements the in-class curriculum with off premise field trips. Parents are required to give written permission for their child to attend each field trip. Notification of a field trip will be sent home in advance of the trip, with all pertinent trip information including, destination, date, time, reason for trip, cost, and mode of transportation. Accompanying the notification paper, teachers will include a permission slip to be filled out, signed, and returned to the teacher prior to the date of the trip. The field trip permission slip must be filled out completely and accurately, and all trip costs must be paid in advance in order for your child to attend.

If parents wish to attend the trip with their child, they should discuss attending with the classroom teacher.

Educational Playcare provides all required supervision for all field trips, but always invites and welcomes parents to attend.

If your child is not scheduled to attend on the day of a field trip and you wish for your child to participate in the trip, please discuss this with your child's teacher at least three days prior to the date of the trip. Your child will be permitted to attend if required ratios can be maintained with his/her addition to the class. If this is not the case, the child can still attend if the parent accompanies him/her. An additional day fee will apply in addition to the cost of the trip. Your Center Director can tell you the amount of the fee.

22.0 PARENT PARTICIPATION/VOLUNTEERS

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at the childcare center. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Teachers will have posted in their classrooms any volunteer opportunities available

Many times throughout the year, we have special visitors come to educate the children. In the past we have had animal trainers, police officers, dentists, doctors, musicians, etc. The children are always excited to meet new people with special talents. We encourage parents to come in and share any unique talents that they have with the children. Please feel free to come and share any ideas, stories, songs, projects, games, etc. with the children.

If you are interested in participating at any time, please see your child's teacher.

23.0 HEALTH, HYGIENE & SAFETY

Educational Playcare employs a nurse who visits the center weekly. She is available for consultations if parents feel the need. She also maintains the health records for both children and staff.

23.1 PRE-ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Each child is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information. This packet is to be returned to the center's office prior to the child's first day of attendance. All children are required to have a complete and up to date immunization record on file at Educational Playcare.

All children are required to have a physical examination form filled out by a licensed medical professional, in order to attend Educational Playcare. The Physical Examination Form, indicating the child's fitness to attend Educational Playcare, must be completed and returned to the Center Director prior to enrollment. Forms need to be updated annually and with each new inoculation.

23.2 HANDWASHING

Hand washing is one of the most important steps in controlling illness. Our staff and children wash hands before eating, before handling food, after wiping noses, after using the bathroom or diapering, and following any messy activities.

Please encourage this practice with your child at home. All staff & children must thoroughly wash hands when arriving at the center.

23.3 DIAPERING PROCEDURES

When changing diapers, we follow these procedures:

1. Wash hands
2. Wear plastic gloves
3. Place paper barrier on the changing table
4. Change diaper
5. Wash hands
6. Remove paper barrier
7. Disinfect changing table

23.4 TOILET TRAINING

The teacher works on toilet training with the children while they are in the Flamingo (older toddler) Group. The teacher and the child's parents will decide when the child is ready to be toilet trained. When the child shows an interest and is not afraid to sit on the toilet, we invite the child to use the toilet. When a child begins the process of toilet training we require that the child stays in his/her diaper and uses the bathroom during the scheduled diapering time. When the child starts to have success on the toilet, we will encourage parents to put their child in training pants at home. Once the child begins having success at home, we invite the child to wear training pants to school. When children are being potty trained, please send them in appropriate clothing.

Children who are wearing training pants MUST wear clothing that they can take on and off by themselves. (i.e. pants with elastic waistbands, and a T-shirt or jersey. Please no onesies, snap T-shirts, overalls, etc.) We do not separate the children by gender when they use the bathroom.

23.5 MEDICATION

The staff and nurse at EPC are not authorized to administer medication to the children. By medication we mean both prescribed medication and over the counter drugs such as Tylenol, cough syrup, cough drops, antacids, etc. If a child requires medication such as antibiotics, the parent should inform the physician of the Center's policy. He or she may be able to prescribe a medication that can be given twice a day. If midday dosage is necessary, a parent may come to the Center to administer it.

EPC will administer "emergency medications" when needed, including epi-pens, inhalers, and nebulizer treatments.

23.6 SANITATION

We wash crib linens on a weekly basis, unless soiled. Each child uses their own sheets.

We sanitize cots on a weekly basis and children use the same assigned cot each day.

All infant/toddler toys that have been in a child's mouth are removed from play and disinfected before they are put back on the shelf for all to use. Toys are sanitized with bleach solution daily.

All surfaces that come in contact with bodily fluids are disinfected immediately. All surfaces that are touched frequently...door jams, table tops, door knobs...are sanitized daily.

All toys, stuffed animals and cots are put in the Zono machine for sanitizing on a weekly basis.

23.7 FIRST AID

EPC's staff is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for children. Our nurse consultant regularly inspects our interior and exterior play spaces for cleanliness and safety. All our staff are certified in First Aid and CPR for both children and infants.

In the event of an accident, we are authorized to cleanse with soap, bandage a wound, apply ice and provide warmth and rest. Parents will be notified by a note or phone call of a minor incident. In the event of a serious accident, EPC will use the CT Children's Hospital or the nearest medical facility while on a field trip. Upon enrollment, parents sign an authorization form for emergency treatment by hospital staff.

The Center staff will handle the emergency first, and then notify the child's parent(s). If a parent cannot be reached, we will phone the emergency contacts indicated on your enrollment form. Someone will need to meet the child at the hospital and assume responsibility for the child.

Please keep us informed of any changes in the phone numbers of the individuals you have listed as emergency contacts.

23.8 CHILDREN WITH SEVERE ALLERGIES

Educational Playcare staff are certified to administer Epi-pens. Parents must also complete a "Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies" form. This form releases Educational Playcare from liability for administering treatment to children with severe allergies and taking other

necessary actions set forth in the “Authorization for Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies” form, provided Educational Playcare exercises reasonable care in taking such actions.

23.9 COMMUNICABLE ILLNESSES

Educational Playcare follows all health/communicable disease policies as outlined in the American Academy of Pediatrics Model Health Policies and Procedures Manual. A copy of this manual is on file with the Center Director and is available upon request for review.

Children with any of the following symptoms will not be allowed to remain at Educational Playcare:

- Temperature of 101 or higher
- Conjunctivitis (pink-eye)
- Strep throat
- Head lice
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Rashes of unknown origin
- The presence of a contagious disease

A child will be sent home if any of the above symptoms are seen during the day. It is expected that if a child leaves Educational Playcare after 12 noon, he/she will remain home the full next day to assure complete recovery. The center is not equipped to care for ill children. Each family must be prepared with a reliable emergency contact in the event the child becomes ill during the day and parents cannot be reached.

Once a parent has been notified, the child should be off the premises within one hour. If a parent is reached, but cannot pickup their child up within one hour, it becomes the parent’s responsibility to arrange for alternate pickup with someone listed on the child’s emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a parent is reached. If a parent cannot be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea which occur 3 or more times in a 24 hours period. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume.

A child will be allowed to return to school if she/he has been on medicine for a contagious illness for 24 hours or is fever free. Fever free means NO Tylenol or any other antipyretic for 4 to 6 hours prior to checking in.

If a child is well enough to attend childcare, he/she is well enough to participate in outdoor activities.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the center director. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a “need to know” basis. If your child has a communicable illness, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the center director, so that the parents of the children in the school may be notified that a communicable illness is present. Once again, only the communicable illness information will be shared.

23.10 BITING

Educational Playcare recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2 ½ year old classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bitten, or will bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which provoke, or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the

future. The staff will not punish, or harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior; they will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. Children who repeatedly bite on a given day will be sent home on that day.

Children older than 3 years of age may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group who bite, the staff will use the discipline procedures outlined in the discipline section of this handbook, as well as observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this inappropriate behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control this behavior.

Parents will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is confidential and cannot be disclosed. The staff of Educational Playcare cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party.

23.11 FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS

Educational Playcare conducts monthly fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe-zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the director or designate will inform each classroom teacher that the school will be closing. At this time any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation. As with the sick child pick up policy, children must be picked up within one hour of the telephone call.

23.12 ALTERNATE SAFE LOCATION

Each Educational Playcare school has a unique emergency evacuation plan which includes an alternate safe location to be used if the administration or emergency services personnel determine that one of our buildings is too dangerous to be occupied. Once the children are assembled there, all parents and emergency contact persons will be notified.

23.13 INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTS

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident Report. The Incident/Accident Report will be placed in the child's mailbox. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later time because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the day.

23.14 CONCERNS REGARDING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

In the event of any concern regarding abuse or neglect of a child in our care, it is our policy to follow the self-reporting protocol established by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF). If either entity believes an investigation is warranted, it is their usual procedure to interview a wide range of individuals associated with the child as well as both the child's home and school.

23.15 FIREARMS AND OTHER WEAPONS

No firearm, weapon, or facsimile of a firearm or weapon is permitted on any Educational Playcare premise at any time, except where carried by a peace officer as defined by Connecticut law.

24.0 FOODS

We provide lunch for all children (except infants) who attend the morning session. Snacks are served in the morning and the afternoon. Lunch menus are sent home at the beginning of the month and are posted on the parent's bulletin board. Snack menus are also posted on the board. All lunches include vegetables and fruit. Milk or water is served with all lunches and snacks.

All age groups:

Parents are required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions. (i.e. lactose intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat free/gluten free diets.)

Parents are responsible for providing food substitutions for their children on days that the Center is serving foods their children are allergic to. The food provided must not require additional preparation, including heating.

Infants:

Bottles of breast milk or formula must be prepared at home in plastic bottles and be labeled with the child's first and last name and the date on which they were prepared. Be sure to prepare one more bottle than you think your child will consume in a day to assure that your child won't run out. Prepared bottles must be stored in the designated refrigerator and will be warmed in a water bath prior to feeding. No bottles will be microwaved. All bottles must be taken home (used or unused) by the child's family each night to be washed.

Extra formula (which does not require refrigeration) can be provided for use during emergencies. Formula must be provided in its original packaging.

All containers of food must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. Food prepared at home must also be dated, as it will only be given that day, and all unused food must go home at the end of each day.

Children will not be fed directly from baby food jars, nor will the staff use previously opened baby food. Staff will mix baby cereal just prior to feedings. All unused food remaining after a feeding will be discarded.

Parents are required to complete a feeding schedule for their child on a weekly basis, or as the child's feeding requirements change. Staff will complete a daily chart for each child detailing for the parent what the child ate, when, and how much.

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center during the day to feed their child.

Non-Infants

Educational Playcare offers children a morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack. Lunch menus are provided to each family, and both lunch and snack menus are posted in each classroom.

Breakfast is served to the children who arrive at Educational Playcare before 7:15 and is cleaned up and put away at 7:30.

All meals are family style, with the children sitting at tables, to promote good manners, eating habits and socialization skills. Educational Playcare curriculum focuses on developing healthy, well-balanced eating habits.

24.1 PEANUT FREE CENTER

Due to the extreme nature of allergic reactions to peanuts and products containing peanuts in some children, Educational Playcare does not serve any products that contain peanuts. We also require that when an alternative food choice is provided for your child, that it complies with this requirement. Peanut allergies can be so severe that exposure to peanuts can result in an anaphylactic reaction. An allergic child can have a reaction from simply smelling peanuts on someone's breath, or touching peanut oil residue left on a counter top, not only from consuming peanuts or peanut products. For this reason, parents bringing in homemade lunches for their child are asked to be extremely careful in their preparation.

25.0 PHONE CALLS

Our teachers are always happy to discuss your child's day and answer any questions that you may have; however, it is difficult to leave the children to take phone calls from parents. Whenever possible, it is much better if you can request a phone call from a staff member and they can call you during the day. This way, the teacher can find a quiet time during the day when they can devote her full attention to the conversation without taking time away from the children.

If you have concerns on a given day, or would simply like a phone call during the day please let the teacher know in the morning or make a notation on the sign-in sheet. If you have questions/messages during the day, we will be happy to pass them along to the teacher. If it is not a message that can be passed along to the teacher, please let whoever answers the phone know and we will make every effort to get the teacher on the phone.

Teachers cannot take personal phone calls during the day. This includes calls regarding babysitting. Please contact them outside of their work hours to make arrangements.

26.0 EDUCATIONAL PLAYCARE DIRECTORY

Federal Tax ID # 061153270

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