

NC Pre-K Program



**Parent Handbook
2022-2023**

NC Pre-K Program

Parent Handbook

Table of Contents

Introduction

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Letter from Administrator..... | 3 |
| Mission Statement..... | 4 |
| Overview of Program..... | 4 |
| Days and Hours of Operation..... | 4 |
| Arrival and Departure Procedures..... | 5 |
| School Safety..... | 5 |
| Pick-up and Dismissal..... | 5 |
| Attendance..... | 6 |
| Inclement Weather..... | 6 |

Health and Nutrition

| | |
|---|---|
| Physical and Immunizations..... | 6 |
| Illness..... | 6 |
| Medications..... | 7 |
| Emergency Care Plans & Severe Allergy Policy..... | 7 |
| Child Nutrition..... | 7 |

Classroom Policies

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| What to Bring..... | 8 |
| Toys from Home..... | 9 |
| Dress..... | 9 |
| Toilet Training..... | 9 |
| Celebrations..... | 9 |
| Nap and Rest..... | 10 |

Behavior Management Policy

| | |
|------------|----|
| SEFEL..... | 10 |
|------------|----|

Curriculum

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Creative Curriculum Overview..... | 11 |
| Seesaw | 11 |

Parent School Partnership

| | |
|---|----|
| Volunteering..... | 12 |
| Communication..... | 12 |
| Parent Conferences..... | 12 |
| Tips: How You Can Make Preschool Successful for Your Child..... | 12 |

Screen Time

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Screen time and young children..... | 13-14 |
|-------------------------------------|-------|

School Policies

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Child Abuse Reporting Policy..... | 15 |
| Sanitation..... | 15 |
| Grievance Policy..... | 15 |
| Confidentiality/HIPPA..... | 15 |

Kindergarten Transition..... 16

Contact Information..... 16

Introduction

Dear Parent:

Welcome to the NC Pre-K Program in Cabarrus County Schools. I am thrilled you have decided to join our family. I hope that as our school year moves forward, you will take time to visit your child's classroom and get to know our staff. All our staff appreciates your willingness to share your child. Each of us know the importance of high-quality early childhood education, as well as the value of caring and nurturing environments. Play is at the heart of our program. Children learn through their play, and all things can be taught through play. I hope you find much laughter, discovery and warmth in the play of our program. Thank you for your trust, and I look forward to getting to know each of you.

Sincerely,
Trina Wenzel
Preschool Director

Mission Statement

Together with families, we will provide an engaging, creative environment where education is individualized for all learners.

Overview of Program

Our program is licensed by the North Carolina Division of Child Development and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction as a 5-Star Child Care Center. This means we elect to abide by all the enhanced standards for licensing requirements, including reduced ratios and highly-qualified staff. All our lead classroom teachers are licensed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction as certified Birth-Kindergarten teachers. All teacher assistants either have, or are working toward, a 2-4 year degree in early childhood education.

Days and Hours of Operation

Our program will primarily follow the Cabarrus County Schools academic calendar. The school hours will be **provided by your child's teacher**. We will observe all holidays and annual leave days listed on the school calendar. A place has been reserved for your child for the school year, early withdrawal causes a loss of funds for our program.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT YOU MUST STOP FOR ALL BUSES THAT HAVE A STOP ARM EXTENDED. This includes buses that are in our drive and/or parking lot. Passing a stopped school bus can result in the maximum point violation on a NC Driver's License. The school resource officer will be on campus most days to facilitate safety during arrival and dismissal.



In order to ensure safety is maintained, it is important that all parents and staff adhere to the following policies regarding safe arrival and departure procedures.

Parents will be required to come to the designated drop-off/pick-up area to sign your child in or out. **Children must be accompanied to and from the designated area by an adult 18 years of age or older.**

School Safety

A security vestibule has been installed to enhance the safety of our school. Please ring the buzzer when entering. All visitors must sign in with a valid picture ID at the computer located in the front office. All adults dropping off and **picking up a child must be 18 years of age or older.**

Any changes on the Emergency Contact Form must be made in the front office by the parent. Two types of documentation of a new residence must be provided. It is very important that parents provide the school with any change of contact information as soon as possible. In order to keep your child safe, no changes will be made over the phone. All changes will need to be made in person at the front office.

In case of an emergency that requires campus evacuation, parents will be notified as soon as possible as to where to pick up your child.

Arrival and Dismissal:

- **Car Riders**

Car riders in the morning and/or afternoon will follow the procedure set by the school they are attending. This procedure will be established and shared with parents.

Attendance

It is important that your child come to class every day, unless he/she is sick or there is a family emergency. If a child misses class regularly or is habitually tardy, it may become necessary to place him/her on the wait list and enroll another child. Good attendance is very important if a child is to benefit from the preschool program. If a child arrives after this time, the morning routine will already be in process. If your child needs to arrive after this time, please let your child's teacher know the reason and what time they will arrive.



Inclement Weather

We will follow Cabarrus County Schools schedule for inclement weather closing, delays or emergency delays/closing. The local television stations and our website will provide information regarding closings and/or delays.

Health & Nutrition

Physicals and Immunizations

Upon enrollment to the preschool program, each child must have a current Preschool Health Assessment and Immunization Record completed by their health care provider. The forms are due by the first day your child attends the program. If these forms not received within 30 days of your child's enrollment, it will result in your child's exclusion from the program. These forms must also be updated yearly.

Illness

If a child is not able to participate in the daily activities, including outdoor time, due to sickness, he/she should not attend school. Due to staffing ratios and visual supervision regulations, children will not be allowed to stay indoors while their classroom participates in outdoor activities. Our Center will call you concerning your child if any of the following conditions occur:

- *Diarrhea*
- *Nausea or vomiting*
- *Fever of 99.4 degrees under the arm or 100.4 degrees orally*
- *Skin rash or open sores*
- *Any symptom requiring one-on-one care or causing severe discomfort:*
 - Very tired, unable to focus in class or lack of appetite
 - Cough that he or she cannot control or continuous sneezing
 - Headache, body aches and/or earache
 - Sore throat, with or without fever, and swollen glands, with inability to control pain or swallow liquids
 - Eye drainage with thick mucus or pus from the eye, with uncontrollable itching



24 Hour Rule:

- Your child should be fever free without medication and no vomiting or diarrhea for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- If your child was given an antibiotic, please keep them home for at least 24 hours after the first dose.

If your child has a communicable disease, such as pink eye, measles, strep throat, chicken pox, virus, flu, etc., he/she should not be sent to school. Some illnesses will require a note from your child's medical provider before your child may reenter the classroom.

Medications

If your child must have medication, either prescription and/or over-the-counter, during school hours, you have the following choices:

1. You may come to school and give the medication to your child at the appropriate time(s).
2. You may obtain a copy of a *Physician Authorization of Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication* form from staff. This form must be completed and signed by a physician and by a parent/guardian. Once completed, classroom staff will be trained by the school nurse in order to administer the medication.
3. You may discuss with your child's physician an alternative schedule for administering medication outside school hours.

Prescription medicines must be brought to school in a pharmacy-labeled bottle. Over-the-counter drugs must be received in the original container. Both must be labeled with administration instructions and your child's name. Over-the-counter medication will be administered according to the parent's written instructions.

Medication must be removed from the school by the parent for the following:

- At the conclusion of a student's treatment
- Medicine expires
- The end of the school year

School personnel will not administer any medication to students unless they have received a medication form, properly completed and signed by the physician, and the medication has been received in an appropriately-labeled container. In order to protect the safety of the staff and your child, there will be no exceptions to this policy.

If you have any questions about this policy, or other issues related to the administration of medication in the schools, please contact our office.

Emergency Care Plans & Severe Allergy Policy

If your child is subject to unusual health hazards, such as an allergy to bee stings, and/or requires special medical intervention (e.g. asthma, diabetes, seizures, etc.), please notify the school administration.

If your child has a life-threatening food allergy, please bring the School Nurse a note from your child's physician. The school will assist the parents and physician of those children who have severe food allergies to develop safe plans for the child at school. All school staff that has contact with a child with life-threatening allergies to foods will be made aware of the child's emergency plan and trained to recognize the symptoms of, and respond to, an allergic reaction.

Child Nutrition

The goals of the food program are to provide nutritious and appetizing meals and snacks for children, introduce different types of foods, and help teach good eating habits. In keeping with childcare licensing rules, children must be served items on the approved menu.

Our program will provide meals at the following cost: Breakfast \$1.40 and Lunch \$2.85. Afternoon snacks must be provided daily by the parent.

To pay for meals you have several options:

- **The Free and Reduced Lunch application is online. If you need a device or assistance to complete the application, please come to our office and we will assist you.**

- Online Payments through K12 Payment Center – <https://www.k12paymentcenter.com/Home/Login>

- **Cash or Checks will be taken if you need to pay in person.**

- **For more information on prices and payments visit the CCS School Nutrition webpage - <https://www.cabarrus.k12.nc.us/Page/39567>**

We will only be able to provide the meals on the menu.

Classroom Policies

What to Bring

- Book bag daily
- Seasonally-appropriate change of clothes (pants, shirt, socks, underwear) labeled with child's name. **Please label all coats, sweat shirts, sweaters etc.**
- Rain boots
- Diapers and wipes (if needed)

Toys from Home

Personal toys from home are treasured by their owners and could become lost or broken. Please be cautious when sending special toys. Teachers may occasionally request items from home to build on the children's specific study or project. Please check with your child's teacher before sending items from home.

Dress

Children attending our program will play and explore in a wide variety of activities. Many of your child's favorite activities may tend to be a little messy, like finger painting and digging in the dirt, and will include lots of movement in different environments. For these reasons, please make sure your child's clothes are comfortable and washable, seasonally appropriate and are not restricting. Shoes need to be sturdy and should keep feet covered and safe. Shoes with slick soles and flip-flops are potentially dangerous to children as they play; therefore, they are not allowed. Sneakers with socks are recommended. If a child appears to have difficulty with his/her shoes, you may be asked to bring sneakers for your child.

Toilet Training

Children are not required to be toilet trained. As the child is showing an interest in toileting, teachers will work with parents to assist in the toilet training process. Parents should dress their child in clothing that is easy to manage, with as few buttons or snaps as possible, so children can feel independent. **Please make sure all clothes are labeled with your child's name.**

Celebrations

The Center will create, within our school community, shared traditions and celebrations that come from our common and valued experiences. Birthdays can be celebrated by teaching children to celebrate their birth, instead of participating in a party with sweet treats. In lieu of sending snacks from home, we invite families to visit the classroom for their child's birthday and share a baby book, story about their birth or the child's favorite book. Our sanitation guidelines prohibit homemade products, and we cannot accept store-bought products due to cross-contamination of nut products. Please respect our efforts to keep all children safe. Teachers will contact you if specific food items are needed for a study project or special occasion.

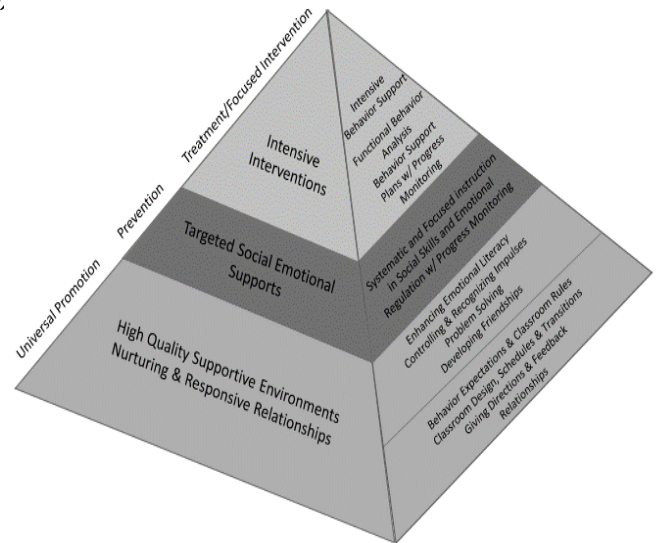
Nap and Rest

Each classroom will offer a scheduled daily rest time. A cot and sheet will be provided by the Center for each child. You will need to provide a blanket for rest time. Children who do not sleep will be allowed to participate in quiet activities (books, puzzles, etc.) after a little rest time.

Behavior Management Policy

North Carolina Preschool Pyramid Model (SEFEL)

The pyramid model is designed to promote positive social and emotional development and decrease challenging behaviors in the classroom. The pyramid model teaches children emotional and social skills that are necessary to be successful throughout their day. When a child is “missing a skill”, it is important to view this as a learning opportunity and teach them the skill rather than using punishment or time out. (For example, if a child grabs a toy from another child, the adult would model and teach the child to ask for a turn using words, gestures, or pictures).



The pyramid’s foundation is built on establishing families, and co-workers. Supportive learning environments are also very important in the tiered model and lay the foundation to teach children to understand and express their emotions, build friendship skills, regulate their emotions, and use problem solving skills. When all these strategies are in place, and there are still persistent challenging behaviors, the team may consider an intensive behavioral support plan with progress monitoring. The pyramid model aligns with school-age MTSS (Multi-Tiered Support System).

In order to support young children who demonstrate dangerous behaviors, North Carolina is providing training in the **Safety First** curriculum (First Response: A Set of Guidelines to Ensure a Safe Environments). Safety First is a systematic, coherent approach to maintaining safety that is developmentally appropriate. As educators, our role is:

- to treat children with dignity and respect
- to prevent injury
- to work towards common goals in addressing behavior
- to teach children rather than punish for their behavior
- to choose teachable moments to address and prevent behavior versus being reactive when it happens

Curriculum

Creative Curriculum for Preschool

Our program uses *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* and *North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development* as a curriculum guide. This curriculum is developmentally, culturally and linguistically relevant for 3-5 year-old children, including those with special needs. Focused on four areas of development: Social/Emotional, Physical, Cognitive and Language, *The Creative Curriculum* is project-based and offers children opportunities to investigate the world around them and to learn through purposeful play.

Ongoing Assessment-Teaching Strategies Gold

This program is used to provide parents with ongoing progress their child is making. Parents are given a log in to the website and the app. With GOLD, assessment is an authentic part of instruction, not a disruption. Embedded in your everyday interactions with children in the classroom or at home, formative assessment is an effortless, organic part of your teaching day. You can easily capture, organize, and store notes, photos, videos, and digital samples of children's work in the moment to make observations authentic, objective, and easy to remember.

Developmental Screening

Mass screening of all children may occur during the first semester of the school year. This would include a review of health information, language and concept development. Teachers will share information with parents as the screening occurs.

NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development

NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development describes goals for all children's development and learning, no matter what program they may be served in, what language they speak, what disabilities they may have, or what family circumstances they are growing up in. The document provides age-appropriate goals and developmental indicators for each age level - infant, toddler, and preschooler. Foundations is also intended to be a guide for teaching – not a curriculum or checklist that is used to assess children's development and learning, but a resource to define the skills and abilities we want to support in the learning experiences we provide for children. Foundations outlines the standards for children from birth through age 5.

Parent School Partnership

Volunteering

Building a strong bond between home and school is encouraged in a variety of ways. A parent's involvement in their child's education is important, and we want you to know what is happening in your child's classroom. Please make every effort to stay informed, as you are your child's most important teacher and advocate. In order to be a regular volunteer at the Center, you must contact our main office for instructions. All visitors are required to sign in at the main office and be identified with a visitor's tag.

Communication

Parent bulletin boards are located in each classroom and contain specific information pertaining to your child's classroom. Center bulletin boards, as well as those in individual classrooms, will display the children's proudest accomplishments -- their creative work!

Communication between home and school is vital to a child's success. Parents are responsible for checking their child's book bag each day for notes and information from the teacher and school. **Most communication between home and school will be through the Teaching Strategies App/Website.** If you do not have computer access, we will have an alternate communication system.



Because teachable moments are occurring every minute your child is at school and teachers need to be available to facilitate learning, we request all phone calls be limited to the specific times each teacher designates, excluding an emergency situation. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule a conference time for any lengthy discussions.

Parent/School Conferences

All parents are invited to participate in parent/ teacher conferences. These conferences will be held a minimum of two times per year during school hours at a time that is mutually convenient for the parents and teacher. During the conference, you will discuss your child's progress based on a Portfolio-Based Assessment and any successes/concerns either the teacher or you may have regarding your child's progress.

How You Can Make Preschool Successful for Your Child:

1. Set up a regular, nightly bedtime routine for your child to ensure he/she is getting enough sleep. Most children need 9-12 hours of sleep. If your child is well rested, he/she will be happier, healthier and better able to make friends and get along with the other children.
2. Wake your child early enough each morning to allow for his/her routine. A hectic morning can cause a child to feel "out of sorts" upon arrival at preschool.
3. Talk to your child each day about what he/she did at school. Do not be concerned if he/she says, "We just played!" Play is the way young children learn. It is often said, "Play is a child's work."
4. Get involved in preschool with your child. YOU are your child's most important teacher! Visit the classroom, volunteer when you can and do things with your child at home to help him/her learn.

If your child seems to have a problem, listen and watch him/her carefully to help you discern what may be bothering him/her. Request a conference with his/her teacher or call the school nurse and make an appointment to meet her. We have staff ready to assist children and parents with any problems that may arise.

Screen Time and Young Children

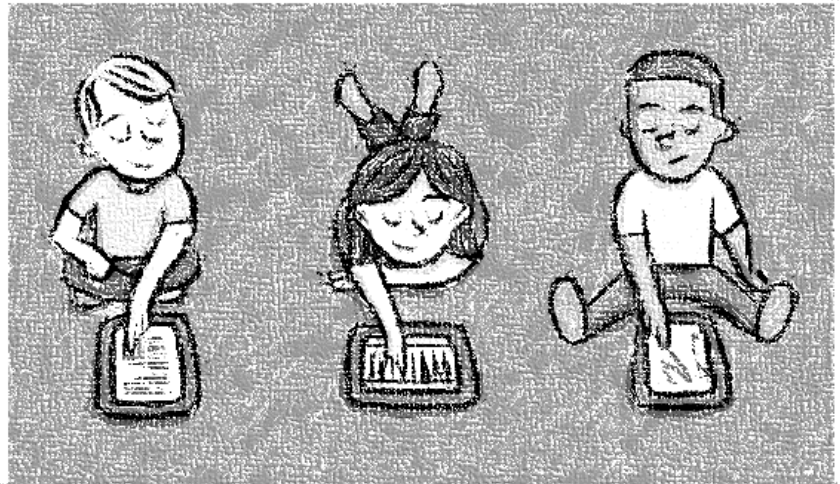
The NC Pre-K Program follows strict guidelines mandated by the state limiting screen time in the classroom. Screen time has grown in popularity with young children. We want to offer guidance that supports the effects of excessive screen time. Digital media exposure (smart phones, ipads/tablets and tv) for children of all ages should be limited, according to new guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The problems with screen time

Unstructured playtime is more valuable for a young child's developing brain than is electronic media. Despite the fact that many digital media programs claim to be educational, children younger than age 2 are more likely to learn and remember information from a live presentation than they are from a video.

Also, it's crucial to monitor the shows your child is watching and the games or apps he or she is playing to make sure they are appropriate. Avoid fast-paced programming, which young children have a hard time understanding, apps with a lot of distracting content, and violent media.

Eliminate advertising on apps, since young children have trouble telling the difference between ads and factual information.



As your child grows, keep in mind that too much or poor quality screen time has been linked to:

- Obesity
- Irregular sleep schedules and shorter duration of sleep
- Behavioral problems
- Loss of social skills
- Violence
- Less time for play

To promote child health and development in a digital world, physicians and other health care providers should counsel parents and caregivers of young children on the appropriate use of screen time. Specific recommendations include the following:

Minimize screen time:

- Screen time for children younger than 2 years is not recommended.
- For children 2 to 5 years, limit routine or regular screen time to less than 1 hour per day.
- Ensure that sedentary screen time is not a routine part of child care for children younger than 5 years.
- Maintain daily ‘screen-free’ times, especially for family meals and book-sharing.
- Avoid screens for at least 1 hour before bedtime, given the potential for melatonin-suppressing effects.

Mitigate (reduce) the ***risks*** associated with screen time:

- Be present and engaged when screens are used and, whenever possible, co-view with children.
- Be aware of content and prioritize educational, age-appropriate and interactive programming.
- Use parenting strategies that teach self-regulation, calming and limit-setting.

As a family, ***be mindful*** about the use of screen time:

- Conduct a self-assessment of current screen habits and develop a family media plan for when, how and where screens may (and may not) be used.
- Help children recognize and question advertising messages, stereotyping and other problematic content.
- Remember: too much screen time means lost opportunities for teaching and learning.
- Be reassured that there is no evidence to support introducing technology at an early age.

Adults should model healthy screen use:

- Choose healthy alternatives, such as reading, outdoor play and creative, hands-on activities.
- Turn off their devices at home during family time.
- Turn off screens when not in use and avoid background TV.

References:

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/Pages/American-Academy-of-Pediatrics-Announces-New-Recommendations-for-Childrens-Media-Use.aspx>

Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world
[Canadian Pediatric Society, Digital Health Task Force, Ottawa, Ontario](#)

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<https://doi.org/10.1093/pch/pxx123>

1998-2018 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research (MFMER)

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/screen-time/art-20047952>

School Policies

Child Abuse Reporting Policy

Anyone suspecting that a child has an injury or a physical or mental condition that appears to have been caused by abuse or neglect must report it immediately to law enforcement or to the Department of Social Services. If the reporting individual provides their name, that information will be kept confidential. Those who issue a report in good faith are immune from criminal or civil liability as a result of the report.

Cabarrus County Schools Early Childhood Program staff has received training relating to child abuse detection, as well as reporting and following the laws of the State of North Carolina.

Sanitation

Our program follows the sanitation requirements set forth by the Department of Environmental Health and the Division of Child Development.

Grievance Policy

In the event of a grievance with regard to the Early Childhood Program, the parent must first seek resolution with their child's teacher. If the parent is not satisfied with the results of that meeting, the parent may contact the program administrator, Trina Wenzel. If the school administrator is unable to resolve the issue, she will refer the issue to the appropriate program coordinator and/or director. Every attempt will be made to resolve any issue.

Confidentiality/HIPPA

It is the policy of the Cabarrus County Preschool Programs to hold in the strictest confidence all information and records regarding any child or family involved with the program. Our policy on "Privacy Rights" states that no information is to be released without the written consent of the child's parent or legal guardian, except in the case of an emergency or other situation in which we are legally bound and/or it is in the best interest of the child. These exceptions may include disclosure of information to consumer advocates such as a Guardian Ad Litem or DSS Social Worker. These persons/agencies are responsible for the safeguarding of any and all confidential information as required by HIPPA. With parental consent, we may also disclose confidential information for the purposes of general research or clinical, financial or administrative audits if there is a need for such information. Persons receiving confidential information may not, directly or indirectly, identify any child in any report of the research, or audit or in any other manner identify the child. We may also disclose information as necessary to health care providers regarding any Advance Instruction pertaining to healthcare.

All staff and volunteer information is considered confidential as well. Each employee and all volunteers sign assurance of confidentiality statements annually.

School Safety

A security vestibule has been installed to enhance the safety of our school. Please ring the buzzer when entering. All visitors must sign in with a valid picture ID at the computer located in the front office. All adults dropping off and picking up a child must be 18 years of age or older.

Any changes on the Emergency Contact Form must be made in the front office by the parent. Two types of documentation of a new residence must be provided. It is very important that parents provide the school with any change of contact information as soon as possible. In order to keep your child safe, no changes will be made over the phone. All changes will need to be made in person at the front office.

Please remember that on Cabarrus County School campuses, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, firearms are not permitted.

In case of an emergency that requires campus evacuation, parents will be notified as soon as possible as to where to pick up your child.

Transition to Kindergarten

At the end of each school year, we will assist parents in enrolling their child in the appropriate kindergarten program. Every effort is made to assist the family in a smooth transition.

Contact Information

Trina Wenzel-Preschool Director

704-260-6790

704-784-2346 (Fax)

3801 Hwy. 601 South

Concord, NC 28025

Check out our website to find out more about your child's teacher and other helpful information!

<http://www.cabarrus.k12.nc.us>

APPENDIX

A: Discipline and Behavior Management Policy

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management of children. When children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief of how children learn and develop values, this facility will practice the following:

We:

1. DO praise, reward, and encourage the children.
2. DO reason with and set limits for the children.
3. DO model appropriate behavior for the children.
4. DO modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.
5. DO listen to the children.
6. DO provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to the children.
7. DO provide the children with natural and logical consequences of their behaviors.
8. DO treat the children as people and respect their needs, desires, and feelings.
9. DO ignore minor misbehaviors.
10. DO explain things to children on their levels.
11. DO stay consistent in our behavior management program.
12. DO use effective guidance and behavior management techniques that focus on a child's development.
13. DO use short supervised periods of time-out sparingly.

We:

1. DO NOT spank, shake, bite, pinch, push, pull, slap, or otherwise physically punish the children.
2. DO NOT make fun of, yell at, threaten, make sarcastic remarks about, use profanity, or otherwise verbally abuse the children.
3. DO NOT shame or punish the children when bathroom accidents occur.
4. DO NOT deny food or rest as punishment.
5. DO NOT relate discipline to eating, resting, or sleeping.
6. DO NOT leave the children alone, unattended, or without supervision.
7. DO NOT place the children in locked rooms, closets, or boxes as punishment.
8. DO NOT allow discipline of children by children.
9. DO NOT criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle children's parents, families, or ethnic groups.

B: Educational Services Agreement

Participation in the Cabarrus County Pre-K programs is a unique opportunity. As with any opportunity, it comes with responsibilities. Participation is a privilege for students. Through this contract, parents join with the Cabarrus County Pre-K Programs in a partnership to support their children.

I am committed to and will:

1. Agree that my child attends school every day that he/she is able. I understand that it is the parent's responsibility to send a note each time the child is absent. I understand that unexcused absences and irregular attendance (despite supportive services) will result in my child being dropped from the program.
2. Agree to make sure my child arrives on time at the start of the school day.
3. Agree to make sure my child is picked up on time at the end of the school day by an adult (18 years of age or older).
4. Agree to keep immunizations/physicals up –to-date and handle any medical needs that arise.
5. Agree to keep all contact information, including home address, phone numbers, emergency contacts etc up to date.
6. Agree to follow school policy regarding sick children and keep my child home if he/she is sick.
7. Agree to communicate with my child's teacher when my child will be absent.
8. Agree to allow staff to make home visits during the school year.
9. Agree to attend conferences requested by my child's teacher and be available to contact on a regular basis with staff. (This may involve home visits, telephone conferences or school conferences)
10. Agree to read nightly with my child and sign the reading daily log as requested by my child's teacher.
11. Agree to participate with my child in regular at-home activities as requested by my child's teacher to promote literacy learning.
12. Agree to check my child's book bag on a daily basis for home/school communication.
13. Agree to let my child participate in the Cabarrus County Pre-K Programs Developmental Screening.

C: Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma

Per North Carolina Department of Child Development, all child development centers serving children from birth to five years old are required to notify staff and families about Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma, in an effort to raise awareness and prevent these types of instances.

The following is information on how to recognize, respond to and report the signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma.

Signs and symptoms include: irritability, difficulty staying awake, difficulty breathing, inability to lift the head, seizures, lack of appetite, vomiting, bruises, disturbance of vision or speech, and weakness or paralysis

Respond: Depending on the severity of the presenting symptoms, the actions taken may include one or more of the following: immediate first aid, calling emergency medical professionals (calling 911), alerting on-campus medical professionals (nurse), and contacting caregivers (family/parents).

Report: If there is reasonable cause to suspect that there is child abuse and/or neglect has occurred, the Department of Health and Human Services should be contacted. 704-920-2277 or 704-920-1400.

In order to support staff in understanding early brain development, all staff are required to attend North Carolina Foundations trainings, which includes a review of the expected development of young children in all domains, including issues related to brain development, including attachment, cognitive functioning, and social/emotional functioning. In an effort to deescalate intense situations (i.e. a child who is crying, tantruming, and/or difficult to control), our staff members are trained in specific strategies to assist children in self-calming.

Cabarrus County Schools Preschool will abide by the following strategies when a child is crying, fussing, tantruming, distraught, and/or difficult to control:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>We:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teach and model deep breathing• move to a quiet setting• set limits and modeling appropriate behaviors• provide alternatives to inappropriate behavior• use positive, descriptive language to encourage appropriate behaviors | <p>We DO NOT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• shake a child• toss a child• push a child into walls, doors, and furniture |
|---|---|

When staff members have attempted to assist in calming a child, but require additional help, they may call for additional support from administration.

The following resources are available to assist staff members and families in preventing shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma: <https://dontshake.org/> <https://www.cdc.gov/> <https://www.childhelp.org/> *Cabarrus County Schools Preschool Programs serve children ages 3-5. Strategies to assist staff members in the care of infants is not applicable.

D: Summary of the North Carolina Child Care Law and Rules

What Is Child Care?

The law defines child care as:

- three or more children under 13 years of age
- receiving care from a non-relative
- on a regular basis - at least once a week
- for more than four hours per day but less than 24 hours.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for regulating child care. This is done through the Division of Child Development and Early Education. The purpose of regulation is to protect the well-being of children while they are away from their parents. The law defining child care is in the North Carolina General Statutes, Article 7, Chapter 110.

The North Carolina Child Care Commission is responsible for adopting rules to carry out the law. Some counties and cities in North Carolina also have local zoning requirements for child care programs.

Star Rated Licenses

Centers and homes that are meeting the minimum licensing requirements will receive a one star license. Programs that choose to voluntarily meet higher standards can apply for a two through five star license. The number of stars a program earns is based upon the education levels their staff meet and the program standards met by the program.

Family Child Care Homes

A family child care home is licensed to care for five or fewer preschool age children, including their own preschool children, and can include three additional school-age children. The provider's own school-age children are not counted. Family child care homes will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants. Licenses are issued to family child care home providers who meet the following requirements:

- Home providers must be 21 years old with at least a high school education or its equivalent, and mentally and emotionally capable of caring for children.
- He or she must undergo a criminal records background check initially, and every three years thereafter.
- All household members over age 15 must also undergo a criminal records background check initially, and every three years thereafter.
- All family child care home providers must have current certification in CPR and first aid, complete an ITS-SIDS training (if caring for infants 0 -12 months) every three years and the Emergency Preparedness and Response in Child Care training and plan. They also must complete a minimum number of training hours annually.

All family child care homes must meet basic health and safety standards. Providers must maintain verification of children's immunization and health status. They must provide developmentally appropriate toys and activities, as well as nutritious meals and snacks for the children in care. All children must participate in outdoor play at least one hour per daily, if weather conditions permit.

Child Care Centers

Licensing as a center is required when six or more preschool children are cared for in a residence or when three or more children are in care in a building other than a residence. Religious-sponsored programs are exempt from some of the regulations described below if they choose to meet the standards of the Notice of Compliance rather than the Star Rated License. Programs that operate for less than four consecutive months, such as summer camps, are exempt from licensing. Child care centers may voluntarily meet higher standards and receive a license with a higher rating. Centers will be visited at least annually to make sure they are following the law and to receive technical assistance from child care consultants.

Licensed centers must meet requirements in the following areas.

Staff

The administrator of a child care center must be at least 21, and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Administration Credential or its equivalent. Lead teachers in a child care center must be at least 18 and have at least a North Carolina Early Childhood Credential or its equivalent. If administrators and lead teachers do not meet this requirement, they must begin credential coursework within six months of being hired. Staff younger than 18 years of age must work under the direct supervision of staff 21 years of age or older. All staff must complete a minimum number of training hours including ITS-SIDS training for any caregiver that works with infants 12 months of age or younger. At least one person on the premises must have CPR and First Aid training. All staff must also undergo a criminal records background check initially, and every three years thereafter. One staff must complete the Emergency Preparedness and Response in Child Care training and plan.

Staff/Child Ratios

Ratios are the number of staff required to supervise a certain number of children. Group size is the maximum number of children in one group. Ratios and group sizes for licensure are shown below and must be posted in each classroom.

| Age | Teacher: Child | Max Group Size |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| 0-12 mths | 1:5 | 10 |
| 12-24 mths | 1:6 | 12 |
| 2 years old | 1:10 | 20 |
| 3 years old | 1:15 | 25 |
| 4 years old | 1:20 | 25 |
| School-age | 1:25 | 25 |

Small centers in a residence that are licensed for six to twelve children may keep up to three additional school-age children, depending on the ages of the other children in care. When the group has children of different ages, staff-child ratios and group size must be met for the youngest child in the group.

Space and Equipment

Centers must have at least 25 square feet per child indoors and 75 square feet per child outdoors. Outdoor play space must be fenced. Indoor equipment must be clean, safe, well maintained, and developmentally appropriate. Outdoor equipment and indoor furnishings must be child size, sturdy, and free of hazards that could injure children.

Curriculum

Four and five star programs must use an approved curriculum in their four-year-old classrooms. Other programs may choose to use an approved curriculum to get a quality point for the star-rated license. Activity plans must be available to parents and must show a balance of active and quiet, and indoor and outdoor activities. Rooms must be arranged to encourage children to explore, use materials on their own and have choices.

Health and Safety

Children must be immunized on schedule. Each licensed center must ensure the health and safety of children by sanitizing areas and equipment used by children. Meals and snacks must be nutritious, and children must have portions large enough to satisfy their hunger. Food must be offered at least once every four hours. Local health, building, and fire inspectors visit licensed centers to make sure standards are met. All children must be allowed to play outdoors each day (weather permitting) for at least an hour a day for preschool children and at least thirty minutes a day for children under two. They must have space and time provided for rest.

The following requirements apply to both centers and homes.

Transportation

Child care centers or family child care homes providing transportation for children must meet all motor vehicle laws, including inspection, insurance, license, and restraint requirements. Children may never be left alone in a vehicle and child-staff ratio must be maintained.

Program Records

Centers and homes must keep accurate records such as children's attendance, immunizations, and emergency phone numbers. A record of monthly fire drills and quarterly shelter-in-place or lockdown drills practiced must also be maintained. A safe sleep policy must be developed and shared with parents if children younger than 12 months are in care.

Discipline and Behavior Management

Each program must have a written policy on discipline, must discuss it with parents, and must give parents a copy when the child is enrolled. Changes in the discipline policy must be shared with parents in writing before going into effect. Corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, or other physical discipline) is prohibited in all centers and family child care homes. Religious-sponsored programs which notify the Division of Child Development and Early Education that corporal punishment is part of their religious training are exempt from that part of the law.

Parental Rights

- Parents have the right to enter a family child care home or center at any time while their child is present.
- Parents have the right to see the license displayed in a prominent place.
- Parents have the right to know how their child will be disciplined.

The laws and rules are developed to establish minimum requirements. Most parents would like more than minimum care. Child care resource and referral agencies can provide help in choosing quality care. Check the telephone directory or talk with a child care provider to see if there is a child care resource and referral agency in your community. For more information visit the Resources in Child Care website at: www.ncchildcare.nc.gov . For more information on the law and rules, contact the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-527-6335 or 1-800-859-0829 (In State Only), or visit our homepage at: ncchildcare.nc.gov

Reviewing Files

A public file is maintained in the Division's main office in Raleigh for every center or family child care home. These files can be

- viewed during business hours (8 a.m. -5 p.m.); requested via the Division's web site at www.ncchildcare.nc.gov; or
- requested by contacting the Division by telephone at 919-527-6335 or 1-800-859-0829 -800-859-0829.

How to Report a Problem

North Carolina law requires staff from the Division of Child Development and Early Education to investigate a licensed family child care home or child care center when there has been a complaint. Child care providers who violate the law or rules may be issued an administrative action, fined and may have their licenses suspended or revoked. If you believe that a child care provider fails to meet the requirements described in this pamphlet, or if you have questions, please call the Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-527-6500 or 1-800-859-0829.

Child Abuse, Neglect, or Maltreatment

Every citizen has a responsibility to report suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment. This occurs when a parent or caregiver injures or allows another to injure a child physically or emotionally. It may also occur when a parent or caregiver puts a child at risk of serious injury or allows another to put a child at risk of serious injury. It also occurs when a child does not receive proper care, supervision, discipline, or when a child is abandoned. North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child maltreatment at a child care facility to report the situation to the Intake Unit at Division of Child Development and Early Education at 919-527-6335 or 1-800-859-0829. Reports can be made anonymously. A person cannot be held liable for a report made in good faith. The operator of the program must notify parents of children currently enrolled in writing of the substantiation of any maltreatment complaint or the issuance of any administrative action against the child care facility. North Carolina law requires any person who suspects child abuse or neglect in a family to report the case to the county department of social services.