



2023-2024

Parent Handbook

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A. HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday through Friday 6:30AM to 6:30PM except holidays.

Holidays

The Center will be closed on the following holidays:

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

These are the minimum number of holidays observed by the Center. A schedule will be provided to the parents at the beginning of each calendar year specifying the exact days the Center will be closed.

B. PROCEDURE FOR RELEASE OF CHILDREN

- 1) Children will only be released to an authorized person. An authorized person is someone designated by the parents on the enrollment forms. The authorized person must provide proof of identification to the Center prior to release of the child.
- 2) In emergency situations where a parent cannot pick up their child, the parent can authorize someone not previously identified if the parent provides a written request. This can be authorized by faxing or emailing the signed permission to the Center.
- 3) The authorized person must be an adult (age 18 or above).

C. ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

- 1) No child/staff will be admitted to the Center if experiencing:
 - a. Temperature of 100°F degrees or more.
 - b. Diarrhea or vomiting.
 - c. A rash or contagious condition of any kind, such as impetigo, scabies, ringworm, head lice, etc. Your child cannot be readmitted to the Center after a communicable disease without the written statement from medical authorities indicating the child no longer presents a health risk to the other children.
- 2) If a child becomes sick during their stay at the Center, the parents will be notified to pick up their child immediately.

- 3) For the health and safety of your child and the other children in the Center please keep your child home if he/she shows signs of obvious illness, rashes, and/or fevers of 100°F or more, etc. Your child will not be accepted if they are deemed a health risk to the other children in the Center.
- 4) Re-admission – child (children)/staff must be free from medication and/or any of the above symptoms no less than 24-hours before returning to school unless there is a written statement from the child's/staff's doctor that advises otherwise.

D. PROCEDURES FOR DISPENSING MEDICATION

The Center will monitor/administer medication, if it has been prescribed by a physician. Medicine must have the prescription label on it indicating the child's name, physician's name, current date, dosage, and duration medication is to be given. All prescription medication must be current (within 10 days) unless substantiated in writing by a physician that the prescription is for long-term usage. This must be reevaluated every six months to ensure no changes in the medication's dosage are needed.

Parental permission must be provided for the Center staff to administer prescribed medication.

- 1) A medication form must be filled out and signed for any medication given or applied to your child.
 - a. A *Consent for Prescription Medication Form* must be completed by the child's physician to administer prescribed medication at school.
 - b. For all medicines to be given to a child, it must be listed for each day of use on the *Medication Authorization Form* which is located at the front desk. Please write one line per medicine to be administered.
 - c. Filling out the *Medication Authorization Form* also includes listing over the counter medications that are recommended for your child's age and we have written permission from you and your child's pediatrician.

The Center will not give pain or fever reducing drugs on a regular basis unless prescribed by a doctor. If your child begins to develop a fever while at the Center, we will notify you of their condition up to and including reaching 100°F.

All medications will be stored:

1. Inaccessible to children
2. Readily available to administering staff
3. Under proper temperature control
4. A small lock box will be used in the refrigerator to hold medications requiring refrigeration.

Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

If you wish your child to wear sunscreen or insect repellent, you must apply it before the child is signed in to the school. Teachers may not apply either sunscreen or insect repellent on your child.

E. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

- 1) All cuts, bruises, falls, etc. will be reported to parents. More serious injuries will be reported immediately. Minor accidents, such as skinned knees, will be shared with parents at the end of the day. First aid is administered for all minor injuries, and the incident is documented.
- 2) In the event of a serious injury or sudden, severe illness (such as convulsions, loss of consciousness, etc.), an ambulance will be called immediately. Parents will be notified and asked to meet the child at the hospital. The child will be accompanied by a CPR trained staff member to the hospital to share information about the incident with the medical staff and parents. The child's medical and health information, including all individual emergency care information will be taken to the hospital.
- 3) Families give the center consent to secure any and all necessary medical care for their child, and staff has immediate access to enrollment forms and relevant health insurance information for your child's emergency medical treatment.
- 4) The Director or designated supervisor will decide which symptoms/conditions require medical review prior to admittance.

5) Allergies

Parents are required to notify Creative Minds Child Development Center regarding their child's food or environmental allergies prior to enrollment or, for current students, as soon as the allergy is diagnosed by their healthcare provider. An individualized health care plan must be submitted with the following:

- Details of the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care
- A list of all necessary medications
- Plan must be signed by child's physician

A list of all students with allergies is posted in all the classrooms and in the kitchen. Staff members are trained to familiarize themselves with the list and to consult as appropriate to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies.

Creative Minds is a peanut-free zone. Please ensure that any foods brought into the school from your home do not contain nuts. Despite our diligent efforts, it is impossible to eliminate all risks for children with food allergies. Some allergies are so severe that the presence of the allergen in proximity of the child causes a reaction. Similarly, it is impossible to prevent children from sharing food or for an allergen to be brought into the center by a family member or child, despite our best efforts to educate families and raise awareness. Ultimately, parents/guardians will need to decide whether group care is appropriate for their child with allergies in light of the risks that cannot be eliminated.

6) Blood Borne Pathogens

During the course of a day at Creative Minds, there may be occurrences where the staff come in contact with blood and other bodily fluids. In order to protect the staff and children from blood borne pathogens, Creative Minds requires all staff to attend training of and adhere to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations.

Gloves are used for all incidents where blood is involved so that hand contact is prevented. All gloves used are placed in a sealed plastic bag and disposed of appropriately. Surfaces are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected following blood exposure and at the end of the workday. Gloves are also used during diaper changing. Any soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed plastic bag to be sent home with the child.

By following these procedures, we are able to not only protect staff from the many small exposures that occur in a facility such as ours, but we are also able to protect children from the transmission of blood borne disease through improperly cleaned surfaces.

F. PARENT NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

When parents have to be notified, the Center will attempt to contact them based on the information on the enrollment form. If the parents cannot be reached, then the Center will go down the list of emergency contacts on the enrollment form until someone is contacted.

G. DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE PRACTICES

1) Discipline-punishment-abuse:

One way of understanding the difference between discipline and punishment-abuse is to look at their desired and actual effects. Discipline is to teach appropriate behavior. Punishment is penalty paid for a wrongdoing and can be an appropriate part of the disciplinary experience. An abusive episode is characterized by its effect. The victim feels unwanted, unloved. Discipline can teach responsibility, family rules and personal standards. It can be adapted as the person grows. Abuse teaches that recipient fear, poor self-concept, revenge, and in the case of physical outburst, permission to hit those you love. It also concentrates on the person at fault, not the behavior that one wants to change.

Abusive outbursts are followed by guilt and remorse and may compound other negative feelings if not confronted. Discipline should leave the recipient with the understanding that what they did was inappropriate, accepting it in a predetermined way and able to carry on life without scars, but with extra valuable knowledge.

2) Guidance vs. punishment

Guidance is positive discipline. Effective guidance helps to mold and strengthen the child towards positive behavior through instruction. Discipline does not mean punishment. Punishment means enforcing control through obedience. Many people think of discipline as punishment and try to decide which punishment is better...Spanking? Yelling? Taking away privileges? However, by telling the child why; helping the child see the other person's point of view; and helping the child take responsibility for his or her own actions, your child will develop self-control; become more sensitive to others; be treated with dignity; and your child will develop positive social behavior. When you think of discipline as guiding children, it leads to helping them learn to develop behavior in a positive way.

3) Specifics regarding discipline

- a. Under no circumstances will corporal punishment be used within the Center by staff or parents.
- b. Any humiliating or frightening punishment is forbidden, such as:
 - (1.) Spanking, slapping, hitting, shaking, or giving any form of physical punishment.
 - (2.) Verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family.
 - (3.) Withholding or forcing meals, snacks or naps.
- c. If a child has a problem with biting, the Director will discuss the matter with the parents and see if a solution can be reached. Continued biting may necessitate withdrawal from the Center either temporarily or permanently.
- d. Children will be temporarily removed from stressful situations for a few minutes and will be redirected to participate in another activity.
- e. If a child has displayed emotional outbursts and/or emotional distress (temper tantrums characterized by screaming, defiance, resistance to attempts at pacification, hitting, destroying property, etc.) and puts other children at risk, the Teacher and Director will document the incidents and will discuss the matter with the parents to seek a solution. Continued behavior may necessitate withdrawal from the Center either temporarily or permanently.
- f. Creative Minds cannot tolerate any harassment, abusive or violent behavior from our children. In the event a child behaves in a violent or otherwise abusive way towards his/her peers, we will enforce consequences which will be decided upon at the discretion of the Director.
- g. Consequences may include letters to the child's parents, a meeting with the child's parent(s), exclusion from certain activities, suspension, and, in extreme cases, termination from the Center.
- h. The primary responsibility for a child's behavior rests with the parent. The Center staff will assist parents in any way possible to reinforce the concepts taught at home. Parents should cooperate with the Center's staff in consistently disciplining their children.

H. MEALS AND FOOD SERVICE PRACTICES

- 1) Meals occur at regular times during the day.
 - a. Breakfast is served by the Center. Breakfast is served from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. for the school age children and 8:30am to 9:00 for the children at the center. This will allow the Teacher time to clean up and prepare for their classroom instruction.
 - b. Lunch occurs from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. and dinner occurs from 4:00pm to 4:30pm.

We serve our students breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack and dinner daily. We serve children 18 months and up. Our meals are planned using the USDA's

MyPlate recommendations to ensure your child's meal is well-balanced. Providing a healthy lunch will ensure your child has the energy and stamina to get the most out of their day and fully participate in all of the fun learning experiences. We do participate in the CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program). Upon enrollment meal paperworks will be given and each child that will be eating at our facility will need to have those paperworks completed and signed and on file.

- 2) Children are permitted to bring their own lunch from home. ALL LUNCHESES, SNACKS AND DINNER MUST BE NUT FREE and it is suggested that they follow the USDA's MyPlate recommendations. All lunches and dinner must be in a lunch box or sack.
- 3) Parents are required to furnish baby food and/or formula for children who are unable to feed themselves.
- 4) If you are bringing lunch for your child/children, please make sure the lunch is pre-cooked and stored in a proper container with a cover. To avoid cross contamination, we cannot warm up food in the Center.
 - a. Hot and/or cold foods must be packaged in a clean and insulated container specific for the food source.
 - b. For health and safety reasons, please make sure the child's container and drinking cups have been cleaned and sanitized. If your child brings a drink container, please make sure it is spill proof.
 - c. All containers and drinking cups will be sent home on a daily basis.
 - d. Ice packs, napkins and utensils are required to be included in your child's lunch box.
 - e. Make sure to label all of your child's belongings legibly with their name.
- 5) **If a child requires a special diet or meals designated for allergy sensitivity, the Center must be informed in writing by the child's physician. Specific instructions (a food allergy emergency plan) must be provided by the health-care professional to ensure proper administration of meals and snacks. PEANUT BUTTER OR ANY FOOD PRODUCTS CONTAINING NUTS IS NOT ALLOWED IN THE CENTER.**

I. HEARING AND VISION SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

All children 4 years and older must be screened for hearing and vision on an annual basis. Parents must provide Creative Minds Child Development Center with documentation of hearing and vision screening within 30-days of notification by the Center.

J. POLICY CHANGES

Parents will be notified of any Creative Minds Child Development Center policy changes within 10 working days prior to implementation. Policies are reviewed annually and updated if necessary.

K. TRANSPORTATION

- 1) Transportation is not provided by Creative Minds for children to attend the Center.
- 2) Transportation will be arranged in advance for the children's scheduled field trip activities. Fees will be charged for any events attended and to offset the cost of providing transportation.
- 3) Parents must provide permission to Creative Minds Child Development Center for their children to be transported for field trips, after school pick-up, and for emergency care.

L. WATER ACTIVITIES

Creative Minds Child Development Center has both inside and outside water activities. Inside water activities consist of using the water tables in the classroom. Outside water activities consist of "Splash Day" during summer months. This is a regular event where children wear their swim wear on the playground. Parents must provide permission in order for their child/children to participate.

M. FIELD TRIPS

According to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children 4-years old and above are the ones permitted to go on a field trip. Field trips will broaden a child's social learning experience. Parents must provide a permission slip in order for their child to participate. Parents are welcomed to join their children during these field trips. Parents will pay for any fees applicable for the event they accompany their child with.

A background check (as required by Minimum Standards for all volunteers) will be submitted by Creative Minds to the Department of Family and Protective Services.

N. PARENT REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Parents are provided a copy of the Operational Policies and the Parent Handbook at orientation time. Additionally, parents are provided updates of these documents as changes occur.

Any information needed to be passed on to either the front desk staff or your child's Teacher must be written in our log book at the front desk with the current date, your child's name, specific instruction and a parent's signature.

If there are any changes to your contact information (address, phone number, emergency contacts etc.) you can update it by emailing us the updated information. The information can be emailed to: admin@creativemindscdc.com.

O. PARENT VISIT PROCEDURES

Parents are welcome to visit their children at any time during normal operating hours. However, it is recommended that all visitors will limit their time and abide by the Teacher's and classroom schedule in order to prevent disruption of the classroom activities and curriculum.

Parents volunteering to assist with classroom events may stay for the duration of the activity. It is required that we have secured the parent's cleared criminal and background check from the Department of Family and Protective Services.

P. PARENT INVOLVEMENT, COMMUNICATION & RESOURCES

- 1) Our objective is to establish a partnership with the parents of the children for which we provide care. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the Center's program in hopes that the Center will become an extension of the home. With parents and Center staff working together, we can provide a better tomorrow for our children. Strong parent involvement correlates with quality child care.
- 2) Some of the ways parents can be involved are:
 - a. Volunteer for field trips, classroom activities, or special events.
 - b. Attend social gatherings such as open house, luncheons, picnics, tea parties, holiday celebrations, skits, etc.
 - c. Assist or observe in the classroom.
- 3) The Center has a Parent Orientation Program. Upon initial enrollment, the Director/Associate Director will give parents an individual tour of the Center to view the classroom environment and get acquainted with the staff. At this time, the parents will be provided a detailed description of the Center's program. Please see the addendum attached for items that are covered during orientation.
- 4) Parent Conferences: Creative Minds Child Development Center has an open door policy. We encourage our parents to inquire and ask questions. If there is ever a need for a parent/teacher or parent/director or parent/teacher/director conference then please feel free to schedule an appointment at the front office or email admin@creativemindscdc.com with your request.
- 5) We believe that caring for your child is a partnership and that we must constantly work together regarding your child's well being and their daily experiences. In the Baby Room I, Baby Room II, Toddler & YPS class we have a daily communication report that we provide that has information about your child's day. In addition, in all classrooms, we periodically will send SmartCare notifications which may include pictures and/or videos of your child. If there is ever a time that we need to reach out to a parent regarding their child's progress and/or behavior we may also send an email to schedule a conference or speak to them face to face.
- 6) We like to communicate through various methods with our parents to ensure that they are abreast of the current events that are happening as well as are notified when there are school closures and/or emergency notifications. We do this by: a) sending an email; b) sending a notice through our SmartCare app; c) posting on our private [Facebook Group](#) for parents only; d) posting a physical notice on our "Parent Info" board found in the front reception area near the SmartCare kiosk.
- 7) Community Resources: In the front reception area, accessible to all, is a place for community resources for our parents. The information posted will be accurate, up to date and from a credible source.

Q. BREASTFEEDING POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Breastfeeding is the normal way to feed a baby, providing many health benefits to both infant and mother. Because breastfeeding employees need ongoing support from child care providers to provide their milk for their babies, Creative Minds Child Development Center subscribes to the following policy.

- 1) Breastfeeding mothers shall be provided a place to breastfeed or express their milk. Breastfeeding mothers, including employees, shall be provided a private and sanitary place other than a bathroom, to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area provides an electrical outlet, comfortable chair, table or stand and nearby access to running water.
- 2) A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed breast milk. Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed breast milk in the child care's refrigerator. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date. The child care will follow guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in ensuring that breast milk is properly treated to avoid waste. Universal precautions are not required in handling human milk.
- 3) Sensitivity will be shown to breastfeeding mothers and their babies. The child care is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers, including providing an opportunity to breastfeed their baby at any time, and holding off giving a bottle, if possible, when mom is due to arrive. Artificial baby milk (formula) and solid foods will not be provided unless the mother has requested. Babies will be held closely when feeding and bottles will never be propped. The child care facility feeds infants on demand and communicates with mothers about feeding preferences.
- 4) Staff shall be trained in handling human milk. All child care staff will be trained every year in the proper storage and handling of human milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers.
- 5) Breastfeeding employees shall be provided flexible breaks to accommodate breastfeeding or milk expression. Breastfeeding employees shall be provided a flexible schedule for breastfeeding or pumping to provide breast milk for their children. The time allowed would not exceed the normal time allowed for lunch and breaks. For time above and beyond normal lunch and breaks, sick/annual leave must be used, or the employee can come in a little earlier or leave a little late to make up the time.
- 6) Breastfeeding promotion information will be displayed. The child care will provide information on breastfeeding, including the names of area resources should questions or problems arise. In addition, positive promotion of breastfeeding will be on display in the facility. There are no advertisements of formula in the facility.

R. PARENT REVIEW OF MINIMUM STANDARDS AND LICENSING INSPECTION REPORTS

All minimum standards and licensing inspection reports are available at the front desk for parents to review at any time.

S. INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTACTING LICENSING, DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE AND WEBSITE

Keeping Children Safe

Reporting Abuse or Neglect: Texas Law requires caregivers to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Texas DPRS or law enforcement. Call 1-800-252-5400 to make confidential reports. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime. Employers are prohibited from retaliating against caregivers who make reports in good faith. These are also available on the web at www.dfps.state.tx.us or your local Licensing Office at 713-940-5200.

The Center's Director or teacher will notify the Department of Protective Services, and/or the local law enforcement officials, when it appears that a child is being seriously neglected or abused.

The Texas Family Code (sections §34.07) States, Failure To Report: (A) A person commits an offense if the person has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be further adversely affected by abuse or neglect and knowingly fails to report it, in accordance with Section §34.02 of the code, (B) An offense Under this Section is a "Class B" Misdemeanor.

Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Neglect of Children 746.501(25)

Employees are required to obtain a minimum of 24 clock hours of training each year relevant to the age of the children for whom the caregiver provides care. At least one clock hour of annual training must focus on prevention, recognition, and reporting of child abuse and neglect, in accordance with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Rule §746.1309 of Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers.

Resources are available at <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Training/Reporting/resources.asp> for employees and parents on increasing awareness and prevention of issues regarding child abuse and neglect, including warning signs that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect.

Procedures for staff being accused of abuse by a parent:

1. Listen, take notes, question, and generate specifics
2. Immediately question staff
3. If abuse is suspected, we would
 - a.) Call police
 - b.) Call Children's Protective Services
 - c.) Call our insurance carriers
 - d.) Call our attorney
 - e.) Immediately place all staff suspected of involvement on administrative leave without pay until the outcome of investigation(s).

4. If, in our opinion, the charge of abuse is unwarranted, we would
 - a.) Confront parents with our findings and ask parents if they were satisfied or want further involvement by others.
 - b.) If no further involvement is wanted, we would ask parents to sign a dated written statement to the effect.
 - c.) IF PARENTS ARE NOT SATISFIED we will call the police, children’s protective services, insurance company, attorney, and immediately put staff on administrative leave without pay until the outcome of the investigation(s).
5. Complaint from a state of local agency, we would:
 - a.) Immediately place staff on leave without pay pending investigation(s)
 - b.) Make calls to our insurance company and our attorney.
 - c.) Cooperate completely by supplying information, data and support to the investigation.
 - d.) Issue a special bulletin to all clients and staff explaining what was going on and urging their complete cooperation with the investigation.

Creative Minds Child Development Center will work with community organizations to provide guidance and contact information for parents/caregivers on preventing and reporting abuse or neglect.

Local Resources:

www.dfps.state.tx.us

Child Care Information	1-800-862-5252
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-252-5400
Child Protective Services	713-394-4000
Sugar Land Police Department	281-275-2500
Fort Bend Children’s Protective Service	832-595-3000
Child Advocates of Fort Bend	281-344-5100

T. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS

A fire evacuation plan is posted at all exits throughout the center. Fire extinguishers are located in visible locations and fire-drills will be completed and documented on a monthly basis. In addition to fire drills, lockdown, earthquake, flooding, and other emergency drills will be completed at least on a quarterly basis. All lockdowns, real or a drill, will be documented and parents will be notified. In the event of any other natural disasters or other emergencies, the steps to take can be found in our Emergency Preparedness Plan in a binder at the front desk.

In the event of an emergency in which the children need to be evacuated from the building, the children will be relocated on foot to:

**Houston Swim Club
 (located right next to Creative Minds)
 9920 US-90 Alt Ste 220B
 Sugar Land, TX 77478
 281-313-7946**

First Aid kits, classroom attendance/roster sheet, staff personal cell phones and any necessary medication will also be brought along. Emergency contact information and emergency care authorization for all children will be taken with the group. Parents will be notified as soon as the children are moved to a safe location.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are conducted monthly. Upon hearing the fire drill alarm, teaching staff are required to follow the emergency/evacuation route (posted in all the rooms) when exiting the building with the children in an organized manner. First aid kit, classroom attendance/roster sheet, and emergency contact information for all children will be taken with the group.

Severe Weather Drills

Severe weather drills are practiced quarterly. In threatening weather, the Director monitors the weather bulletins.

Upon hearing the severe weather drill announcement from the Director or person in charge, each room will proceed to the following areas:

Baby Room I: Adult restroom in the front center area.

Baby Room II: Young Preschool classroom in a crib.

Toddler: Restroom adjacent to their classroom.

YPS: Class will stay in their room, away from windows.

Pre-School: Restroom in their classroom.

Pre-K: Child restroom in front reception area of the expansion building.

In the event of an emergency, 911 will be called immediately upon evacuating the children from the building. The evacuation route is posted in each room.

In the event the children have to be evacuated, we will follow the emergency preparedness procedure.

Lock Down Drills

Lock-down drills are conducted quarterly. Upon hearing the lockdown drill announcement from the Director or person in charge, each room will:

- 1. CLOSE THEIR DOOR**
- 2. TURN OFF THE LIGHT**
- 3. ENSURE THEY HAVE THEIR CLASSROOM PHONE**

They will then proceed to the following areas:

Baby Rooms I & II: Both rooms will use their evacuation cribs to transport children to move to the back of their room where there is a cove.

Toddler: Restroom adjacent to the classroom.

YPS: Stay in their classroom.

Pre-School: Restroom in their classroom.

Pre-K: Passageway to the playground area.

After proceeding to their designated area, all classes will:

1. REMAIN QUIET

Once the Director or person in charge has given the signal that the drill is over, classes can resume to their current activity.

In the event that an intruder with a weapon comes into the school, lockdown procedure will be enforced and 911 will be called immediately.

U. MINIMUM STANDARDS SUPPLEMENTAL POLICIES

Any new standards and/or rules required from the Child Care Licensing of the Department of Family and Protective Services will be relayed to the parents.

PARENT HANDBOOK

A. MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a quality child care service to the community for infants through pre-kindergarten children that promotes development in the areas of cognitive, social, and physical skills. In this way we are helping children to become independent, inquisitive, and self-confident learners.

B. VISION

Develop a high quality child care service that is in such demand that it will promote improved standards among daycare centers throughout the Houston metropolitan area. Also, the intent is to eventually add kindergarten and elementary education grades to the curriculum to provide quality education from infant through grade school level.

C. GOALS

a. Social:

- * Teach a positive concept by encouraging self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-understanding.
- * Learn constructive social interaction with other children.
- * Display a positive attitude toward life.

b. Cognitive

- * Promote a confident attitude toward learning through the development of problem solving skills and the ability to express themselves.
- * Acquire concepts and information leading to a full understanding of their environment.
- * Develop age appropriate readiness skills and acquire beginning writing readiness skills.

c. Physical:

- * Provide a physically challenging environment that will develop large and fine motor skills.
- * Teach physical discipline that promotes muscular self-control.
- * Use all of their senses during learning experiences.

D. STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Creative Minds Child Development Center has been open since 1999. Aurora Haller is the Owner. Her experience consists of being the director of both private and chain day care centers. Additionally, she has two years' experience operating a Child Development Center of 175 children for the U.S. Air Force. Aurora has a B.S. in Elementary Education, and one-year towards an M.A. in Management and Supervision. She has been certified by the State of Texas as a Director of Child Care Center. She has been married for over 50 years, and has four children. Aurora has taught elementary grades in the public school in the Philippines. She has been concerned about quality child care since first becoming a mother in 1969. Her dream is to have a Child Development Center that provides quality care and influence competitors to improve their standards. Additionally, she wants to educate parents about child care through community service work, so that parents will be aware of what to look for in a quality child care facility. Also, she hopes to motivate parents to be more involved with the development of their young children.

The staff will consist of an Associate Director, Administrative Assistant, and Teachers that will provide the full range of child care service.

The Associate Director will be in charge of the Center during the absence of the Director. Teachers will be responsible for a particular age group of children. The Teachers are responsible for the proper implementation of the early childhood program. Teachers have at least one year experience with a Child Development Associate certification.

All staff personnel are at least 18 years of age, with a H.S. diploma, and have the ability to speak, read and write English. Our desire is that each teacher's educational requirement is to receive a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or a B.S. in Education. Additionally, all staff personnel have undergone a state and national criminal background investigation and

FBI fingerprint prior to being hired. Also, all staff personnel have received training in Child/Infant CPR and First Aid. They will receive at least 24 hours of training in Early Childhood Care annually.

E. ADMISSION

1. You are required to provide us a record of your child's immunizations signed by their physician. Children must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services in 25 TAC 97, Subchapter B from birth to 14 years. All immunizations required for your child's age must be completed by the date of admission to our center. A Tuberculosis test is required for all children 12 months and older in addition to Texas state requirements. No child may attend school without an up to date immunization record signed by their physician.
***Important: It is your responsibility as parent or guardian to maintain up-to-date immunizations and physicals for your child(ren). Updates must be reported to Administration in writing.** Children who show symptoms of a disease that can be prevented through the administration of a vaccine and puts other children in the program at risk, will be promptly excluded from the program.
2. Children may not remain in the center over eleven (11) consecutive hours.
3. Daily check-in and check-out procedures require that you log your child in and out of the Center at the front desk's computer child care system (SmartCare). This procedure is necessary to provide accurate accountability of children at all times for their security, in case of a fire, tornado, or other catastrophic events. Children must be accompanied by their parent or a person authorized by the parent for admittance to the Center. We request parents to accompany their child to and from their assigned rooms. This allows the parent to become better acquainted with your child's teachers and to ensure your child is safely settled. If your child will be absent please notify us as soon as possible.
4. Children will be given a daily routine check to identify and record any physical marks such as bruises, burns, scrapes, cuts, etc. This procedure is for the protection of the child, the parent, and the Center. Any suspicion of child abuse or neglect will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
5. Children over 36-months of age must be completely potty trained. Classrooms for this age group do not have the facilities or staffing to change and clean children who have frequent toileting accidents. Caregivers in the Toddler and Young Pre-School age group will work closely with parents to help each child accomplish toilet training. Children are encouraged and praised for their successes, and never rushed into potty training or punished for accidents.
6. A change of clothing (2 sets) must be provided for every child that is properly labeled with the child's first and last name. The Center will not be responsible for the loss of clothing or dirty clothes.

7. Do not allow your child to bring money or gum into the Center. Personal toys and books will be allowed when the child needs them for security reasons on a limited basis or for show and tell activities. However, the Center will not be responsible for the loss or damage of toys.
9. Children must arrive clean and fully dressed. Closed-toed shoes (preferably clean tennis shoes) must be worn for safety reasons. No bare feet, flip flops, Crocs, and shoes of that type are allowed.
10. Bring sufficient baby food and formula (in plastic bottles) for bottle-fed babies, a day's worth. All baby food jars, bottles, and clothing must be labeled with first and last names before your child is signed into the room.
11. Disposable diapers and baby wipes are required. Diapers are checked every two hours. Please calculate the amount of time your child will be in the Center and bring the appropriate amount of diapers and baby wipes. If the Center has to provide disposable diapers or baby wipes, there will be a charge.
12. Car seats, for health, safety and storage space reasons, cannot be kept/stored in the Center.
13. To withdraw your child's enrollment at our facility, we require 2-weeks advance written notice. **If you are unable to provide us with this notice, the week's tuition remains due.**
14. Children with special needs, such as health problems or disabilities, may be accepted if they can be mainstreamed in the Center's program and do not require more attention than other children of their age. This decision is at the sole discretion of the Director.

F. TUITION

Upon initial registration, tuition for the first week must be paid. Two weeks advance written notice must be given when withdrawing. Tuition preferred payment is through *SmartCare*. However, you may also pay with your VISA or MasterCard (Discover Card and American Express are not accepted).

Tuition Guidelines:

- Our school uses SmartCare to collect tuition payments. All families must register for Smartcare and download the app in order to make payments, clock their child(ren) in and out, and to receive messages.
- Weekly Tuition is paid in advance every Friday. Monthly tuition payment plans are paid in advance on the last Friday of the month.
- Please pay the tuition in full without any deductions. Even if your child is absent, the appropriate tuition is still due. Tuition is based on enrollment NOT attendance. If your child is absent for more than two days please notify us (email or phone call) so that we are aware and can notify their teacher.
- **A \$10.00 late fee is charged for every day you are late paying the tuition.** Late payment will begin on Tuesday, 6:30AM, CST.

- If tuition is not received by Friday, 6:30PM, CST of the first week, Creative Minds reserves the right to discontinue childcare for your child until all tuition and late charges are paid.
- A \$30.00 NSF fee will be charged for returned checks. Credit card declines will incur the required fees.

Late pick-up Guidelines:

- When a child remains in the Center after closing time (6:30 p.m. CST) an \$8.00 late pick-up fee is charged for the first five minutes and \$3.00 per minute after that.
- Late payments must be settled no later than the next school day in cash.

Vacation and other Fees

A one week free vacation is allowed after the child has been enrolled in the Center for one year continuously (except for Schlumberger employees). A two week notice is required to apply the vacation credit. This must be coordinated with the Director prior to taking the vacation. However, without proper notice, tuition will be billed. Vacations must be taken within that year and do not roll over.

There is an annual registration fee due per child when the child enrolls and every September 1st thereafter. This is an administration cost to reserve your child’s place in the Center. The registration fee is non-refundable. See front desk for current pricing.

There is an annual school supply fee due per child for Toddlers through Pre-Kindergarten students. The school supply fee is non-refundable. See front desk for current pricing.

Tuition rates are based on the child’s age. Tuition rates, registration fee, and school supply fee costs will be provided separately. Tuition rates are subject to change without notice.

G. BABYSITTING

Creative Minds does not sanction babysitting by our Teachers. If our Teachers choose to babysit, Creative Minds is not liable or responsible for their actions.

H. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The Center will conduct monthly fire and tornado/severe weather drills. Please see our procedures outlined above in this handbook. This practice will ensure the safety of your children in case of an actual disaster. Drills are varied throughout the time of day. If you should be in the Center during a drill, please participate. You may not remove your child until you have signed them out of the Center and the drill has been completed.

I. DAILY ACTIVITIES

Diverse activities provide for both the care and development for all children. The daily schedule provides a balance of activities which are aimed at developing your child’s cognitive, social, and physical skills.

Outdoor activities are an important part of your child’s development. Weather permitting, the children spend time outside daily. If your child is too ill to play outside, it is recommended

that you do not bring him/her to the Center. All children are required to go outside during scheduled outdoor time. Appropriate clothing should be brought to the Center to meet the needs of the changing weather. A detailed written activity plan is added below as an addendum for your reference.

Babies rest according to their individual needs. Toddlers and preschoolers rest for two hours each day. All children at the Center during rest time are required to rest or participate in quiet activities. Children may bring a “security” item such as a blanket or stuffed animal for rest time.

We have a practice of praying at meal times. If you do not wish your child to participate please notify the teacher or the director.

J. CURRICULUM SUMMARY

1. Introduction

The most important goal of any early childhood curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic learners. This means encouraging children to be active and creative explorers who are not afraid to try out their ideas and to think their own thoughts. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. We are teaching them how to learn, not just in preschool, but all through their lives. We are allowing them to learn at their own pace and in ways that are best for them. We are giving them good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of themselves, which will give them the self-confidence to make good decisions in life.

The center provides an environment that allows children to learn by doing. Through active involvement with the environment, children make sense of the world around them. They learn by observing what happens when they interact with materials and other people around them. They engage in the different learning centers such as block building, painting, or dramatic play and add pieces of information to what they already know and thereby generate new understandings. Children learn simple concepts and then use these concepts to grasp more complex ideas.

Since children of each age group are at a different stage in the learning process, the curriculum is tailored to fit that particular age group. The following is a detailed breakdown concerning the curriculum goals and objectives for each age group.

2. Curriculum Goals and Objectives for **Infant Children (6 weeks to 18 months):**

Social Development

To develop a sense of trust:

- * provide frequent contact with a teacher at the Center
- * provide opportunities to get to know and recognize others while with the teacher
- * provide opportunities to recognize and get to know themselves
- * provide many opportunities for interaction with familiar people
- * provide opportunities to play and interact in games and activities with more than one familiar person
- * provide activities that help children to become aware of themselves and their awareness of others
- * respond to their needs so that they feel successful at communicating

Cognitive Development

To acquire concepts and information leading to a fuller understanding of the immediate world:

- * provide baby with much interaction by calling them, playing music, or making various noises to attract their attention
- * play “Peek-a-boo” games with baby, so that they can become familiar with them and learn to expect a series of actions
- * provide opportunities to observe objects that appear, disappear, reappear
- * provide a variety of toys and objects that are new and different
- * provide moving objects to watch
- * provide many different shaped objects to play with and study to interact with baby and give them actions to imitate
- * provide opportunities for baby to practice searching for objects

Begin to understand the names of many things:

- * provide good language response from teachers with many opportunities to hear baby’s own name and the names of objects
- * opportunities to freely play and talk about the actions they make

Physical Development

To enhance small motor skills:

- * provide opportunities to learn to use their fingers and hands for eating
- * to learn how to use their spoon for eating
- * to provide chances for them to “pick-up” all kinds of objects
- * practice grabbing one object as they hold another
- * to discover the size, weight, shape, and feel of things for themselves.

To enhance large motor skills:

- * provide opportunities to perform directed toy turns
- * provide practice in controlling things around them by using their body
- * provide plenty of opportunity to practice moving around, and to learn to make their body fit into the space available
- * provide a safe environment for practicing new skills

3. Curriculum Goals and Objectives for Toddler Children (18 months to 2 years):

Social Development

To foster feelings of competence:

- * provide toys and activities that encourage them to play alone
- * provide opportunities for imitation
- * provide prompt return responses
- * respond to their various emotional moods, and help them control them in a positive way
- * give support when they try to do things on their own
- * play music, songs, and action rhymes with many body motions that they can perform
- * give them a chance to achieve a new developmental step, a sense of ownership

To develop positive, self-help skills and foster independence:

- * to learn how, when and why they should wash their hands, and chances to dress themselves
- * to be allowed to use the spoon and cup for themselves at meals
- * to be encouraged to pick up toys after they have finished playing with them

Cognitive Development

To enhance language development:

- * provide many books and magazines with large and colorful pictures
- * more opportunities to play seek and find
- * encourage “give and take” games
- * more opportunities to find things that disappear
- * help in learning the parts of their body
- * much practice with various shapes
- * provide opportunities for them to learn how to do things in a certain order
- * practice in going to get the toys and other things that they want or need

Begin to understand how to use language:

- * provide courteous responses to their efforts at polite speech
- * patiently and correctly answer all of their questions
- * opportunities to try to understand the meaning of longer and harder sentences
- * verbally label objects for them to imitate
- * provide much practice in naming objectives

Physical Development

To enhance small motor skills:

- * provide opportunities to practice drinking with a filled cup
- * provide paper and brightly colored crayons to use
- * provide books that are colorful and attractive to them
- * provide interesting objects to help their eye-hand coordination, and to give them quiet time
- * many manipulative toys and experiences to practice new and refine existing motor skills
- * opportunities to play with clay, play dough, large bead items to string, etc.

To enhance large motor skills:

- * to provide opportunities to practice walking, dancing, marching, running, develop casting and overhand throwing, for pounding
- * find and explore things in the environment, kick and throw balls, climb up and down stairs and other obstacles

4. Curriculum Goals and Objective for Young Pre-School Children (2 to 3 years old):

Social Development

To enhance self-esteem:

- * time to learn and think about each new experience
- * give them reasons for doing things
- * engage in “make-believe” play with them
- * provide opportunities to try both sides of various actions and activities, so they can learn about the results of various choices.
- * provide constant supervision when they are playing

Beginning to develop self-help skill:

- * allow time and freedom to try to dress and undress themselves
- * allow them to wait on themselves
- * store toys in areas that are easy for them to reach and use
- * praise for success, and non-critical help when they do have an “accident”

Cognitive Development

Developing a greater understanding of language:

- * speak to them in longer sentences
- * provide opportunities to talk without being “turned off”
- * opportunities to take part in and enjoy songs and finger play
- * provide experiences and activities that will help them explore differences between one and many
- * provide many props that they can use for imaginative play

To acquire concepts and information that will lead to a fuller understanding of their immediate world:

- * the opportunity to find out whether they are a boy or girl
- * practice in learning the names of various body parts
- * opportunities to handle objects in order to become aware of color, shape, and size
- * much practice in learning that one object and another object make two objects
- * patient and honest responses to their questions
- * provide lots of songs and fingerplays
- * encourage them to point out more details in pictures
- * help develop an awareness of colors and that they have names

Physical Development

To enhance fine motor skills:

- * much practice with folding and tearing paper
- * many boxes and other containers to play with
- * many opportunities to use crayon and paper
- * more freedom and opportunities to manipulate objects
- * provide problem solving objects

To enhance large motor skills:

- * many opportunities to play and be physically active with feet and legs
- * opportunities to try out and learn balance skills
- * provide action toys to play with, such as cars, tricycles, wagons, etc.

5. Curriculum Goals and Objectives for Pre-school (3–4 years old) and Pre-Kindergarten (4-5 years old) Children:

Social Development

To experience a sense of self-esteem:

- * identify themselves as a member of a specific family and cultural group
- * feel proud of their heritage and background
- * demonstrate confidence in their growing abilities
- * demonstrate increasing independence
- * stand up for their rights

To exhibit a positive attitude toward life:

- * demonstrate trust in adults
- * be able to separate from parents
- * demonstrate interest and participate in classroom activities
- * participate in routine activities easily

To demonstrate cooperative, pro-social behavior:

- * seek out children and adults
- * understand and respect differences

- * accept responsibility for maintaining the classroom environment
- * help others in need
- * respect the rights of others
- * share toys and materials
- * work cooperatively with others in contemplating a task
- * resolve conflicts constructively

Cognitive Development

To acquire learning and problem-solving skills:

- * demonstrate an interest in exploring
- * ask and respond to questions
- * show curiosity and a desire to learn
- * use planning skills
- * observe and make discoveries
- * find more than one solution to a problem
- * apply information and experience to a new context
- * use creativity and imagination
- * persist in tasks

To expand logical thinking skills:

- * classify objects by similarities and differences
- * put together objects that belong together
- * recall a sequence of events (e.g., first, second, last)
- * arrange objects in a series (e.g. smallest to largest)
- * recognize patterns and be able to repeat them
- * increase awareness of cause-and-effect relationships

To acquire concepts and information leading to a fuller understanding of their immediate world:

- * demonstrate an awareness of time concepts (e.g. yesterday, today, tomorrow)
- * make comparisons (e.g., more/less, larger/smaller, taller/shorter)
- * use words to describe the characteristics of objects (e.g., colors, shapes, sizes)
- * identify the roles people play in society
- * identify relationships of objects in space (below, inside, under)
- * count in correct sequence and match one-to-one

To demonstrate skills in make-believe play:

- * assume pretend role
- * make-believe with objects
- * make-believe about situations
- * sustain play
- * interact with other children

To expand verbal communications skills:

- * recall words in a song or finger play
- * follow simple directions
- * use words to explain ideas and feelings
- * talk with other children during daily activities
- * make up stories
- * participate in group discussions

To develop beginning reading skills:

- * acquire a like for books
- * listen to a story and explain what happened

- * demonstrate knowledge of how to use books
- * recognize pictures and text on a page

To acquire beginning writing skills:

- * make increasingly representational drawings
- * imitate recognizable letters and numbers
- * recognize written names
- * label pictures
- * demonstrate an interest in using writing for a purpose

Physical Development

To enhance gross motor skills:

- * use gross motor skills with confidence
- * walk up and down steps independently
- * run with increasing control over direction and speed
- * jump over or from objects without falling
- * use large muscles for balance (e.g., walk on tiptoes, balance on one foot)
- * catch a ball or a bean bag
- * throws an object in the intended direction
- * ride and steer a tricycle
- * climb up or down equipment without falling

To enhance and refine fine motor skills:

- * coordinate eye and hand movements (e.g., completing puzzles)
- * use small muscles to complete tasks (e.g., building, stringing)
- * use small muscles for self-help skills
- * use writing and drawing tools with increasing control and intention

To use all senses in learning:

- * demonstrate skill in discriminating sounds
- * demonstrate visual discrimination skills
- * discriminate by taste and smell
- * discriminate differences in texture

ANCILLARY PROGRAMS

Ancillary programs are a fun and fascinating way for children to experience, explore and express themselves in Music, Spanish and Science from our Toddlers through our Pre-Kindergarten group. It helps in:

- * stimulating their interest in the cultural arts through music and movement
- * learning basic scientific principles
- * learning the basic Spanish language to develop their vocabulary, enhance their social skills and interaction among other students and teachers.

K. TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Children have access to technology devices such as computers and tablets as part of their STEAM curriculum. Our policy allows for no more than 30 minutes of screen time and any use of these devices is specifically for educational purposes.

The use of cell phones in the school is strictly prohibited by staff, families, and visitors. This is to minimize the level of distraction when picking up your child. Please refrain from using your cell phone until after you leave the school.

L. PARKING LOT SAFETY

- When approaching Creative Minds CDC, **be extra vigilant of pedestrians crossing between the center and the parking lot.** This is especially important at peak pickup times (5:00-6:00 p.m).
- **Please drive slowly and stay alert** when you are in the parking lot. Small children can dart out in front of or behind cars. Also, please be on alert for any persons (pedestrians, on bikes or bike trailers, in cars) in the parking lot.
- Please respect the bus signals; it is illegal to pass the bus when the lights are flashing. At all other times, we strongly advise against going around another car as this can further reduce visibility.
- **Cell phone use while driving is prohibited.** Reduce any potential distractions to ensure awareness of the road and the surroundings.
- **Please do not leave unattended cars running in the parking lot.** Idling engines create unnecessary air pollution. Children are especially vulnerable as they inhale more air in proportion to their weight. An exception to this policy would be during extreme heat or cold in order to maintain interior or car engine temperatures.

When walking ...

- **Please ensure children are well supervised at all times** in and around the parking lot. Please carry or hold a young child's hand when crossing parking lots.
- **Please use sidewalks to the extent possible.**
- Otherwise, **please be aware of cars backing up (rear lights on).**

M. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Given our goal of partnership, we understand that both parents and staff will evaluate the mutuality of their relationships. Naturally, both parties have a say in the continuation or termination of their partnership. To maintain harmony, strengthen the cooperative spirit and preserve respect for families, the school wishes to provide its participants, both staff and parents, avenues for addressing grievances in a constructive manner that is fair to all parties.

During your child's enrollment there may be occasions when you have a disagreement with the way a Center policy is carried out. You may also have a disagreement with the way procedures are being implemented in the classroom. While part of the Center's mission is to be supportive of families through meeting the needs of the individual children, it must do so in a way that is feasible in a group care setting.

If you have a disagreement about how a policy affects your child or a question about how procedures are being implemented in the classroom, please go to the person most closely related to the issue, so that they have the opportunity to work the problem out with you, or clarify the policy or regulation. Of course, any time you feel uncomfortable speaking to the teacher involved, you can go directly to the Director to voice your concerns. In our experience concerns

are not effectively resolved when individuals revert to emailing or discussing issues with individuals who have no ability to solve such problems.

When addressing a question or concern we ask that you follow the following steps:

Step 1

Talk to the person involved. Address any issue with your child's teacher as soon as it becomes a concern.

Step 2

If the concern cannot be resolved at that level, speak to the Director within five business days of speaking to your child's teacher.

Step 3

The Director will review the issue and will provide a solution within 48 hours. Some issues may take longer to consider, in which case you will be informed of a timeline for receiving an answer.



BEHAVIOR POLICY

We believe that all domains of learning are supported during play and through strong, positive interactions with adults. Promoting healthy social and emotional development, including self-control, is one of the fundamental responsibilities of our program.

The preschool period is a critical time for children to learn to control their thoughts, feelings, attention, impulses, and behavior. They are learning how to get along with others and how to be friends. Children are not born with these skills. Teachers, parents, and caregivers must teach social and emotional skills just as they teach washing hands or learning colors and shapes. We know that when children are given the opportunities and support to develop (learn, practice, discuss, etc.), self-control and other social and emotional skills, it gives them the foundation needed for academic and life success.

When any child in our program presents challenging behaviors, teaching staff shall follow the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

- Observe the children, and then identify events, activities, interactions and other factors that predict and may contribute to challenging behavior.
- Rather than focus only on eliminating the behavior, teaching staff shall focus on teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills and using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.
- Teaching staff shall respond to challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the safety of the child and the safety

of others in the classroom. Our response will be calm, respectful and provide the child with information on what is acceptable behavior and what is not.

- We will document the challenging behaviors and the intervention methods that were attempted in a behavior tracking log.
- Teacher-parent discussions regarding a child's behavior shall be held in private and shall focus on working as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.
- If necessary, intervention shall ensure each child has access to professional services, such as referrals to the educational cooperative behavioral specialist, community mental health center and/or a private therapist.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

We have found that behavior concerns usually indicate that a child needs more time, support, and practice to develop their social and emotional skills. When serious concerns arise, we will partner with parents and professionals who specialize in supporting children's social and emotional health.

When a child continues to be unable to control their actions, one method we use is called "safe place." When children are upset, angry, or being disruptive, they may be sent to or asked if they would like to go to the "safe place." This is a quiet spot in which they can allow themselves to take the time to relax, breathe, and try to get their emotions under control. Teachers will continue to watch children while they are in the "Safe Place" to make sure they are not hurting themselves or others. They will encourage the child to talk about their feelings and help with calming techniques so the child will be able to return to the classroom setting.

If a child is unable to use these calming techniques and continues to be disruptive, the teacher will then notify the office and the director will be called in to help the child. We might also reach out to parents so they can speak with the child and/or be notified of

the circumstances.

If further guidance is required, actions taken will always be individualized, consistent, and appropriate to each child's level of understanding. **No physical punishment of any kind will be administered on Creative Minds CDC property. This policy restricts parents and staff from using physical punishment on their own children while on school property. In addition, staff may not yell at, shame, or humiliate a child in any way.** Our goal is to correct children's behavior in a way that will help mold and perfect a child's mental faculties or moral character. The terms "bad" or "naughty" shall not be used about a child.

The following steps will be completed when a child must be removed temporarily for challenging behaviors that constitute an imminent danger to the child or others:

- Make a referral to one of the local resources that help with early childhood special education and/or behavior services. If a child's behavior is such that it necessitates temporary removal on a repeated basis, there should be sufficient documentation for consideration of special education services.
- Maintain documentation on file of the outcomes of the incident, subsequent parent conference, and plan developed that includes appropriate intervention strategies. The purpose of the parent conference is to develop a plan jointly with the family and available resources, to address the specific behaviors which constitute an imminent danger (recurring violence, behavior, or aggression).

WE SUPPORT THIS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH:

Our Environment

- We provide children with interesting materials and engage them in activities that

are appropriate for their age to keep them focused and attentive.

- We develop schedules that meet the needs of young children by avoiding long periods of wait time without activity.
- Our schedule is flexible enough to follow the children's interests as well as their cognitive, physical, and biological needs. We do our best to not let any child get bored or disinterested.

Our Teachers

- Work to develop a relationship with each individual child, including those needing higher levels of support.
- Always speak to children in a calm tone, especially during redirections.
- Help children put words to their emotions. (For example, "Billy, I can tell you were mad when James took your block.")
- Use stories about young children in social situations to teach healthy social skills.

Our Families

- Communicate regularly with staff to ensure consistency in guidance between home and school.
- Partner with us and allow us time to work with all children, including those needing higher levels of support.
- Understand and acknowledge that we do not expel children as they are learning these skills. We strive to serve individual needs while ensuring the safety of young children.
- To best serve children, we may need to partner with social and emotional experts to help give a child the best foundation for academic and life success.

Our Children

- We ask parents to communicate regularly with staff to ensure consistency in guidance between home and school.
- Parents understand and acknowledge that we do not expel children as they are learning these skills. We strive to serve the individual needs of each

child, while ensuring the safety of young children.

- To best serve children, we may need to partner with social and emotional experts to help give a child the best foundation for academic and life success.

I acknowledge that I have received Creative Minds Child Development Center's Behavior Policy. I have had the opportunity to read it and ask any questions regarding this policy.

Parent Signature

Child's Name

Date

PARENT ORIENTATION

Creative Minds Child Development Center conducts an orientation with each family within a month of enrollment. The orientation includes the following:

- A tour of the facility
- An introduction to the teaching staff
- A parent visit with the classroom teacher
- An overview of the parent handbook
- The policy for arrival and checking in/out via SmartCare
- An opportunity for an extended visit in the classroom by both parent and child for a period of time to allow both to be comfortable
- An explanation of TRS (Texas Rising Star) quality certification
- An explanation of NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) certification
- An overview of family support resources and activities in the community
- Information on child development and development milestones including an overview of our curriculum (The Creative Curriculum)
- Importance of the significance of consistent arrival time: children should arrive before the educational portion of the program begins, to limit disruption and also having a consistent routine prepares children for the transition to Kindergarten
- Limit of technology use: we encourage parents to refrain from cell phone use while at the center. In order to facilitate better communication between the parents and the teacher and the parents and the child, it is best if parents are not distracted by use of electronic devices while at the center
- A statement to parents reflecting the role and influence of families

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have attended the parent orientation.

Child's Name: _____

Printed Name of Parent: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

WRITTEN ACTIVITY PLAN

Research has shown that learning in young children is the result of interaction between the child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas, and people. The quality of these interactions is enhanced by providing structure and a variety of opportunities to practice and explore new skills.

Planning daily activities ensures the children have a variety of activities that meet their developmental needs. A written plan helps to clarify for parents the services our center provides and also provides our teachers with a guideline to follow. This activity plan includes **all** children at our center regardless of special care needs.

Early childhood is traditionally the most active period during one's lifespan! It is especially important for young children to get plenty of vigorous physical activity during which they may be breathing hard and exhibiting sweating with flushed cheeks. This vigorous physical activity provides healthy exercise for children's hearts, lungs, and muscles and facilitates the development of their fundamental movement skills. Typical vigorous physical activities young children enjoy are running, jumping, hopping, and dancing. Outdoor play usually provides the opportunity for lots of vigorous physical activity.

Benefits of Physical Activity & Outdoor Play

Social-Emotional Benefits

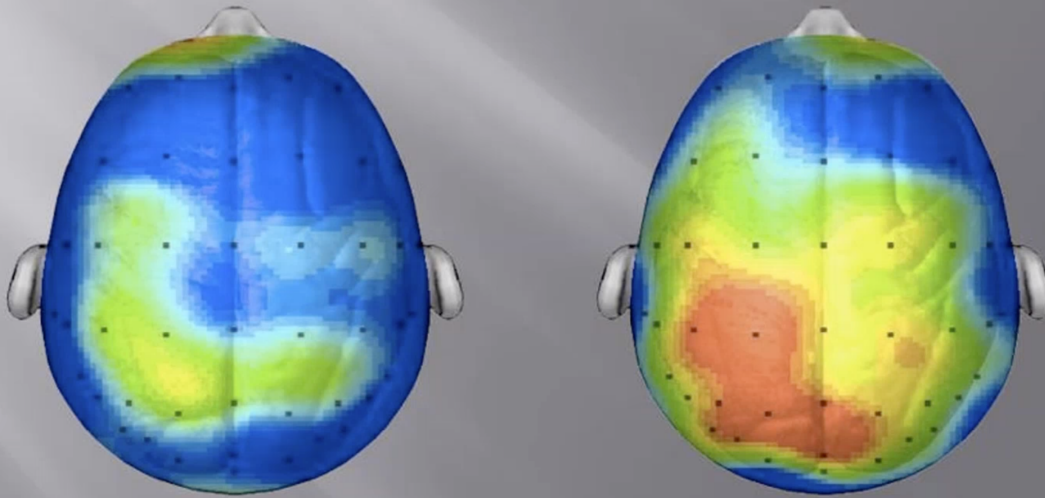
- ★ To strengthen the way children feel about themselves
 - Have positive experiences with movement to strengthen positive self-esteem including self-image
 - Develop self-motivation to become independent learners who confidently chose to be active
- ★ To learn social skills
 - Learn to share and take turns
 - Learn to be cooperative and compromise
 - Learn to play and talk safely

Physical and Health Benefits

- ★ Physical Development
 - Fundamental movement skills
 - Gross motor skill development provides stability for fine motor skill development
- ★ Health
 - Persons who are physically active tend to be healthier than those who are primarily sedentary

BRAIN AFTER SITTING QUIETLY

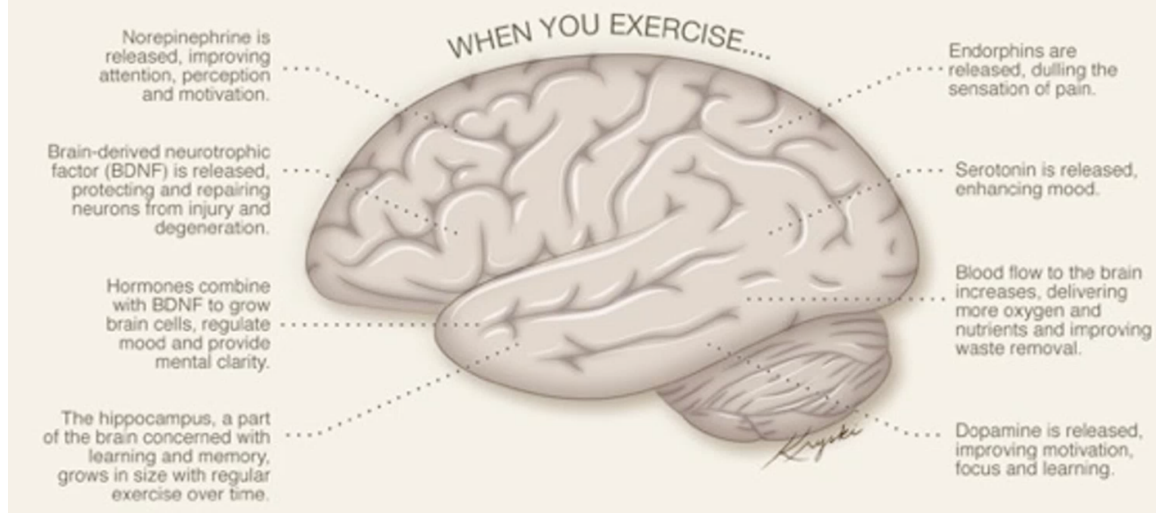
BRAIN AFTER 20 MINUTE WALK



Research/scan compliments of Dr. Chuck Hillman University of Illinois

YOUR BRAIN LOVES THE GYM

(OR SIDEWALK, BIKE TRAIL, POOL,...)



Duration of Physical Activity

- (1) A minimum of two daily opportunities for *outdoor play*, weather permitting, in which a child makes use of both small and large muscles:
 - (a) An infant **birth through 12 months** of age may engage in outdoor play for an amount of time **as tolerated** by the infant; and
 - (b) An infant **13 months through 17 months** of age, a **toddler**, or a **pre-kindergarten** age child must engage in outdoor play for a **minimum of 60 total minutes** daily

* Outdoor play provides for greater freedom and flexibility, fuller expression through loud talk, and a greater range of active movement. Outdoor play also extends opportunities for large muscle development, social-emotional development, and small muscle development by offering variety, challenge, and complexity in ways that are not attainable in a confined indoor space.

- (2) A balance of *active and quiet play* that incorporates group and individual activities, both indoors and outdoors, and must include:
 - (a) A minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play for toddlers; and
 - (b) A minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play for pre-kindergarten age children

An example of moderate active play is taking a brisk walk (3-4 mph pace). You can hold a conversation but not sing. An example of vigorous active play is running and you can only say a few words at a time.

NOTE: Outdoor and active play requirements can be met simultaneously. For example: 60 minutes of active play outdoors counts towards 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play for preschoolers.

Type of Physical Activity

- (1) Child-initiated (unstructured) activities where:
 - (a) The equipment, materials, and supplies are within reach of the child; and
 - (b) The child chooses the activity on the child's own initiative

* Creative Minds Child Development Center has centers in each room that offer children the opportunity for self-directed physical activities. Some examples include suspending a covered balloon or ball for tapping and kicking, rolled socks for throwing at a large wall target, and a floor beam for walking. We will vary the options in the centers accordingly to maintain the children's interest. We also utilize transitions in which children can jump, march, creep, tip toe, walk backwards, or dance their way from one activity to the next to promote their motor skills. Transition time and circle time both present opportunities to move to music, a perennial favorite for infusing physical activity into the child care day.

- (2) Caregiver-initiated (structured) activities that the caregiver directs or chooses, at least two of which must promote movement

* When leading children in physical activities, Creative Minds Child Development Center will avoid elimination games and instead select activities that promote everyone's participation in the physical activity. Some examples include creating an obstacle course in which everyone can participate, turning on the music and dancing or playing a game and even acting out movements during storytime.

Setting of Physical Activity

- (1) Outdoor playground area (smaller playground for Infant through Young Preschool; larger playground for for Pre-School through School Age)
- (2) Outdoor side gated area
- (3) Outdoor fenced grass area
- (4) Indoor gym
- (5) Classrooms - we will move furniture as needed to enable children to engage in vigorous activity while indoors

Recommended Clothing & Footwear

Children need to be allowed to participate freely and safely while doing physical activity. Creative Minds Child Development recommends that children wear comfortable clothing so they can move around. If wearing a dress, we recommend wearing shorts underneath. Everyone **must** wear closed toe shoes - no sandals, clogs or Crocs.

Extreme Weather Conditions

In the event of extreme weather conditions which prohibit or limit outdoor play, the indoor gym can be utilized or they can use their classrooms. As stated above, we will move furniture as needed to enable children to engage in vigorous activity while indoors.

COVID-19

As we continue to navigate through COVID-19 and the different variants that are out there along with the declaration of Monkeypox being a public health emergency we are doing all we can to keep everyone as safe as possible. We do understand that missing days from work is not feasible for a lot of our parents. We will try our best to mitigate the spread as much as possible but would like to implore your cooperation in letting us know if your child has symptoms so we can prevent the spread even further. Below outlines our updated protocols and procedures as of July 28, 2022.

IF an individual that attends our school *tested positive* for COVID-19 **THEN** they need to isolate for a period of 5 days.

The individual who tested positive for COVID-19 can resume regular activities after meeting the following criteria:

- 5 full days of isolation since symptom onset (or test date if no symptoms are present)
- No symptoms or symptoms are resolving after 5 days with strict mask-wearing when around others for 5 full additional days.
- Fever resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications within the last 24 hours.
- **Able and willing to wear a tight-fitting mask when around others for 5 additional full days.**

IF an individual was in *close contact* with someone that tested positive **THEN** we ask that you:

- Keep an eye out for any symptoms that may develop. Even the slightest and/or mildest symptom, which can include:
 - Headache
 - Fever
 - Runny nose
 - Coughing/congestion
- If your child **is showing symptoms** after being notified of close contact we ask that you test them immediately and notify us of the results. If they test positive then follow the protocol above.
- If your child **is not showing symptoms**, we ask that on day 5 after exposure that you test them and share the results with us.

Multiple Cases in the Same Class

If there are multiple (2 or more) COVID-19 cases in the same class after the first identified case then we will close the class down for **1 day** to be able to sanitize and disinfect the area. Parents will immediately be notified. If we deem that we need to close for longer than 1 day then we will also communicate that to the parents. Each situation is going to be different so this will be on a case by case basis.

Multiple Cases in Different Classes

If there are more than 3 cases in different classrooms then we will shut the school down for **1 day** to be able to sanitize and disinfect all areas. Again, if we deem that we need to close for longer than 1 day we will notify all parents immediately. We ask that you keep a close eye on your child during this 1 day rest period and if symptoms occur that you notify us immediately.

Additional Reminders

- Please ensure if you are feeling any symptoms that you **wear your mask** upon dropping off and picking up your child
- Watch for symptoms on a daily basis. If your child is showing symptoms please notify us immediately. Please also consider siblings as well as they are in close contact with each other.

We appreciate everyone for their continued support of our program and we thank each and every one of our families for understanding the environment that we are in and that it is changing constantly. We will try our best to navigate through these times and appreciate your partnership in ensuring the safety and well being of everyone we serve!

**OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PARENT HANDBOOK
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

I acknowledge that I have received the Creative Minds Child Development Center Operational Policies and Parent Handbook. I agree to the conditions and rules specified in the Operational Policies and Parent Handbook.

Child's Name: _____

Printed Name of Parent: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____