

Church of God  
Association of Christian Schools

Child Care Standards

**Revised July 2021**



3736 Cragmont Drive

Tampa, FL 33619-1384

(813) 620-3366 Ext. 112

Direct Line: (813) 739-5618

E-Mail: [director@cgacs.org](mailto:director@cgacs.org)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Philosophy, Governance, and Administration	4
1.1	Mission, Vision, and Philosophy	4
1.2	Governance	4
1.3	Governance Evaluation and Compliance Responsibility	4
1.4	Fiscal Responsibility	4
1.5	Admissions	5
1.6	Children’s Information and Conduct	5
2.0	Personnel	5
2.1	Staff Hiring Practices and Benefits	5
2.2	Director	6
2.3	Instructional and Support Staff Qualifications	8
2.4	Instructional Staff	9
2.5	Support Staff	9
2.6	Child-Staff Ratios	10
2.7	Internal Relationships	10
3.0	Curriculum	10
3.1	Curriculum Guide and Lesson Plans	10
3.2	Physical Development	11
3.3	Social and Emotional	11
3.4	Teaching Strategies	11
3.5	Language and Literacy	12
3.6	Mathematical Awareness	13
3.7	Science	13
3.8	Social Studies	13
3.9	Fine Arts	13
3.10	Program and Child Assessment	14
4.0	Nutrition and Food Services	15
4.1	Nutrition	15
4.2	Parent/Guardian Information	15
4.3	Social Interaction	15
4.4	Food for Infants and Toddlers	16
5.0	Physical Environment	16
5.1	Lighting and Ventilation	16
5.2	Classrooms	16
5.3	Restroom Facilities	17
5.4	Diapering	17
5.5	Staff Space	17

5.6	Outdoor Facilities	17
6.0	Health and Safety	18
6.1	Health	18
6.2	Safety	19
7.0	Family and Community Relations	21
7.2	Parent Handbook	21
7.3	Communication	21
7.4	Parent/Guardian Education	22

## **1.0 PHILOSOPHY, GOVERNANCE, AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **1.1 Mission, Vision, and Philosophy**

- 1.1.1** The program has a written mission statement and a written vision statement that clearly articulate the program's purpose for the care and/or education of young children.
- 1.1.2** The program has a written philosophy regarding the care and/or education of young children which is based on current research and "best practices" in the field and is consistent with the program's mission and vision statements.

### **1.2 Governance**

- 1.2.1** The childcare center has a board or governing committee which oversees the general operation of the center.
- 1.2.2** The board or governing committee establishes and maintains written governing policies and procedures that are consistent with the center's philosophy.
- 1.2.3** The board operates in conjunction with and under appropriate bylaws.
- 1.2.4** The board or governing committee has clearly defined roles and responsibilities in the early education program. New board members are provided with an orientation when they join the board consisting of the center's written policies, defining roles and responsibilities of board members and staff.
- 1.2.5** The board or committee maintains on file written minutes of its meetings.

### **1.3 Governance Evaluation and Compliance Responsibilities**

- 1.3.1** The childcare board ensures an annual evaluation of the early education administrator/director (hereinafter referred to as "the director").
- 1.3.2** The board ensures the childcare center meets and/or exceeds all requirements of civil authorities in the areas of health and safety, child-staff ratios, background screening, fingerprinting, and staff training requirements (or training requirement equivalencies) regardless of any exception status that may be present.
- 1.3.3** The director submits an annual program evaluation and assists the board in setting and prioritizing short- and long-range goals for the center.

### **1.4 Fiscal Responsibilities**

- 1.4.1** The center's financial resources must be sufficient to support its programs.
- 1.4.2** The board provides oversight of the program and reviews the financial position of the program regularly.

- 1.4.3 The center's budget is made carefully and controlled properly, being realistic and adequate for the attainment of the center's stated objectives.
- 1.4.4 The board reviews the program's financial records, including an annual internal review. General accounting procedures used by the program have been validated by an appropriate outside source.
- 1.4.5 In order to ensure the stability of the program in the case of a significant litigation, the board maintains adequate liability and accident insurance including insurance on any vehicle that transports children.
- 1.4.6 The board approves wages and benefits. Wages, benefits, recruitment procedures, and staff retention are reviewed at least annually by the board. Policies reflect an effort to compensate and retain quality staff by including benefits such as health coverage, sick leave, vacation leave, continuing education, Social Security, and an opportunity to participate in a tax-sheltered annuity or other type of retirement plan on a prorated basis where applicable. Paid planning time away from children is also provided.

## **1.5 Admissions**

- 1.5.1 Clear admissions policies and procedures are stated in writing.
- 1.5.2 Race or ethnic background is not a factor in admissions, and the center must issue a statement of nondiscrimination supporting this policy.

## **1.6 Children's Information and Conduct**

- 1.6.1 The director ensures current, complete, confidential records for each child are kept and are available to authorized personnel. The file might include such information as the child's life history, behavioral patterns, assessments of development and cognitive development, interests, and appropriate health records as noted in the Health and Safety section of these standards.
- 1.6.2 The director oversees interaction between staff and children, publishing the discipline policies and procedures for parents/guardians and staff and taking appropriate measures to maintain discipline. Corporal punishment or legally questionable practices will not be used.

## **2.0 Personnel**

### **2.1 Staff Hiring Practices and Benefits**

- 2.1.1 All staff receive a copy of the employee handbook. The staff are instructed at least annually on the center's employee policies.
- 2.1.2 The teachers, administrators, and support staff shall be professing Christians.

- 2.1.3** The center has a published nondiscrimination policy relating to its hiring practices regarding “race, color, and/or ethnicity.”
- 2.1.4** The center’s hiring procedures include background screening and fingerprinting to obtain a history regarding abuse and any criminal convictions for all employees and for others who have direct access with the children in the program.
- 2.1.5** New staff are provided with an orientation and/or a Staff Manual that should include but not be limited to the following:
  - Goals and philosophy of the program
  - Planned activities for the program
  - Appropriate classroom management techniques
  - Routines and transitions in which the children in the program are engaged
  - Discipline policies and procedures
  - Communication with parents
  - Mealtimes and food-handling policies
  - Occupational health hazards
  - Emergency health and safety procedures
  - General health policies and procedures including but not limited to the following:
    - Hand-washing techniques
    - Diapering techniques and toileting (including proper diaper disposal and diaper-changing techniques where applicable)
  - Child abuse/child neglect detection, prevention, and reporting
  - Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting procedures
  - Recognition of symptoms of illness, documentation of these symptoms, and implementation of ill-child policies that include the following:
    - Applying the center’s policies regarding exclusion of ill children and readmission of them after illness
    - Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting procedures
    - Documenting and administering prescribed medication if given to children during center hours by center employees
    - Notifying parents/guardians regarding a communicable disease occurring in children or staff
    - Assessing the health of children daily

## **2.2 Director**

- 2.2.1** The director of the childcare center is a minimum of twenty-one (21) years of age and has a high school diploma or its equivalent, at least one year of continuous work experience in a childcare facility, and fifteen hours of training in childcare, child development, early childhood education, and/or administration along with one of the following: (1) a Director’s Credential or (2) a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution. The degree should include a minimum of nine credit hours of college course work in administration, leadership, or management and a minimum of twenty-four credit hours of

specialized college course work in early child education, child development, elementary education, or early childhood special education.

- 2.2.2** The director is charged with assuming responsibility of the day-to-day operations of the program, maintaining program policies, and monitoring the program's compliance with applicable requirements of civil authorities. The director's leadership addresses the program's goal of fostering the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and character development of children.
- 2.2.3** The director obtains a minimum of thirty clock hours during the first year of employment, especially as relates to state requirements. An additional twenty-four hours per year of continuing professional development, provided by a qualified entity, in such areas as emergent literacy and mathematics, child or staff development, programming, administration, health and safety, family relations, legal issues, communications, and technology is recommended. Whenever possible, continuing education should be validated by college credit and provided as a benefit of employment, part of tuition reimbursement program or financial assistance.
- 2.2.4** The director is responsible for hiring staff who are at least eighteen years of age and support the philosophy and mission of the program in accord with applicable governance procedures.
- 2.2.5** The director ensures a formal evaluation of new employees takes place no more than six months into the orientation period and at pre-determined periods thereafter.
- 2.2.6** The director ensures for each staff member an annual written evaluation is conducted that contributes to the staff member's professional development and is kept in the staff member's file.
- 2.2.7** The director discusses the formal written evaluations with each staff person confidentially and recognizes strengths as well as those areas needing improvement. The areas needing improvement receive follow-up.
- 2.2.8** The director has a current list of qualified substitutes who may be called upon to maintain the integrity of the program.
- 2.2.9** The director designates a qualified person who is at least 21 years of age to assume leadership and responsibility of the center in the event of the director's absence.
- 2.2.10** Developing relationships
  - 2.2.10.1** Staff treats colleagues, children, and their families with equal respect and consideration regardless of race, religion, family background, or culture.
  - 2.2.10.2** Respectful relationships with children are developed by smiling, touching, holding, and speaking to children at their eye level throughout the

day, during routines such as arrival and departure and mealtimes as well as during teacher-planned and child-initiated experiences.

**2.2.10.3** Respectful relationships between colleagues encourage and reflect mutual trust, respect, and support for each other. Staff members seek out and acknowledge each other's ideas and opinions. Staff give positive recognition to each other's skills and accomplishments and provide appropriate support for each other in dealing with stress, maintaining confidences at all times.

**2.2.11** The director builds strong relationships and communication between the staff and administration and encourages team collaboration and spirit among the staff. Regular staff meetings are held for staff to consult on program planning, to plan for implementing and attaining goals, to plan for individual children and family involvement, and to discuss program and working conditions.

**2.2.12** The director meets with the staff annually to evaluate the early education program and to discuss areas of strengths as well as areas needing improvement. The areas needing improvement are addressed after the meeting through a specific Program Improvement Plan.

**2.2.13** The director maintains a confidential personnel file on each employee. The file should contain but not be limited to the following and/or contain information that civil authorities require:

- Resume
- Application including three personal references and employment history
- Copies of college or university transcripts
- Background screening and results
- Fingerprints/clearance
- Annual staff evaluations
- Documentation of any grievances
- Evidence of in-service training
- Copy of contract/work agreement
- I-9 form
- Health screening data (if required)
- Affidavit of Good Moral Character
- Documentation of child abuse training completed
- Copy of current CPR/First Aid card

**2.2.14** Volunteers undergo orientation, background screening, fingerprinting, and training. They work under the supervision of qualified staff.

## **2.3 Instructional and Support Staff Qualifications**

**2.3.1** Qualifications of all instructional and support staff meet or exceed the requirements of civil authorities.



**2.3.2** Clear and up-to-date written personnel policies have been developed by the center. These policies include but are not limited to job descriptions; wages and benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievance procedures.

**2.3.3** Written personnel policies have been communicated with the staff, and receipt of them by the staff has been documented.

## **2.4 Instructional Staff**

**2.4.1** The director recruits and hires quality teachers with appropriate training, at least eighteen years of age, and sufficient experience to carry out their role in the early education program.

**2.4.2** The director recruits and hires quality assistant teachers with appropriate training, at least eighteen years of age, and sufficient experience to carry out their role in the early education program.

**2.4.3** The teaching staff obtains a minimum of forty (40) clock hours during the first year of employment, especially as it relates to state requirements. In addition, a minimum of twenty-four (24) documented clock hours of continuing education or professional development of which twelve hours are provided by an outside source relating to child growth and development in the areas of cognitive learning and social, emotional, and physical development; safety and health issues for young children; family and community relations; classroom and program management; and professional development which may include special needs. Training may also include related language development, discipline, and technology.

## **2.5 Support Staff**

**2.5.1** Support staff—such as secretaries, kitchen staff, substitutes, and aides—have training, are at least eighteen years of age and/or experience to carry out their role in an early education program.

**2.5.2** The support staff obtains a minimum of forty (40) clock hours during the first year of employment, especially as it relates to state requirements. In addition, a minimum of twenty-four (24) documented clock hours of continuing education or professional development of which twelve hours are provided by an outside source relating to child growth and development in the areas of cognitive learning and social, emotional, and physical development; safety and health issues for young children; family and community relations; classroom and program management; and professional development which may include special needs. Training may also include related language development, discipline, and technology.

## 2.6 Child-Staff Ratios

**2.6.1** In order to help ensure the care, bonding, and nurturing of the individual child, each group of children has one primary teacher/caregiver.

**2.6.2** Staff-child ratios for each age group are as follows

<u>Age</u>	<u>Maximum Child:Staff Ratio</u>	<u>Maximum Group Size</u>
Birth – 12 mos.	4:1	12:3
13 – 24 mos.	6:1	12:2
25 – 35 mos.	11:1	22:2
3-year-olds	15:1	30:2
4-year-olds	20:1	40:2
5-year-olds	25:1	50:2
VPK (school year)	11:1	20:2
VPK (summer)	12:1	

When children two years of age and older are in mixed age groups, the ratio is based on the age of the largest number of children in the group. When children under two years of age are in mixed groups, the ratio is based on the ratio of the age of the youngest child in the group.

**2.6.3** The staff maintains a continuous, accurate account of the children in their care.

**2.6.4** Staff who are sharing the primary responsibility of a group of children communicate with one another to ensure smooth operation of the program.

## 2.7 Internal Relations

**2.7.1** All early care and education teachers, caregivers, and staff are given the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey in which they are asked to evaluate the quality of the child care program and work environment.

## 3.0 Curriculum

### **3.1 Curriculum guide and lesson plans**

**3.1.1** The center uses curriculum that has a consistent scope and sequence. The curriculum must be developmentally appropriate and should meet or exceed domains of development of industry standards. Written goals and objectives drawn from research-based developmental benchmarks and scientifically based research is included and reviewed on an annual basis.

**3.1.2** Instructional staff develop lesson plans for each class/age group that reflects the goals and objectives of the curriculum. Plans are developed through consultation and shared ideas with other colleagues who communicate frequently to ensure smooth operations.

### **3.2 Physical development**

- 3.2.1** The curriculum is designed to meet the physical needs of each child. The curriculum includes a balance of indoor and outdoor play opportunities to enable the children to develop gross-motor skills.
- 3.2.2** Lesson plans provide opportunities for children to develop fine- and gross-motor skills.

### **3.3 Social and emotional**

- 3.3.1** The curriculum and environment provide opportunities to foster the social/emotional development of children through respectful interactions with children by frequently making eye contact and using clear, correct language patterns and affectionate, supportive words. Staff-child interactions are an integral part of the social development of children's emotional development which is exemplified by a supportive and comfortable environment where they can be relaxed, happy, and involved in play and other activities.

### **3.4 Teaching strategies**

- 3.4.1** The curricular practices provide a balance of active and quiet activities including large-group (teacher-directed), small-group (teacher/child-interactive), and individual-choice (child-initiated) activities throughout the day.
- 3.4.2** The length of group times is appropriate for the age and development of the children in the class. In mixed-age groupings, accommodations and flexibility meet the needs of each age group included in the class.
- 3.4.3** Staff uses transition activities to move the children from one activity to another throughout the day. Transitional tools may include songs, poems, or other signs that children recognize as signaling a change of activity.
- 3.4.4** Ample developmentally appropriate materials and equipment are provided to support the learning objectives of the program's scope and sequence. Materials and equipment may include but are not limited to manipulatives, puzzles, building materials, musical instruments, creative art materials, sand and water tables, dolls, and other props that support the educational objectives.
- 3.4.5** Ample opportunities for children to interact independently, in small groups, and in large groups are provided in order to help meet social/emotional needs of children.
- 3.4.6** Instructional staff initiates interaction with children who are not engaged in order to stimulate and expand the involvement of these children in the classroom offerings.

- 3.4.7** Curricular plans include ensuring children learn about healthy nutrition through experience and instruction, as appropriate to the program.
- 3.4.8** Children are made aware of good health practices. Methods may include the use of related daily routines by teachers, teacher example, visits to health facilities or from health care professionals, and other curricular presentations appropriate to the program’s curriculum.
- 3.4.9** The center’s discipline policy is clearly articulated in a written document. The policy employs interactive procedures such as redirection, reflective listening, adult role modeling, and positive reinforcement. Corporal punishment or demeaning practices are not used.
- 3.4.10** Staff prepares the environment and plans the flow of the day in such a way that children are encouraged to become independent and to accept personal responsibility with initiative. For example, routines are clearly established so that children know when to clean and organize the room, when to put on clothing for outside activities, and/or when to transition to different activities.
- 3.4.11** Hand-washing techniques are appropriately taught as part of the curriculum. Specifically, hand-washing always precedes eating and children regularly wash hands after bathroom use and outside activities.
- 3.4.12** Media (especially videos) are used on a limited basis and are used particularly for the reinforcement of a teaching topic.

**3.5 Language and literacy—core knowledge**

- 3.5.1** Receptive and expressive language experiences appropriate to the development of children are provided throughout the day. Children in the preschool classes are provided with increased exposure to print and active experiences that support the development of listening and speaking concepts and skills.
- 3.5.2** Teachers provide daily interactions with labels, signs, and/or forms of print and read aloud to the children. They provide exposure to the sounds and names of the letters of the alphabet.
- 3.5.3** Teachers consciously work to help children develop vocabulary and comprehension. They verbally interact with the children to guide them in the acquisition of new and expanded vocabulary, in anticipating outcomes, and in comprehension of what they have heard. This may include (1) “What if” type questions to help children anticipate outcomes, (2) recall of a story, and (3) other verbal interactions that help the children understand sequence (building memory), interaction between characters, etc.
- 3.5.4** Lesson plans include activities that encourage the awareness of phonemes, such as (1) listening for sounds in words; (2) beginning to isolate the syllables of a word using snapping, clapping, or rhythmic movement; (3) learning to differentiate between sounds that are the same and different); and (4)

beginning to recognize when words share phonemes (sounds) and repeat the common phoneme (e.g., /b/ as in Bob, ball, baby).

- 3.5.5 Children are exposed to the form and function of the alphabet through opportunities such as tracing shapes, copying or writing letters, and practicing writing names.

### **3.6 Mathematical awareness—core knowledge**

- 3.6.1 Teachers plan activities that expose children daily to math activities such as sorting and classifying concrete objects; recognizing and identifying likenesses and differences; recognizing first, middle, and last; using opposite concepts such as long and short, in and out, up and down, over and under, and top and bottom; and using concepts of quantity, such as more than and less than.
- 3.6.2 Teachers plan ample opportunities for children to be exposed to basic math concepts such as numbers and numeration through counting; placing objects in one-to-one correspondence; grouping objects by color, shape, or other characteristics; patterning; and recognizing numbers in their environment.

### **3.7 Science—core knowledge**

- 3.7.1 The preschool classroom is a sensory-rich environment, and it includes numerous objects and organisms with which the students can interact. Opportunities are provided throughout the day for children to use their senses for observing and learning about objects, events, and organisms. Teachers help children to perform simple investigations and to describe their observations.

### **3.8 Social studies—core knowledge**

- 3.8.1 Teachers promote the advancement of social skills and positive dispositions by offering numerous opportunities for children to learn about themselves and others.
- 3.8.2 Teachers foster positive communication and interaction as preschoolers actively engage in a variety of such learning experiences as taking turns, playing simple small-group games, and performing daily routines.
- 3.8.3 Teachers provide opportunities and activities that expose children to cultural diversity.

### **3.9 Fine arts—core knowledge**

- 3.9.1 The curriculum daily provides age-appropriate opportunities to expose children in each age group to a variety of musical experiences—including child-initiated ones—such as singing, listening, rhythmic movements, and playing rhythm instruments.

**3.9.2** The curriculum daily provides opportunities to expose children in each age group to a variety of age-appropriate creative arts experiences—including child-initiated ones—such as painting, gluing items together to create art, cutting for design purposes, combining mediums, molding with clay, and creating one’s own stories, plays, and other dramatic activities.

**3.10 Program and child assessment**

**3.10.1** Instructional staff are trained in the use and deliverance of the curriculum. Opportunities for instructional staff to share their suggestions and ideas regarding the curriculum are provided annually.

**3.10.2** Ongoing assessment of children’s progress takes place and is used to plan activities for individual children and for groups of children. Children’s progress is reported with supporting documentation, and the assessment methods are consistent with the program’s philosophy and methodology.

**3.10.3** The center recognizes that instructional improvement, as evidenced by the progress of children, requires the use of multiple tools for assessment. Such assessment should include such tools of evidence as the following:

- Samples of children’s writing and art projects and sketches of constructions with blocks or sand
- Photographs, audio recordings, and videos of children engaged in play while alone and while in groups in a variety of situations and of children otherwise engaged in interactions with others
- Written observations such as time and event samplings of children’s interactions, individual and group activities, and language while alone and in groups
- A checklist of developmental levels and behaviors on which to mark children’s progress and increasing capacities across time
- Observations that address all areas of children’s development—that is the seven intelligences, not just cognitive development
- Results of screenings and formal assessments
- Individual portfolios that contain a wide array of these records and other documentations and that aid teachers in using flexibility to adapt lesson plans
- Written assessment tools shared with parents

**3.10.4** The director ensures instructional staff are qualified to observe children and record these observations or have aid from personnel trained in methods of observing children and recording these observations. Results of observations are used for curriculum planning after identification of each child’s stage of development and parent/guardian conferences.

**3.10.5** An age-appropriate, research-based assessment tool is used to identify the developmental levels and growth of children.

- 3.10.6** Observations of children by staff address all areas of children’s development, including but not limited to multiple intelligences, learning styles, and learning preferences and character development.
- 3.10.7** Staff use their observations to incorporate classroom activities that address the individual needs, strengths, and preferences of the children in their care.

#### **4.0 Nutrition and food services**

##### **4.1 Nutrition**

- 4.1.1** If food is prepared on the premises, the program must be in compliance with the requirements of civil authorities for food storage, preparation, and service. Food may be prepared at an approved facility and transported to the program in approved containers and at approved temperatures.
- 4.1.2** The meals and/or snacks provided for the children meet the nutritional guidelines regarding food groups and quantities that are age appropriate for the children, as suggested by the Child Care Food Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- 4.1.3** Kitchen equipment is monitored by civil authorities, where applicable, to ensure healthy and sanitary conditions.

##### **4.2 Parent/Guardian information**

- 4.2.1** The center provides parents/guardians with printed menus that meet all nutritional guidelines established by civil authorities. Written menus of all snacks and meals provided by the center are also posted in such a way that they are easily seen by parents/guardians. At least two food groups are included for each snack (preferably one is a protein source), and four food groups are included for each meal.
- 4.2.2** Suggestions for food choices that meet nutritional requirements are made available to families who send meals and/or snacks with their own children. Families are encouraged to include at least two food groups, including one protein source, for each snack and four food groups for each meal.

##### **4.3 Social interaction**

- 4.3.1** Mealtime is to be cultivated as a pleasant social time. Staff members sit with children and encourage healthy social interaction, appropriate table manners, and good eating habits.
- 4.3.2** Tables and chairs used for snack/mealtimes are appropriate for the size of the children.
- 4.3.3** The children are encouraged to serve themselves and assist with cleanup within age-appropriate levels of ability.

#### **4.4 Food for infants and toddlers**

- 4.4.1** Infants are held when bottle-fed and not placed with bottles into cribs at any time.
- 4.4.2** Feeding times and amount of food consumed are recorded and made available to parents of infants and toddlers on a daily basis.

### **5.0 Physical environment**

#### **5.1 Lighting and ventilation**

- 5.1.1** The physical environment of the program provides sufficient lighting, good ventilation, and a comfortable temperature.

#### **5.2 Classrooms**

- 5.2.1** Classrooms are suitable for the age and activities of the children in the program. Floor space meets or exceeds a minimum of thirty-five (35) square feet of usable space per child.
- 5.2.2** Classrooms are clean and well-maintained.
- 5.2.3** The physical environment of the classroom is arranged not only to stimulate learning by accommodating large and small groups of children but also to encourage exploration and experimentation. The following are examples:
  - Infants have a protected space for crawling and playing away from more mobile babies.
  - Mirrors, pull-up bars, and/or other interactive items are placed on the walls at babies' eye level.
- 5.2.4** The environment designed for toddlers and two-year-olds facilitates optimal age-appropriate learning experiences. Shelving and storage units provide an organized flow to the room and thereby invite children to interact with materials and equipment.
- 5.2.5** Children are provided with individual spaces, such as cubbies, in which they can store their work and personal belongings.
- 5.2.6** The physical environment includes not only appropriate furnishings such as tables and chairs that allow children's feet to touch the floor but also appropriate room flooring and soft areas that are comforting to children.
- 5.2.7** Drinking water is adequately provided to the children as regulated by civil authorities.



### **5.3 Restroom facilities**

- 5.3.1** Sinks and toilets are readily accessible to children. The number of sinks and toilets (child-sized ones are recommended) must be compliance with civil authorities and adequate for the number of children in attendance.
- 5.3.2** Sinks are located in the area near the toilets with soap and paper towels accessible to the children.

### **5.4 Diapering of infants and toddlers**

- 5.4.1** The diapering area is in good repair and is sanitized after each use. Soiled diapers are stored in a sealed container. Gloves as well as running water and soap for hand washing are accessible and utilized by the staff during diapering.

### **5.5 Staff space**

- 5.5.1** The facilities include appropriate office space for the director of the program.
- 5.5.2** The facilities include an appropriate area for staff meetings and breaks.
- 5.5.3** The facilities provide suitable storage space.

### **5.6 Outdoor facilities**

- 5.6.1** To accommodate the children's various play activities, the outdoor physical environment includes seventy-five (75) square feet per child on the playground at any given time.
- 5.6.2** Playground equipment is varied and sufficient for the number of children on the playground at the same time. The playground is designed and equipped to provide optimal learning experiences for children.
- 5.6.3** Children are supervised at all times, and the child-adult ratio is maintained while the children are on the playground.
- 5.6.4** The center provides adequate protection for the play area, including fencing and a balance of sun and shade.
- 5.6.5** Wood chips, sand, and other cushioning materials of recommended depths are used under equipment such as swings and climbing apparatus, as recommended by civil authorities or national playground safety standards.
- 5.6.6** Through routine inspections and resulting timely repairs, the outdoor play area is well maintained to prevent children from being injured by broken equipment, sharp edges, and rusty parts.

- 5.6.7 When inclement weather prevents children from playing outdoors, alternative activities are planned to ensure large-motor exercise and to foster large-motor development.
- 5.6.8 The center has a process in place that ensures proper maintenance of the buildings, grounds, and equipment.

## **6.0 Health and safety**

### **6.1 Health**

- 6.1.1 The center is inspected by city/state agencies as applicable or licensing or exemption under state or federal law (i.e., fire department, health department, food services, etc.). Inspection documentations are on file. If the program is exempt from licensing, voluntary inspection has been sought, and recommendations for improvement have been followed.
- 6.1.2 Up-to-date, complete, and confidential health records for each child enrolled in the program are maintained in a safe and secure area and are available to authorized personnel. These files are maintained in a safe and secure area and are available to authorized personnel. These files may include such information as the child's life history, developmental milestones, screening or assessment results, typical behaviors, and interests. Children in attendance are in compliance with the requirements of civil authorities regarding immunizations, physical examinations, and communicable diseases.
- 6.1.3 Current emergency information is maintained for each child enrolled in the program, including expected attendance, parent/guardian contact information, people authorized to take the child off the premises, allergies, and other important health information.
- 6.1.4 A written policy regarding the attendance of children who are ill, have been diagnosed with a contagious disease, or have been found to have a communicable condition has been developed and made available to parents. An isolation area is made available for ill or contagious children while they wait for someone to take them home.
- 6.1.5 Staff are alerted to special health conditions of children and are equipped, when applicable, to handle such concerns.
- 6.1.6 A written policy that complies with the requirements of civil authorities for administering and storing medications has been developed and made available to the parents of the children in the program.
- 6.1.7 A detailed medical log is maintained that includes a record of all medications given to children, the time the medication was given, and the person administering the medication.

- 6.1.8** The center has developed policies and procedures to protect the staff and children from blood-borne pathogens by developing a blood-borne exposure control plan and by providing annual in-service to the staff regarding protective procedures. As a result, the staff use “universal precautions” when encountering children’s body fluids.
- 6.1.9** Children and adults wash their hands after toileting, before eating or handling food, and as otherwise necessary to prevent the spread of disease.
- 6.1.10** Infant and toddler bedding is washed at a minimum of twice per week and more often when soiled, and it is used by only one child between washings. Bedding used by preschoolers is washed a minimum of once per week and more often when soiled, and it is used by only one child between washings.
- 6.1.11** The center makes available visual, auditory, speech, language development, physical development, cognitive development, and other health screening assessments when possible to the children, having the consent of their parent or guardian, in the program at least annually.

## **6.2 Safety**

- 6.2.1** Safe arrival and departure procedures ensure all children in the program are accounted for throughout the day and released only to authorized adults. Children are supervised by sight at all times, and transition of children from one teacher to another or from one area to another is accounted for to ensure the supervision and whereabouts of children at all times.
- 6.2.2** The staff is trained to recognize signs of child abuse and neglect. They know the laws and procedures or reporting to the appropriate agency. All communications with authorities are documented and placed in a confidential file.
- 6.2.3** Exemplary abuse prevention is practiced throughout the early education program. For example, a minimum of two teachers is assigned to a group of children. Viewing windows allow for visual access into the classrooms, bathroom doors are left open, and random walk-throughs are practiced throughout the day.
- 6.2.4** Parents are encouraged to provide a change of clothing for their children to keep at the center in the case of an accident. The center maintains a supply of generic clothing in varying sizes to ensure children are provided with a change of clothing in case of an emergency.
- 6.2.5** At least one staff member with first aid certification and infant/child CPE certification will be present on the premises at all times. (It is recommended that all staff have basic first aid and CPR training.)

- 6.2.6** The center maintains adequate first aid supplies and a universal precaution kit that are conveniently available to the classrooms but not to the children. The program maintains a detailed medical log regarding the use of these items.
- 6.2.7** A written notice of accidents and/or illnesses is kept on file, and a copy is given to the parents of the children in the program.
- 6.2.8** The center has a general disaster plan and/or an Emergency Crisis Manual that includes evacuation procedures and inside actions in the event of a disaster or crisis (e.g., snowstorm, tornado, lightning, flooding, fire, bomb threat, violence, and hostage situation). The plan includes directions or disasters common to the geographic area. Staff members are familiar with routes and procedures which are posted in each classroom, and staff regularly practice drills with the children. Such plan should be reviewed periodically by the local law enforcement and emergency personnel and should conform to that recommended by the Office of Homeland Security.
- 6.2.9** Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors are provided and checked as mandated by the local fire marshal, and staff is trained in the use of fire extinguishers.
- 6.2.10** Emergency phone numbers or 911 is posted by readily accessible telephones that have 911 access in order to allow for quick reference in contacting the fire department, police department, poison center, and rescue squad.
- 6.2.11** A plan is in place to contact parents in case of an emergency closing, and the parents have been made aware of the plan.
- 6.2.12** All chemicals, medicine, and other “dangerous if swallowed” materials are stored in their original containers. All potentially dangerous products are stored in a locked area. An MSD (Material Safety Data) sheet is strategically placed near harmful chemicals.
- 6.2.13** Current documentation is available on all vehicle safety inspections and driver qualifications, verifying that all requirements of civil authorities and all specific vehicle transportation requirements are being met.
- 6.2.14** Vehicles are equipped with age-appropriate restraint devices and a first aid kit, and appropriate safety precautions are taken when children are being transported.
- 6.2.15** The center has written field trip policies and procedures that ensure the supervision of all children at all times and thus promote the safety of the children. These are shared with parents and implemented by the program. The policies and procedures must include that permission is attained from parents and that roll checks are logged before, regularly during, and upon return to the center.
- 6.2.16** The facilities are cleaned on a daily basis, including sanitizing the bathrooms and removing trash. The facilities are free of mold and offensive odors.

- 6.2.17 The program has an established plan of sanitizing toys and equipment regularly (infants, daily; toddlers, semiweekly; preschoolers, weekly—with all three groups of toys and equipment receiving more frequent sanitization as needed to maintain a healthy environment for the children).
- 6.2.18 Hot water heaters are set for 110°F or less if the heated water is accessible to children.
- 6.2.19 Electrical outlets should be tamper resistant or covered to prevent children from being shocked.

## **7.0 Family and community relations**

- 7.1 All informational sources established by the center accurately describe the early education program, including its enrollment policy, mission, and statement of nondiscrimination and satisfied consumer protection requirements as established by state, federal law, or administrative rule.
- 7.2 **Parent Handbook**
  - 7.2.1 Parents of the children in the center receive a Parent Handbook that includes but is not limited to (1) the philosophy statement regarding the care and education of young children attending the program, including what discipline techniques will be used; (2) policies regarding holidays, illnesses, hours of operation, fees, refunds, enrollment, and termination procedures; and (3) an explanation of the program's day-to-day functioning. Parents sign a statement acknowledging that they understand and support the program's policies as outlined in the Parent Handbook.
  - 7.2.2 The center has an open-door policy regarding visits by parents on the program's premises. Policies concerning parent involvement (visiting, observing, and volunteering) are in place to ensure the partnership between home and center is maintained.
- 7.3 **Communication**
  - 7.3.1 Administrators and staff communicate with parents in a variety of ways on a regular basis—daily and weekly by verbal communication or posted information and monthly by a newsletter and/or classroom calendar of events, or through electronic means.
  - 7.3.2 Conferences with each child's parents are offered at least twice per year—and at other times as needed—to discuss the child's developmental progress, personal care, and education. Conference schedules accommodate working parents.
  - 7.3.3 During parent conferences, summaries of the results of child observation forms used during scheduled observations of the child are shared with parents, and parents are encouraged to participate in the goal-setting process for the child.

**7.3.4** Significant changes in a child's pattern of behavior and/or physical condition are reported to the parents, documented, and placed in the child's file.

**7.4 Parent/guardian education**

**7.4.1** The program director plans and implements regularly scheduled parent programs that support parents in their parenting role and reinforce the mission of the center. These programs take place at least quarterly.

**7.4.2** The director is familiar with community services and resources regarding children with specific needs and provides this information to parents. The director and staff work collaboratively with community agencies in providing information as needed.

**7.4.3** All parents/legal guardians of children enrolled in the early care and education program are given the opportunity to complete a survey anonymously in which they are asked to evaluate the quality of the program.

**7.5** All early care and education program stakeholders are given the opportunity to complete a survey anonymously in which they are asked to evaluate the quality of program administration.