



# GROTON-MYSTIC EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER



EST. 1998



**591 POQUONNOCK ROAD  
GROTON, CT 06340  
860-449-8217**



**State Funded & Nationally Accredited Program  
Serving children ages 6 weeks to 5 years**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome.....	2
State Licensing & National Accreditation.....	2
Philosophy.....	2
Eligibility Criteria .....	3
Confidentiality & Non-discrimination Policy .....	3
Enrollment/Tuition Fee Policy.....	4,5
Child’s Hours of Care.....	5,6
Pick up Procedure after Center Closing .....	6,7
Discharge Policy .....	7
Days Center is Close .....	8
Alternate Care Plan.....	8
What is Developmentally Appropriate Practice.....	8
Curriculum .....	8,9
Assessment .....	9
Parent/Teacher Conferences.....	10
Family Engagement.....	10
Serving Children with Special Needs.....	11
Discipline Policy .....	11
Supervision of Children.....	12
Infant Sleeping Position.....	12
Transition to Kindergarten.....	12,13
Program Evaluation Strategies.....	13
Important Telephone Numbers.....	14
Program Staff.....	14,15
Mandated Reporting.....	15
Program Support Professionals.....	15,16
Professional Development.....	16
Toileting.....	16
Items Needed for School.....	17
Meals and Snacks.....	17,18
Health Related Services.....	18,19
Health Exclusions .....	19
Administration of Medications.....	20
Incident/Accident Reports.....	20
Emergency Care Procedure .....	21
Parking/Car Seat Safety .....	21
Emergency Preparedness Plan .....	22
Complaint Procedure.....	22

## **WELCOME !**

Welcome to the **Groton-Mystic Early Childhood Development Center**. The Groton child care center is open M-F 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

This handbook provides families with a basic introduction to our center and operating policies.

The purpose of the child care center is to provide an affordable, high quality, easily accessible early childhood program for children ages 6 weeks–5 years old while also connecting families to a wide variety of supports and services. We promote the enrollment of children from diverse racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds by enrolling families on a first come first served basis from the community we serve. Placement on our waitlist is determined by the order in which the application is received. Priority is given to siblings of enrolled children. Priority can also be given based on other factors as deemed appropriate by the Director of Early Childhood Services.

Our goal is to combine parent knowledge of their children’s development with that of the child care professionals while developing genuine partnerships which create the best possible learning experience for the children.

## **STATE LICENSING & NATIONAL ACCREDITATION**

The State Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is our licensing agent. State licensed programs are held accountable to meet health and safety regulations, staff qualifications and best practices for the care and education of young children. We are nationally accredited by The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children ages birth – 8 years old, by connecting early childhood practice, policy and research. We are proud to be nationally recognized as a quality program for young children.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Our goal is to foster each child’s love for learning and opportunities for success. To best achieve this we:

- Encourage appropriate social behaviors
- Promote cognitive and language competencies
- Stimulate creativity and imagination
- Encourage fine and gross motor skills
- Encourage self-esteem and independence
- Encourage curiosity

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

- The center is funded by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and the State Department of Education (SDE). Child Care services are available full-time year-round to children ages 6-weeks-old to 5-years-old.
- Priority is given to families residing in Groton and New London.
- All infant and toddler families must be employed a minimum of 25 hours a week or enrolled in an educational program as required by funding.
- All biological parents have the right to visit or pick up their children unless there are court documents stating otherwise on file at the center.
- All guardians must provide legal documentation.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Staff will maintain confidentiality regarding children enrolled in the program. The parent(s)/guardian(s) responsible for enrolling the child will be our main contact person to share information with including fees/payments, tax information, enrollment updates, etc.

Information learned about a child/family shall be shared only with teachers and supervisors during private team meetings or other appropriate, confidential settings.

Written documentation regarding child/family shall be inaccessible to non-agency staff except with proper prior authorization for release of information.

Confidentiality standards will be adhered to with regard to the taking and using of photographs of children at the program, as well as the use of their art work and the like. Such use shall only occur after permission from the parent/guardian is obtained.

Admission and treatment of children/families will be conducted without regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, or ability to pay. Reasonable provisions will be made to assist clients with language differences and who are deaf, hearing impaired, or have other special needs.

Every effort will be made to provide bilingual personnel when needed.

On an as-needed basis an appropriate interpreter or other assistance will be made available to the client to allow services to be utilized.

## **ENROLLMENT/TUITION FEE POLICY**

1. At the time of enrollment all families will be charged a \$35.00 enrollment fee. This enrollment fee will be applied to your tuition once your child begins attending the program.
2. Weekly tuition is due on the Friday before the next week. If payment is not received by 9:30 a.m. on the first day of the week, child care services may be suspended immediately until payment is made. Tuition fees continue to be due for the duration of the suspension. If payment or a payment plan has not been made by the end of that week, the child may be dis-enrolled. If dis-enrolled a child's name may be placed at the end of the wait list for future enrollment.
3. Your weekly fee is due regardless of your child's absenteeism and the programs days of closure.
4. A minimum two weeks written notice is required when a family decides to withdraw their child. Tuition payments will be charged for the child's last two weeks.
5. Child care fees are set according to the State's OEC sliding fee scale based on a families size and gross annual income. Primary documentation of gross annual income will be in the form of the most recent tax return or W-2 forms.
6. Fees are calculated and reviewed with families by the Site Manager during enrollment and then processed by the Agency's Business Office. All families will receive a copy of this form. Family's fee eligibility will be re-determined every six months. Failure to provide requested re-determination information will result in the family being charged the maximum child care tuition fee or child being suspended from the program until information is provided.
7. All families who are working will be requested to apply for State Child Care assistance (Care 4 Kids). This application process will be done with the site manager at the time of enrollment and will be forwarded to the appropriate state agency. The fee determined by the child care assistance program (Care 4 Kids) is the fee that will be charged for services. This fee supersedes all other funding sources' fees.
8. After a child has been enrolled for one year, families may request a week's fee be waived for a child's consecutive 5 day absence. Families will be asked to complete a fee adjustment form for the requested 5 days away. Children may not attend the program during the requested time off.
9. Payments are accepted by: cash, check, money order, credit or debit card. All cash payments must be made at the building reception areas. Please note: change cannot be made for a cash payment.

## **ENROLLMENT/TUITION FEE POLICY con't.**

10. If a check is returned for non-sufficient funds, all future payments must be made by cash or money order.
11. If a family encounters a hardship that would affect the payment of their tuition, they should speak with the site manager to discuss an alternative tuition payment plan.
12. Child & Family Agency re-assesses its tuition fees annually. Should tuition fees change; families will be given a 30 day notice before tuition increase takes effect.

## **A CHILD'S HOURS OF CARE**

Contracted childcare hours are based on a family's work schedule and ARE placed in writing at enrollment. Your child must be dropped off and picked up at the written agreed times. Contracted hours may not change until notifying the Site Manager. This is to ensure proper staff/child coverage. Flexible work schedules will be accommodated with advance notice, such as a next week's work schedule. Verification of work hours from an employer may be required.

If the parent/guardian does not work, the child's scheduled hours of care will be 9:00-3:30. This also applies to parents/guardians that are scheduled off from work. All children must attend a minimum of six hours per day as required by our state funding. All children having **medical appointment** after 9:30 are required to let staff know in advance and may attend the program with a **no later than 11:30** drop off.

All children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or responsible adult, who must be at least 18 years of age or older. Photo ID is required for all unknown adults who pick up children.

If an unauthorized adult attempts to remove a child from the center, the parent/guardian and the police will be informed.

A child will not be released to any authorized adult whom staff suspects to be under the influence of narcotics or alcohol; an offer will be made to call an emergency contact to pick up the adult and child. If the adult removes the child from the center, center staff will call the police.

### **DROP OFF/PICK UP**

**Cell phone use is not allowed within the center. Please turn your phones off prior to entering the building.** All children's drop off/pick up times must be in accordance with their written schedule. If a change to a drop off/pick up time is necessary, prior approval by Site Manager and/or Lead Teacher is required. If pick up arrangements change during the day, a call into the child's classroom or class cellphone is required as soon as possible and a message must be left with a staff person.

## **A CHILD'S HOURS OF CARE con't**

Notification is requested if your child will not be in attendance for a day. After two days absence, please be aware the center will reach out to families to check in regarding the child's attendance.

- Upon entering the classroom, the accompanying adult and child will put the child's belongings in his/her cubby and lunch in the refrigerator.
- The adult and child then must wash their hands.
- The adult must sign the child in. All information must be completed on the child's daily sign in sheet. Staff also record time in and out on their own classroom attendance sheet and make an initial observation of the child's well-being and health.
- The adult must do a quick check-in with a teacher. Parents are expected to inform staff about any concerns about the child's health and well-being.
- The adult must make child and staff aware of their departure.

**Note: no child shall be signed in after 9:30 a.m.**

- When picking up, the adult must wash their hands.
- The adult must sign the child out.  
The adult must do a quick check-in with the teacher about the child's day and make staff aware of their departure.

If a child has not been picked up by their contracted hours, staff will call the designated pick up person. If the person cannot be reached, a message will be left. If that person does not call back within 15 minutes, staff will be calling emergency contacts.

- All children must be picked up and **out of the building by 5:30.**

## **PICK UP PROCEDURE FOR AFTER CENTER CLOSING**

**The center is closed at 5:30 p.m.**

- If a parent has not contacted us, we will reach out to the parent. If the parent does not answer or return our call within 5 minutes, emergency contacts will be called to pick the child up.
- If no one can be contacted by 6:00 p.m., **staff will call the local police department and DCF** to report the situation.
- If a child is picked up by one of your emergency contacts, we will make every attempt to contact you and a note will be left on the outside door saying who picked up the child and the time the child left the center.
- Pick up after 5:30 will result in a late pick up fee of \$5.00 per child for every fifteen minutes.

## **PICK UP PROCEDURE FOR AFTER CENTER CLOSING CON'T**

- After two incidences of later than 5:30 pick up, your child's dismissal from the program will be considered.

When the Center closes early due to weather conditions staff will call the pick up parent/guardian listed on the child's sign in. When parent/guardian cannot be reached, previously identified emergency contacts will be called. Your child must be picked up **no later than** the revised closing time of the program. Failure to do so will result in a late fee charge. Consistent late pick-ups on early closing days may result in discharge from the program.

## **DISCHARGE POLICY**

If the center is unable to meet the needs of the child or family, we reserve the right to discharge a child from the program. A family who is discharged from the program will be given two weeks' notice to find alternate care.

Every child enrolled in our program is given a 90 day trial period to ensure the program meets his/her needs. At the end of the first 30 days, a family-teacher conference will occur. During this first family conference parents are given the opportunity to set goals for their child and also discuss progress and areas of concern with the teacher. If significant concerns are identified, the family will meet with the Site Manager to discuss possible resources and/or program options. The program can discharge a child without notice for the below reasons:

- Failure to comply with program policies as outlined in the parent handbook, including but not limited to, non-payment of fees, and not picking up children at the contracted time.
- Failure to inform the Site Manager or program staff of changes in information including: address, emergency contacts, household income, employment, and telephone numbers. Families are required to update this information every six months.
- When a family does not work collaboratively with the program.
- When a child's behaviors impact the safety and well-being of themselves and others.
- When a parent/guardian demonstrates physical, emotional, or verbally abusive behavior towards any other person in our center.

If a family chooses to leave the program, a minimum two week written notice is required.

## **DAYS THE CENTER IS CLOSED**

Upon enrollment, every family will receive a calendar of days in which the center is closed.

In the event of an extenuating circumstance, such as a weather condition or loss of water, there may be a need to close the center. All families will be notified by text should this occur.

In the event of severe weather, families will receive a text with the Agency/Center's revised operating hours. This information will also be posted on our website at [childandfamilyagency.org](http://childandfamilyagency.org), on Child and Family's Agency's Facebook page, and broadcasted on television WFSB Channel 3 and local radio stations.

On days in which the program has a delayed opening, children must be in attendance no later than 45 minutes past the designated opening.

## **ALTERNATE CARE PLAN**

Children enrolled in School Readiness funded slots are eligible to use an alternate childcare program on non-holiday closures. In order to access alternate care, a family must notify the Site Manager at least two weeks in advance. The Site Manager will make arrangements for your child's alternate care needs providing those sites have space availability. There is no guarantee that alternate care will be available.

## **WHAT IS "DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE" PRACTICE?**

As trained Early Childhood Education professionals, teachers are educated in knowing what developmentally appropriate practice is. Teachers discover children's needs through both individual and group play and plan their environment and learning experiences (activities) accordingly. Teachers nurture a child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development by observation/assessment, in coordination with knowledge of the child's family, cultural background, past and current experiences, and the community of which they are a part of. Research and experience tell us that play is a young child's work and each child's work is a journey.

## **CURRICULUM**

Every classroom utilizes the Connecticut Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) as the foundation for planning learning experiences, observing and documenting child growth and implementing teaching strategies. The curriculum is developed to support the standards and benchmarks as outlined in the ELDS.

## **CURRICULUM con't.**

Another strong component of our curriculum is the Bingham Pro-Social Behavior Program. This program teaches kindness, respect, cooperation and empathy with a focus on emotions. Along with the daily classroom activities, there is a home/school connection which utilizes parent tip sheets and prosocial activities for home.

The daily schedule and Learning Experience Plans (LEP) are posted in the classroom. The activities planned are developmentally appropriate and reflect the interests, growth, and development of the children.

Outdoor play is an integral part of our daily curriculum. All children receive 90 minutes of large motor physical activity on a daily basis. The amount of daily outdoor play is determined by utilizing the heat/cold National Weather Index Chart which is posted in each classroom.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Many forms of assessment are used to ensure children are meeting developmental milestones. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is used to screen each child on a regular basis. This is a parent driven tool that is supported by classroom teachers. When concerns arise, the parent and teacher create a plan to address these concerns which could involve Birth to Three Services for children under three, and the public school system for preschoolers. Teachers use the Connecticut Documentation and Observation Teaching System (DOTS) as an ongoing assessment tool that drives the classroom LEPs for both individual and group learning experiences. For those children having been in attendance in our center for a year and will be entering kindergarten the Brigance Early Childhood Screening is conducted in the fall/October and spring/June. The Brigance Screening targets key areas of development: language, literacy, math, science and physical health. The results of the screening provide teachers with the knowledge of where individualized instruction should be implemented. Concerns that arise from any of these screenings are referred to the appropriate resource which may include a pediatrician, Birth to Three, our education consultant or the public school system for further evaluation. Parents are always included in this process.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Within four weeks of enrollment in the program, each parent/guardian will be requested to meet with childcare staff to review the child's progress and set goals for their child. During this meeting, staff and parents will share their assessments of the child's development and ideas for an individual education plan. Staff and parent/guardian will complete and formalize the Individualized Child Profile (ICP)/Individualized Development Plan (IDP). Staff will assess child's development every three to four months and conference with the parent/guardian regarding the assessment. The ICP/IDP will be reviewed and modified or rewritten at that time. Staff or parent/guardian may request a conference at any time. Parent-Teacher conferences support healthy home school connections and are a necessary tool for gathering important information from families about their child.

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

"Family engagement is a full, equal and equitable partnership among families, educators and community partners to promote children's learning and development, from birth through college and career" (OEC). *We do believe families are the most important people in their child's life!* Our center always welcomes our families! We encourage and expect our families to participate in setting goals for and evaluating their child's progress, communicate with staff, and help make decisions relating to your child's education.

Ways to engage with your child and our program:

- Conversations with our teaching staff at drop off and pick up
- Keep yourself informed with the many means of school to home communications
- Your child's assessment plan: completion of ASQ and participation in parent/teacher conferences
- Attend family activities and events
- Attend family meetings/trainings on topics including: Kindergarten Transition, Nutrition for children, The Importance of Play & Early Literacy
- Support our programs effort to develop a Parent Advisory Council, be an active member and help to outline responsibilities and policies for this council
- Participate in home/school activities including helping your child to bring a show and tell item to school, early literacy take home bags with activities and read to your child everyday.

**Positive relationships and genuine partnerships between families and center staff naturally support the positive growth and development of each child.**

## **SERVING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Our program is committed to serving children with special needs. Whether a child enters with a Public School IEP (Individual Education Plan) or one is generated during a child's time at our center, staff and administrators will promote and ensure IEP goals and objectives along with public school representatives.

**Teachers meet with parents on a regular basis to discuss children's development. If a child presents a developmental concern, teachers will discuss this with parents and a plan is developed to have the child observed, assessed and/or referred for appropriate services.**

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Staff shall use positive methods of discipline which encourage self-regulation, self-direction, self-esteem, and cooperation.

“Above all, we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are emotionally damaging, physically harmful, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, or intimidating to children.” (NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct)

Staff shall not use verbally abusive, emotionally, physically, neglectful (to include denying food), corporal (hitting, shaking, pinching, etc.), humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances.

Removal of a child from the group for disciplinary/health reasons shall be to a location where visual supervision by staff can be maintained.

Staff teaches children acceptable behavior in positive ways through various techniques including; redirection, conflict resolution, helping with tasks that are difficult or frustrating for the child and demonstrating/role modeling positive behaviors.

Each classroom provides a quiet space for children who are in need of a break or need time to themselves or away from the group.

Staff will not physically restrain children except for the protection and safety of the child or others, using least restrictive methods, as appropriate. Families will be notified of a restraint to their child. If the Site Manager determines an Individual Behavioral Care Plan is in the best interest of the child, the child's family and teaching staff will be involved in the formation of the Care Plan. Families are required to sign off on this Care Plan.

The Site Manager will support a family of a child with persistent behavioral issues by connecting them to services such as Birth to Three, Child and Family Agency Child Guidance Clinic, Child First, and Early Childhood Consultant Partnership (ECCP).

## **SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN**

We are mandated to follow OEC State Licensing Regulations in regard to the supervision of children. You can find a copy of the State Licensing Regulations at the center or at: [https://www.ct.gov/oec/lib/oec/licensing/childcare/centers\\_statsregs.pdf](https://www.ct.gov/oec/lib/oec/licensing/childcare/centers_statsregs.pdf)

The following are safety practices that are followed:

- Staff maintains a daily attendance record.
- All children must be supervised by sight and sound.
- Infants and Toddlers must be in the physical presence of adults at all times.
- Staff takes group headcounts at every transition throughout the day.
- Field trips are a part of our preschool curriculum and supervision by staff does not change. Parent participation on field trips is appreciated as it allows additional support in the supervision of children.

## **INFANT SLEEPING POSITION**

To reduce the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), all infants up to the age of 12 months must be placed on their backs to sleep in accordance with CT OEC Child Daycare Licensing regulations. If there is a medical condition that warrants stomach placement for sleep, a letter of authorization must be signed by the parent/guardian and the child's pediatrician. Crib sheets for our Office of Early Childhood regulated cribs will be provided by the center. Blankets, bumpers and toys are not permitted in the cribs. The only alternative to a blanket that may be used for sleeping is a sleep sack. Infants are to sleep in cribs only. They will not be left sleeping in seats, car seats, swings unless medically required and a doctor's note is kept on file.

## **TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN**

An important goal of our Early Care and Education Programs is to prepare our preschoolers for kindergarten. Transition to kindergarten can be an exciting and anxious time for both the parent and child. The list below reflects the ways in which parents and teachers work together to provide a positive and smooth kindergarten transition experience:

- During the beginning of the pre-k year, the teacher and parent will and plan the child development goals and Kindergarten transition strategies.
- Parents are invited to attend a Kindergarten information session with the local schools to gather information and have their questions answered.

## **TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN con't.**

- We will encourage families to visit the schools so they can make an informed school choice for their child.
- The Public Schools will send us Kindergarten Lottery information to post for the families.
- Family Resource Center and/or Childcare staff will schedule some times to have a computer available to help families register their child for Kindergarten.
- Classroom teachers will sponsor a Kindergarten Transition Parent Night.
- The pre-k children may participate in a field trip to a kindergarten classroom in late Spring
- Discharge summary on your child's learning experience will be completed by teachers and be forwarded along to public school systems prior to their first day of kindergarten. Families will also receive a copy of this summary.
- A "Movin' On Up" ceremony is held during the summer months for the families of children leaving for kindergarten.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION STRATEGIES**

We continually evaluate the quality of our program and its effectiveness in these ways:

### Families:

- Bi-annual Family Surveys
- Parent meetings
- Family engagement

### Program:

- State OEC annual and unannounced licensing inspections
- Annual local health department environmental inspection
- NAEYC annual program report
- Annual staff surveys
- Quarterly School Readiness monitoring visits and reports

The feedback received from these evaluation sources are reviewed by program management on a yearly basis and shared with staff and families. Program changes are made based on the results in order to ensure that these changes are aligned to best practices for children and families.

## **IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Site Manager	860-449-8217 ext. 1124 Cell 860-941-6089
Caterpillar Room (Infant)	860-449-8217 ext. 1127 Cell 860-941-2401
Butterfly Room (Toddler)	860-449-8217 ext. 1122 Cell 860-941-4360
Sunshine Room (Preschool)	860-449-8217 ext. 1126 Cell 860-941-4978
Jelly Bean Room (Preschool)	860-449-8217 ext. 1121 Cell 860-941-4458
Childcare Administrative Assistant	860-449-8217 ext. 1101
Director Early Childhood Services	860-442-2797 ext. 1215

## **PROGRAM STAFF**

The **Director of Early Childhood Services** is responsible for management of the agency's two Early Care and Education Centers. Questions/concerns may be addressed with the Director at (860) 442-2797 ext. 1215.

The **Site Manager** is the first person with whom you have contact. She/he completes the enrollment paperwork process with all incoming families. She/he has college training in early childhood or education and several years' experience working in child care programs. She/he is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Center. Any changes with enrollment information, questions and/or concerns in regard to your child or the program should be addressed with the Site Manager at (860) 449-8217 ext. 1124.

### **Teaching Staff**

As a nationally accredited program, our teachers must have high levels of formal education and specialized early childhood professional preparation. Teachers engage in warm positive interactions with children, offering rich language experiences, and creating higher quality learning environments. Teaching staff are responsible for curriculum planning and assessment.

### **Substitutes**

Substitutes are utilized on an as needs basis in relationship to staff absences. Substitutes are required to have some early care and education training as well as practical classroom experience.

## **PROGRAM STAFF con't**

### **Additional:**

Volunteers are an important and beneficial part of our program. Community members, student volunteers and interns from local colleges and community members make up our volunteer team. These volunteers provide classroom support and establish positive connections with the children.

## **MANDATED REPORTING**

All child care staff have the responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of all children. The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct states, "When we become aware of a practice or situation that endangers the health, safety or well-being of children, we have an ethical responsibility to protect children or inform parents and/or others who can."

All child care staff are Department of Children and Families (DCF) Mandated Reporters and are legally obligated to report any knowledge or suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the DCF hotline.

## **PROGRAM SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS**

### **Consultants:**

- Educational Consultant
- Health Consultant
- Social Service Consultant
- Nutrition Consultant
- Dental Consultant

Consultants are required by State OEC Licensing and provide advice, support, and education to the program.

**Child and Family Agency Child Guidance Clinic:** For staff and families that express concerns in regard to a child's social, emotional, and/or behavioral needs, mental health clinicians are available through a referral process.

**Child and Family Agency School Based Health Center Nurse Practitioners:** are a back-up health provider for program enrolled children. Nurse practitioners are available by appointment to take care of children's health needs as they arise i.e. physicals, prescribe medication, and administer flu shots.

## **PROGRAM SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS con't.**

**Child and Family Agency Family Resource Centers:** Are a valuable resource for children and families in the community as well as in our programs. They provide family engagement activities such as create a craft & create a healthy snack. They also help to engage children and families in the Kindergarten transition process and often follow the children after they have started Kindergarten. In addition, FRC staff also help provide families with access to a variety of resources including; parent education, job training, adult education and Public Library Services.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Professional development is a requirement for all program staff, with each staff member having his/her own Professional Development Plan. Professional development not only provides staff with required trainings and certifications, but allows staff to improve in their knowledge and competency in the field of Early Care and Education. Some of these training opportunities include: CPR/First Aid, Medication Administration, Mandated Reporting, Early Literacy, Curriculum, Diversity, Special Needs, Child Assessment, Nutrition and Behavior Management Strategies. Our level of commitment to ongoing professional development for our teaching staff ensures the highest quality program for children and families.

### **TOILETING**

Toileting begins with our toddlers. When parent/guardian and provider agree that the time has come to begin the toileting process, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss how both provider and parent/guardian can support the child in this important learning process. Keep in mind that learning to use the toilet is like any learning process and should be presented when the child is developmentally ready.

For our preschoolers ages 3 -5 they should have started and/or mastered the following toileting skills:

- Understand the difference between wet and dry
- Are willing to use the toilet
- Communicate their need to use the toilet
- Manage their own clothing
- Wipe self after toileting

Staff will support children in their toilet training needs as necessary and provide communication and guidance to families needing toileting support in the home.

## **ITEMS NEEDED FOR SCHOOL**

Your child must have:

- Daily nutritious lunch: labeled with your child's name – microwavable containers only, no glass containers, soda, or candy
- Weather/seasonal appropriate clothing\*
- Two complete sets of extra clothing to remain at Center labeled with child's name (individualized bin provided)
- Tooth brush
- Small blanket and/or pillow- will go home every Friday for laundering and must return on Monday
- Diapers/pull ups and wipes

Items/toys from home are only allowed on days when requested by staff as part of a classroom curriculum activity.

## **MEALS AND SNACKS**

Good nutrition is important to our program. Developing healthy eating habits at an early age helps children grow into healthier adults. We meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for the snacks in our program by providing at least two of four food components. These food components include: milk, fruit, vegetables, bread, grains, meat and dairy products. Our Nutrition Consultant has also provided healthy foods and nutrition training for our parents and the "My Plate" Nutrition program to the children and staff. Our Center's provide a daily morning and afternoon snack. Families provide their child's

lunch. The Center provides milk and water to children at snack and lunch time. Center snacks are served family style.

Snack menus are planned for the month and posted in each classroom. Changes will be noted on the menu. Children dropped off between 6:30-7:30 are allowed to bring a breakfast from home. For all other children, Center snack time is approximately from 8:30-9:10.

Lunch is served from 11:45-12:30.

A microwave oven is available for staff to **warm** children's lunches. For safety purposes the following guidelines must be followed:

1. Food is to be sent in a non-breakable microwave safe container, and each heatable item must be in a separate container. **Glass containers are not accepted.**
2. Staff will warm food 1-2 minutes.

## **MEALS AND SNACKS con't.**

3. Unacceptable foods to be warmed: frozen kids meals of any kind, uncooked food, food in a can, **including Chef Boyardee meals.**

A list of unacceptable and chokable food items is given to each family at the time of enrollment.

Afternoon snack time is based on the rest schedule of the room, but is typically served between 2:50 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

### **For infants/toddlers in our program:**

Staff will not introduce new foods to infants. Please tell staff when a new food has been introduced to your child at home.

Per licensing requirements, after bottle feeding, the formula or breast milk is discarded within one hour; please portion your infant's bottles to avoid waste.

When infants transition to cereal, the cereal must be spoon fed to the baby. Adding cereal to bottled formula is not allowed.

Nursing mothers are encouraged to breast feed their infants. A quiet private space will be provided.

For infants and toddlers, peanut butter and honey will not be offered to the child unless the child has had these food items at home with no allergic reactions and parents must notify staff that these two items have been introduced at home.

## **HEALTH RELATED SERVICES**

At the time of enrollment, all families will complete a School Based Health Center application. The School Based Health Centers are a backup alternative healthcare plan to a family's primary healthcare plan. They can provide physicals and flu shots, treat acute illnesses, and prescribe medicine for children. The Site Manager can provide the location of the centers as well as the nurse consultant's information in order for a family to make appointments.

Upon enrollment, families must provide a current (within 6 months) State of Connecticut Health Assessment Record (for children ages birth-5) that includes the child's immunization record. **An annual Health Assessment Record with up to date immunizations is required.** Parents are given a reminder by the center when the next exam is due. Attached to the reminder is a new Health Assessment Record that will need to be updated by both the parent and the pediatrician. The nurse consultant does weekly well-child check-ins, reviews children's records, and consults with the Site Manager.

## **HEALTH RELATED SERVICES con't.**

If a family wishes to consult with the Center's nurse practitioner they should speak with the Site Manager. For questions in regard to a child's vision, dental and hearing, the site manager and the School Based Health Centers can make referrals to local programs. On occasion, the Lions Club may be contracted to provide free vision screening for the children in our programs.

## **HEALTH EXCLUSION POLICY**

Children must remain home or will be excluded when they have the following:

- A fever (above 100.0 F) for the past 24 hours without fever reducing medication. The center staff will take a child's temperature two or more times to ensure accuracy.
- Shows symptoms of a contagious disease or illness such as Measles, Chicken Pox, Conjunctivitis, Coxsackie Virus, Fifth disease.
- Have rashes that have not been identified or diagnosed by a physician.
- Any lesion or wound with chronic oozing of fluids.
- Have had 2 or more episodes of diarrhea in the past 24 hours that cannot be contained in a diaper or that cause a toilet trained child to have accidents.
- Have vomited 2 or more times in the past 24 hours.
- Have a thick green nasal discharge and/or a persistent cough.
- Is not well enough to fully participate in classroom activities, including outdoor play, or has a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide.

All parents/guardians will be called when the child has a health concern. When the child is being excluded families have 1 hour after phone call to pick up their child (emergency contacts can be used for this purpose). All children excluded from the program will receive a written Health Exclusion Form which indicates the specific requirements for the child to return to the program. Parents are required to sign and date this form and will receive a copy.

When a child is excluded, they may not return to school the next day. In some circumstances a doctor's note may be required to return. When prescribed an antibiotic, a child must remain at home for 24 hours.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS**

Staff may administer medications when necessary. Administration of medication procedure is followed and a Care Plan is developed and reviewed by the Site Manager and Health Consultant. All prescription and non-prescription medications require an **"Authorization for the Administration of Medications by Day Care Personnel"** order form with written physician and parental permission. Physicians are required to enter all necessary information. No child will be given medication unless they have had at least one dose at home without any adverse reactions.

All prescription medications must be in the original childproof container. Non-prescription medications (Tylenol, Benadryl, and teething medications), and topical medications (diaper changing ointment, sunscreens, insect repellents, medicated powders) must be labeled with the child's name.

If your child is going to require medication parents will notify staff both verbally and in writing at drop off as to what time the medication should be administered.

Please refer to the Administration of Medications, or Non-Prescription/Topical Medication Administration form for complete details on acceptable medications.

Emergency medications will not be locked, but will be out of reach of children (epi-pens, inhalers). All other medications are stored in locked boxes in the refrigerator or cupboard as appropriate.

**The adult is required to hand medications and permissions to a staff member.** No medications are allowed to be stored in a child's personal belongings or cubby.

All necessary items needed to administer medication (measuring spoons, etc.) must be provided by parent/guardian.

## **INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTS**

A report is written for each incident or accident that occurs while your child is under our supervision. Each report must be signed and dated by the child's parent/guardian. A copy of the report is given to the parent/guardian and a copy is kept in the child's file. If staff feel it is necessary to inform the parent/guardian of the incident/accident prior to their child's pick up, staff will attempt to reach the parent/guardian.

## **EMERGENCY CARE PROCEDURE**

All staff are certified in Pediatric First Aid CPR and AED, and Medication Administration.

If a medical emergency occurs to a child, the following steps will be taken:

- Immediately administer first aid.
- If an ambulance is needed, 911 will be called as well as the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called.
- Parent/guardians must meet the child at the hospital.
- The parent/guardian will be responsible for the fee charged for the emergency service.
- Upon arrival at the emergency care facility, the parent/guardian insurance policy will be considered primary and the Agency's will be considered secondary.

## **PARKING/CAR SEAT SAFETY**

- Please use caution upon entering and exiting the parking lot.
- Vehicles may only park in designated parking spaces in both the front and back lots.
- The designated "handicapped space parking only" is for vehicles with state issued handicapped permits only. It is illegal to park in "handicapped space parking only" without state issued permits.
- **Per Fire Marshal it is illegal to park in the FIRE LANE.**
- **Do not leave your car engine running.**
- **Do not leave children in the car without adult supervision.**

Connecticut Car and Booster Seat laws:

- Infants must remain rear facing until they are a minimum of both 2 years and 30 pounds.
- Toddlers must be in a forward facing car seat with 5 point harness until 5 years and 40 pounds.
- Any child 5-7 year of age or weighing 40-59 pounds regardless of age must ride in a rear facing child restraint/care seat or a forward facing child restraint/booster seat secured by a lap-and-shoulder seat belt.

If you are in need of a car seat for your child, please speak with the local police department or L&M Hospital.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

Early Care and Education programs are required to maintain emergency preparedness plans which include fire safety, lockdown protocol, Dominion Millstone Nuclear events, and medical emergencies. We maintain these plans by:

- Monthly Fire Drill Evacuation
- Annual Site Lockdown Drill
- Dominion Millstone Nuclear event: we follow special instructions from the Department of Emergency Management. In the even a radiological incident, staff will take children to Kelly Middle School in Norwich in their personal vehicles. Only with the governor's announcement will children receive the potassium iodide pill.

In case of emergency, staff and children may be evacuated to:

Faith Lutheran Church  
625 Poquonnock Road  
Groton, CT 06340

***\* This site is located next door to The Groton Early Childhood Development Center***

Parents/guardians will be notified by text and/or phone call to pick up their child.

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

If you have a problem or a concern about the program, we want to know about it and work with you to resolve it. To address your concern, please follow the chain of command below until your concern is resolved:

- Your child's teacher
- The Site Manager
- The Director of Early Childhood Services
- Chief Operations Officer (860-443-2896)
- Chief Executive Officer (860-443-2896)

If the problem is not resolved, you may contact the CT Office of Early Childhood-Division of Licensing (1-800-282-6063 or 860-500-4450). In case of abuse, neglect, or life threatening situations contact the Department of Children and Families (1-800-842-2288).