

Family Handbook



Growing and Learning Center, LLC.

5390 Route 6N West

(Edinboro Elementary School)

Edinboro, PA 16412

(814) 734-5164

“Providing quality care for children since 1991”

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Welcome

Welcome to the Growing & Learning Center! We are pleased that you have trusted us with your child's early education.

Since 1991, we have offered Preschool & Childcare services for families in the Edinboro area. Admission is open to all regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. Individual attention to each child's needs is commonplace. Just as important, the center has developed a comprehensive and engaging curriculum for each of our programs.

This handbook will inform you about programs, general policies, and procedures to make your experience with the Growing & Learning Center an enjoyable one. Our staff and management are committed to meeting the needs of each child and family.

After review of this handbook, we encourage you to ask questions and refer- to this book often. Families are always welcome at the Growing & Learning Center and appointments are never necessary. Please feel free to stop by the center any time. We look forward to serving your family and will strive to provide a warm and loving environment for your child while promoting individual development to the fullest.

Philosophy

The Growing & Learning Center strives to provide a safe, comfortable, and stimulating environment where each child can, as our name indicates, learn and grow intellectually, socially, and physically. Each child is valued as a unique individual and is encouraged to realize his or her fullest potential. Our care is based on a nurturing attitude that is expressed through:

- Respecting each child with his or her abilities
- Fostering intellectual, social, physical, and emotional development
- Developing positive attitudes through positive experiences

To support our philosophy, we:

- Employ and train skilled, professional staff with special qualities needed to work with young children
- Develop program goals for each age group and provide children with support to reach these goals.
- Maintain bright, inviting, cheerful facilities with ample space for small, well-supervised groups

The Growing & Learning Center's curricula are drawn from the latest educational concepts and teaching techniques. We take the very best from different schools of thought and apply our knowledge to develop a curriculum that promotes learning for all children.

Mission Statement

The Growing & Learning Center strives to provide a safe, comfortable, and stimulating environment where each child can, as our name indicates, learn and grow intellectually, socially, and physically.

License & Certificate

The Growing & Learning Center is a childcare center and preschool, licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. We are a Child Care Works (CCW) provider with all staff meeting the educational and professional qualifications required by Pennsylvania law including FBI and police clearances. Our licenses and copies of laws and regulations and inspection reports are posted and available for review upon request.

Additionally, the Growing and Learning Center has received and maintained a STAR 4 rating through the Pennsylvania Keystone STARS Program Since 2010. Keystone STARS (Standards, Training/Professional Development, Assistance, Resources) provides families with a tool to gauge the quality of early learning programs. The STARS program supports early learning programs in the commitment to continuous quality improvement. Programs that participate in Keystone STARS care about providing quality early learning to your child. As programs move up the STARS ladder, they are providing even higher quality experiences, so your child benefits even more from the program. Early learning programs can earn STAR 1 to a STAR 4 level. At each level, programs have to meet certain research-based quality standards that measure four areas that make a difference in the quality of care your child receives:

1. Staff Education.
2. Learning Environment
3. Leadership Management.
4. Family and Community Partnerships.



As a program moves from STAR 1 to STAR 4, the requirements in these areas increase

Inclusion Policy

The Growing and Learning Center will uphold and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Civil Rights Act.

The Growing and Learning center has an open admissions policy solely based on the availability of services, and the individual families desire to enroll. It is required that If a child has received services from any outside agency this information be disclosed to the director before the child starts the program.

Should the Growing and Learning center be unable to accommodate a child's individual needs because of the impact said needs have on the center, the family will be notified. Accommodations may be discussed and based upon availability of the discussed accommodations the child may be admitted into the program on a trial basis.

Enrollment Forms

Forms to be completed before enrollment include the following:

- **Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form** – Please be sure to fill out all boxes on this form. Should a portion of the form not apply to your family, please indicate so with “N/A”.
- **Child Health Report** – This form is to be completed by your child’s physician. This form is not required before your child’s first day. However, it will be due shortly after they begin at G&L, and according to the recommended schedule for routine health supervision as referenced in the most current edition of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).
- **Hand Sanitizer Permission Form** – Please indicate if G&L has permission to apply hand sanitizer to your children. Hand Sanitizer does not replace proper hand washing.
- **Sunscreen Permission Form** – We need permission to apply sunscreen to your child. This form encompasses the different options associated with our sun protection policy.
- **Getting to Know Your Child** – Helps our teachers and your child build a connection quickly.
- **Media Permission Form** – Grants the center permission to document your child’s experience at G&L. Additionally allows the center to use the photos around the facility and on our website.
- **ProCare Data Sheet** – The Growing and Learning Center uses ProCare for attendance and communication. The information from this form helps the Center to better communicate with our families.
- **Emergency Pick Up Authorization Form** – In the event of an Emergency we have an additional form we use for child pick up authorization.
- **Ages and Stages Screening Tool Permission Form** – ASQ’s are developmental screening tools used to identify areas to plan for improvement regarding child development.
- **Client COVID-19 Acknowledgement and Agreement** – This form must be completed for each child attending the Growing and Learning Center.
- **Agreement** – Payment terms, schedule, and services provided.

Arrival & Departure

Hours for the *Center* are from 6:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. Please enter and exit through the covered door on the west side of the building, using the sidewalk. When arriving, sign in and assist your child removing outer garments. The school age children will be escorted by a G&L teacher to and from school.

Upon departure, sign out and notify a staff member. Your child may be released only to those persons listed on the admission forms. Please inform us in writing if someone other than the usual person is picking up your child, even if they are listed on the form. In emergencies, we will release upon oral parental permission using the required form and information.

Any new person picking up a child will be asked to show ID.

Payment Policy

Billing & Payment Schedule

All parents/guardians must sign an agreement prior to your child's first day of care at the Growing and Learning Center. Billing is done on a weekly basis and will be emailed on the first day of the week. Payments are expected to be made weekly. If an alternate payment schedule is needed please reach out. We understand that childcare is expensive, and we want to work with you the best we can.

CCW Subsidy Payment

The Growing and Learning Center has partnered with Pennsylvania Child Care Works (CCW) program to provide subsidized childcare costs. This program is administered via the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC). Please contact the ELRC about applying for benefits:

Early Learning Resource Center, Region 1
3823 W. 12th St.
Erie PA, 16505
(866)-225-2263

Multi-Child Discounts

For families with multiple children, attending the Growing and Learning Center, we offer a discount. A 10% discount will be applied to the oldest child when two children attend the center. A family with three children at G&L would receive 20% off the oldest and 10% off the middle child. This discounting would continue for as many children as are enrolled at the center.

Erie's Future Fund Preschool Assistance

The Growing and Learning Center is proud to work with Erie's Future Fund to provide preschool scholarships. Contact Kim Beers at 814-874-0144 ext. 15 for more information.

Attendance Policy

Sick Days

Children get sick. To protect the other children in our program please keep your sick children home. The Growing and Learning center understands that we need to support your efforts in keeping sick children home. Children enrolled during the school year (September – May) will receive the following number of sick days:

- Students that attend 5 days per week will receive 6 sick days during the school year
- Students that attend 3 days per week will receive 2 sick days during the school year
- Students that attend 2 days per week will receive 1 sick day during the school year

*The day before and after a planned G&L closing are considered “free sick days”. This means if you take those days off you will not be using one of your allotted sick days. We ask that you notify the center if you will be utilizing this option to ensure proper staffing.

Children enrolled during the Summer will receive the following number of sick days:

- Students that attend 5 days per week will receive 2 Sick days during the Summer
- Students that attend 3 days per week or less will receive 1 sick day during the Summer

Leave of Absence

Families that want to pull their children out during the Summer or for an extended winter break will be required to pay 25% of their weekly rate for the center to “hold” their spot until they return. Should you pull your children out for an extended leave and choose not to hold your spot you may be waitlisted.

Nonplanned Closures

The Growing and Learning Center will follow the General McLane School District involving unplanned or emergency closings.

Offered Programs

Infant

Child Care for children 6 weeks to 12 months. Infant care has a maximum teacher child ratio of 1:4. We only offer full time care for this age group.

Young Toddlers

Childcare for children 12 months to 24 months. This age group has a maximum teacher child ratio of 1:5. We only offer full time care for this age group.

Older Toddlers

Childcare for children 24 months to 36 months. This age group has a maximum teacher child ratio of 1:6. We only offer full time care for this age group.

Preschool Only

The Growing and Learning Center offers families the option of attending only our preschool program. The program runs from 9:30am until 1:00pm. This is a great option for families that do not need full day childcare but would like to provide their child with the educational and social advantages of a Preschool Education.

Preschool & Child Care

Children that attend our program for the full day are included in our preschool program. These students can attend our program from 6:30am until 5:30 pm.

School-age Before & After School Care

The *Center* cares for school-age children during the hours before school and after. The schedule flexibility this program offers to working parents has made it an extremely popular service.

In the morning before school children are provided with a snack, organized games, and a place to finish homework. The school age children are escorted by the G& L Staff upstairs at 8:45 am. After-School the G & L staff escorts them downstairs around 3:25 pm. We know that kids are **always** hungry at the end of a long school day, so snacks are served after school. In the afternoon, the children again have a variety of activities and a quiet spot to do their homework.

School-age Summer Day Camp

For school-age children who have finished Kindergarten, the *Center* offers summer Day Camp. We have indoor games and activities available. Outdoor activities include organized games, free play time, planned activities, weekly field trips, and guest speakers and activities .

Field Trips

To provide a rich variety of learning experiences for the children, local field trips are scheduled periodically. We have visited nearby businesses, hospitals, and community sites--places where kids can get safe, hands-on contact with their quickly expanding world. If you have an idea for a good field trip, please let us know. We may be able to incorporate it into our program. During the summer months our School age students go on field trip(s) every week. Announcements of trips will be sent to parents in advance.

A permission form signed by the parent or guardian is required for each child attending. Field trip attendance is never mandatory. Your child will be provided care at the *Center* if you do not want him or her to attend the field trip.

All transportation for field trips is provided by the General McLane School District.

Curriculum

Our goal is to design a preschool program that provides a broad, balanced, and relevant education that takes individual differences into account. The curriculum incorporates objectives in separate interest areas spread over four developmental areas: Social/Emotional, Physical, Cognitive, and Language. To accomplish this goal, the Growing and Learning Center shall use the Creative Curriculum and Work Sampling/Ounce assessment tools along with the guidance of the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards. Weekly lesson plans are always posted to keep parents well informed. Observations are done daily to guide teacher's decisions and to facilitate the three annual assessments. In addition, monthly newsletters are sent home with scheduled events and information on child development. Additionally, our preschool classes provide a weekly recap of what our students accomplished.

Progress Evaluations

Children will receive individual achievement evaluations three times per year. Within 45 days of enrollment, we will use the Ages and Stages screening tool as recommended by OCDEL. If we see a possible issue you will be notified. In addition, parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled three times a year. However, if the times scheduled are not convenient, parents are welcome to review results by making an appointment with the *Center* Director or classroom teacher to discuss their child's progress. All evaluation results are kept strictly confidential.

Child Referral

It is the duty of the Growing and Learning Center to provide what information we know to help parents in referring their child to an appropriate social, mental health, educational, wellness, or medical service provider. Suggestions of such referrals will only be made by the director with the assistance of the child's teacher(s) and only after documentation is provided to the parents and a parent/teacher/director conference is held to discuss the referral. Within the first 45 days of enrollment your child will be screened using the Ages and Stages screening tools as recommended by OCDEL.

Transfer of Child Records

Parents may request their child's records to be transferred to another educational facility at any time. If such a request is made, the parents will need to submit the "transfer request" form before the records may be transferred.

What Your Child Will Need from Home

School Age:

- Extra set of clothes in case of an emergency
- Packed lunch for summer or full days
- Backpack for belongings

Preschool:

- Extra set of clothes in case of an emergency
- Packed lunch
- Morning and afternoon snack (If you would prefer your child not have the provided snacks.)
- Backpack for belongings
- Small blanket, sheet, napping buddy if needed, and pillow (if napping)
- Optional paint smock
- Contigo water bottle to remain at the center (We will ensure they are properly cleaned).

Toddler:

- Extra set of clothes in case of an emergency
- Extra big girl/big boy pants and several extra sets of clothes during potty training
- Packed lunch and snacks (Snacks are provided for children two and older.)
- Backpack for belongings
- Small blanket, sheet, napping buddy if needed
- Disposable diapers (please leave at the Center a pack of diapers and wet wipes to be used only for your child). A staff member will notify you when the diapers or wet wipes need replaced.
- Diaper ointment labeled with your child's name and written permission and instructions for use.
- Contigo water bottle to remain at the center (We will ensure they are properly cleaned).

Infants:

- Written statement giving formula, feeding, and napping schedule
- Labeled bottles
- Extra set of clothes
- Packed lunch and snacks when appropriate
- Small blanket and sheet
- Disposable diapers (The Center will provide diapers and wipes at no extra charge. However, you may provide your own if you choose, and we will notify you when you need to bring more.)
- Diaper ointment labeled with child's name and written permission and instructions for use.
- Extra formula or frozen breast milk in case of an emergency
- Extra pacifier to leave at the center if needed

Personal Belonging

All children should leave at the *Center* a complete change of clothes in case of spills or accidents. Children are welcome to bring in toys from home but please no guns, cell phones, video games, or headphones. Do not hesitate to ask the staff if they know where the toy might be, but please, do not ask them to help look for it at the end of the day. This is a very busy time of day for all staff. Please label toys and all personal belongings. This helps immensely with settling discrepancies and/or allows the teacher to return a lost toy if found.

Dress for Play

Please dress your child in comfortable play outfits. Art activities and outdoor play can be hard on clothes. Sneakers and soft-soled shoes are required for safety reasons. Young muscles need exercise to develop strength and skill. Outdoor exercise is provided daily, even in winter months (weather permitting) therefore, dress your child appropriately and remember to label all clothing.

Food & Rest

Breakfast is served until 8:15 am.

When General McLane is in session you will have the option to order your child a hot lunch, The cost is \$2.40 and will be added to your weekly bill. Lunches must be ordered for aStudents who stay during the lunch time must bring a packed lunch. A micro-wave is available for reheating meals (1 minute or less).

Opened leftover foods cannot be saved and re-served by the staff. Hazardous foods (i.e. milk, meat, cheese, yogurts) must be refrigerated. Please label these items with your child's name and place them in the appropriate class refrigerator. Snacks will be provided by the center except for toddlers and Infants.

Rest time is required for all children aged three years and younger and is available for anyone. Your child will have his/her own cot. Please provide a small blanket, crib sheet, and/or pillow. All bedding must be taken home on Weekends to be washed. Soiled bedding must be washed immediately.

Please label all belongings!

Medication & Illness

An emergency medical release form is required for each child in case of accident or serious illness. This allows for us to take the child to the nearest medical facility. Please notify us if your child contracts a communicable disease so that other parents may be informed. Children may become sick while at the center and must be removed for the safety of the other children. If they have a temperature of 100.4 degrees and above, uncontrolled or uncontained diarrhea, lice and/or nits, or 2 episodes of vomiting, the parent will be contacted by telephone and arrangements must be made to pick up the child at once.

If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the emergency person listed on the release form will be contacted. Children must be fever free for 24 hours without medication before returning to the center.

Please be sure that the information on the medical release form is current. Periodically you will be asked to review your application to check this information.

Prescription or non-prescription medication, must be in the original, labeled container and be placed in our locked container. For any medication to be administered at the *Center*, parents must sign the Medication Log indicating times and dosages. Tylenol may be administered only if the appropriate box is checked on the student's application.

Sunscreen

G&L provides sunscreen to be use when the U.V. index is at a 4 and above. Written permission will be necessary. Sunscreen cannot be applied without permission. If your child has allergies to certain types of sunscreens, we ask you to provide an alternative solution. Either their own bottle of sunscreen to remain at the center or protective clothing.

Hand Sanitizer

Childcare and preschool programs in PA receive guidelines from the Department of Human Services concerning the use of hand sanitizers in preschool settings. These guidelines require Growing and Learning to have written permission to use hand sanitizer for each child and to keep hand sanitizer out of the reach of children. There is a hand sanitizer permission form in your enrollment packet that you will complete that either grants or denies us permission to use hand sanitizer on your child's hands.

Please DO NOT send hand sanitizer in or attached to your child's backpack or jacket.

Sick Child Procedures

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children are not brought to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms in the morning, he or she will not be admitted for the safety of the other children.

- Fever of 100.4 degrees F or higher
- Vomiting
- Uncontrolled or uncontained diarrhea
- Pink eye with drainage

Procedure for Minor Injuries

- A staff person certified in first aid will always be present.
- Basic first aid treatment will be administered by the child's teacher or director.
- A written Emergency Treatment Form will be completed by the child's teacher or school nurse and signed by the teacher in charge. This form will go home with the child and will provide specifics about the injury sustained and treatment administered.
- Depending on the severity of the injury, the child's family will be called immediately to take him or her to a physician
- The child's teacher or school nurse will remain with the child and continue to apply first aid as needed.

Procedure for Serious Injuries

- Certified first aid personnel, the Director and/or the teacher will remain with the child and appropriately apply first aid.
- A second staff person or director will call the ambulance, retrieve the child's file and call the family and/or authorized emergency contact.
- The child's teacher and or person in charge will ride with the child in the ambulance to the hospital. The child's file goes along in the ambulance to the hospital.
- A parent or authorized emergency contact person meets the teacher at the hospital to authorize treatment for the child. Signed consent for treatment is in the child's file if a parent of contact cannot be reached.

Vaccinations

The parent/guardian of a child who has not received the age-appropriate immunizations prior to enrollment and who does not have a documented medical or religious exemption from routine childhood immunizations must provide documentation of a scheduled appointment or arrangement to receive immunizations. This could be a scheduled appointment with the primary care provider, or an upcoming immunization clinic sponsored by a local health department or health care organization. An immunization plan and catch-up immunizations should be initiated upon enrollment and completed as soon as possible according to the current "Recommended Immunization Schedules for Persons Aged 0 Through 18 Years – United States" from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). If immunizations have not been or are not to be administered because of a medical condition, a statement from the child's primary care provider must be on file. If immunizations are not to be administered because of the parents/guardians' religious or personal belief, they must provide a signed letter stating such to be on file with the Center.

Emergency Plan

In the event of an emergency, the Growing and Learning Center has a detailed plan in place. Our plan was created with consideration from The Edinboro Volunteer Fire Department, Erie County Department of Public Safety Emergency Management division, and the General McLane School District. Copies of this plan are located within the facility and reviewed annually by our team. Staff are updated when changes occur and at every yearly review. Our plan includes methods to contact families and communicate updates as needed.

Calendar

The *Center* is open year-round, Monday through Friday, except for the following holidays:

1. New Year's Eve
2. New Year's Day
3. MLK Day
4. Good Friday
5. Memorial Day
6. July Fourth (Observed)
7. Labor Day
8. Thanksgiving Day
9. Friday after Thanksgiving
10. Christmas Eve
11. Christmas Day
12. December 26th

Parties

We plan three parties each year: Costume party (around October 31st), Christmas party, and Valentine's Day party. For the fall we have a costume party, for Christmas children exchange little gifts, and for Valentine's Day children exchange cards. More information will be available prior to each party.

Birthdays

To help celebrate birthdays, the children may bring in a special treat for his or her immediate class. **MUST** be store bought. Please notify the Center of any particular diets or foods that are not to be served to your child.

Transition Information

Children are enrolled in classes generally by age in the fall. We offer:

- Infant classroom ages 6 weeks to their first birthday
- One-year old classroom for ages 12 months to 2nd birthday
- Two-year-old classroom
- Three-year-old classroom
- Four-year-old classroom

If the parents along with both the teachers involved & the directors agree that a child would do better in a different age group, and space is available, arrangements may be made for a different classroom assignment. Parents will be notified at least two weeks ahead of time when a child will be assigned a new classroom. Parents are encouraged to talk to both classroom teachers involved and the directors to help with the child's transition. The new teacher will provide a list of personal belongings needed for that classroom. The child will also be given short periods of time to spend in the new classroom before he/she is moved.

The following are goals for each classroom to help parents with the transition process:

Infant Room

To provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Outside time is given daily weather permitting. Evaluations will be done every three months.

One-Year Old Room

To provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Opportunities will be given daily to promote motor, auditory, language, cognitive, and self-concept skills. Nap time is more consistent. Outside time is given daily weather permitting. Evaluations will be done every four months.

Two-Year-Old Room

To provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Opportunities will be given daily to promote motor, auditory, language, cognitive, and self-concept skills. Children will be exposed to more structured time planned for independent as well as group activities. Nap time will be between 12:00pm-3:00 pm. Outside time is given daily weather permitting. Evaluations will be done every four months.

Young Preschool

To provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Children will be exposed to more learning centers to develop motor, auditory, language, cognitive, and self-concept skills. More structured time will be planned for independent as well as group activities. Nap time will be between 1:00 pm-3:00 pm. Children will be expected to handle everyday bathroom routines with little adult help. Outside time is given daily weather permitting. Evaluations will be done 3 times a year.

Older Preschool

To provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Children will be exposed to more learning centers to develop motor, auditory, language, cognitive, and self-concept skills. More structured time will be planned for independent as well as group activities. Kindergarten readiness skills will be emphasized throughout the school year. Nap time will be offered between 1:00 pm-3:00 pm but is not

required. Children will be expected to handle everyday bathroom routines with little adult help. Outside time is given daily weather permitting. Evaluations will be done 3 times a year.

Before and After School Program

To provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Planned optional activities/learning centers are available daily to develop motor, auditory, language, cognitive, and self-concept skills. Evaluations will be done 3 times a year. A breakfast snack, usually consisting of cereal with milk and juice is served between 7:30-8:25 am. An after-school snack is also available when the children come downstairs. The option of homework time with a staff member's assistance is available to all children. Outside time is given daily weather permitting.

Summer School-age program

To provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Planned optional activities/learning centers are available daily to develop motor, auditory, language, cognitive, and self-concept skills. Evaluations will be done 3 times a year. A breakfast snack, usually consisting of cereal and juice is served between 7:30-8:15 am. Outside time is given daily weather permitting. Field trips are planned every week. Again, these are optional, and the cost is the parents' responsibility. The Summer School-age program is for children that have been in Kindergarten.

Transitioning out of Child Care

The following is information to help your child transition from our after-school facility to his or her own self-care. Parents can provide a safer environment for their children by telling them your expectations and educating them on several items, including the following:

- Performing basic first aid
- Getting in touch with emergency contacts
- Operating household appliances
- Answering the phone or the door
- Contacting you or your spouse.
- Keys-instruct your child to keep house keys in a pocket, purse, or wallet. Also instruct your child how to lock up your house when leaving.
- Schedule-set up a daily schedule so that the child knows what to do when at home alone. When and what they are allowed to watch T.V. What your expectations are about homework. What you consider acceptable snacks.
- Safety rules-Establish and post house safety rules on use of appliances, answering the door and telephone, and play activities.

BE AWARE OF THEIR INTERNET USE

- Emergency procedures-Post emergency telephone numbers and addresses near the phone, and make sure your youngster knows how to report an emergency. Practice these steps and enroll the child in a first aid or life skills class.

- Check in-Set up a check-in routine so that a responsible adult knows when the child has arrived home. This could involve a phone call to your workplace or to a neighbor.
- Do not allow friends to visit your child when he or she is at home alone. Unsupervised play may get out of hand.
- Entertainment-Provide some type of safe home entertainment or simple chores to ensure that your child won't be bored after school.
- Travel-Do not allow your child to experiment with new routes to and from school. If possible, have your youngster walk to and from school with friends. Emphasize the need to come straight home.

As a parent, you have some responsibilities too. If you are going to be late coming home from work, be sure to inform your child. As this becomes a family routine, do not forget to tell your child thank you for a job well done! They need to know you trust them and acknowledge their new-found responsibility. Spend time with them when you get home. Let them know that you care, even when you cannot be there. Most children understand parents' schedules so long as the parent does not bring work or a bad attitude home with them.

Discipline Policy

Staff will help children avoid conflicts by using observations of room arrangement along with observations of children's behavior. Staff will react positively to children's behavior to avoid negative attention getting behavior. Staff needs to be consistent with classroom rules and their reactions to inappropriate behavior from the children. If a problem arises between two children staff need to neutralize the object in question and ask the children to solve the problem. Staff will allow both sides to be heard and then encourage the children to arrive at a solution. Staff will help the children understand why their behavior is inappropriate.

STAFF WILL NEVER USE HARSH OR PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT. If staff feels that more help is necessary, then they can provide they will document the behavior and meet with the director for advice. Between the director and teacher, a decision will be reach about further action. See "Child Referral"

Suspension and/or Expulsion

The Growing & Learning Center strives to provide a safe, comfortable, and stimulating environment where each child can, as our name indicates, learn and grow intellectually, socially, and physically. We understand that everyone is different and will require a unique approach to early learning. Sometimes our program may not be a perfect fit for everyone involved. The following are the ways in which we strive to avoid suspensions and/or expulsions.

Alignment with Federal Policies:

The Growing and Learning Center will uphold and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Civil Rights Act. The Growing and Learning center has an open admissions policy solely based on the availability of services, and the individual families desire to enroll.

Developing a Highly Skilled Workforce:

At the core of the Growing and Learning Center's success is our high retention rate of our talented permanent employees. All the Growing and Learning Center's permanent staff are members of the community we serve which allows them to connect with our families on a larger foundation. Our team of dedicated employees is our greatest strength and most valuable asset. We at the Growing and Learning Center continue to strive for excellence through continued individualized professional development. All our early childhood education staff members are required to complete a predetermined amount of professional development hours. These professional development courses must be approved training from The Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) or accredited college courses that fulfill the Keystone STARS standards. Topics included in these approved courses are high quality positive interactions and classroom management, teaching social and emotional development, child development, developmental milestones, implicit bias, and cultural competence. Additionally, staff members are encouraged to discuss the topics of their professional development training amongst each other at monthly staff meetings, during classroom preparation time, and throughout day-to-day interactions.

The Growing and Learning Center encompasses daily practices for effective classroom environments, activity transition ease, individualized lesson plans, ongoing daily assessment tools, balanced daily schedules for children, and intentional teaching of positive social emotional skills for children through the implementation of the Creative Curriculum system. Our early education teachers are expected to plan their lessons using the Creative Curriculum system. This system provides early childhood teachers with resource guides with a focus on; planning and reflecting on transitions, daily schedules, physical environment, lesson planning, and daily assessment.

Strong Family Partnerships:

Building strong, lasting relationships with our families is one of our core values at the Growing and Learning center. When a new family begins with the center, they are offered a tour of our facility and introduced to the staff. Teachers are also scheduled to be in the classroom to welcome children and parents as they enter the facility each day. This time allows our parents and teachers to get better acquainted and allows the opportunity to discuss any concerns that either the teacher or parent may have regarding the child's success at the center. The Growing and Learning center also offers parent teacher conferences, and "getting to know you" meetings to further foster these relationships and to ensure there are open lines of communication.

Additionally, the Growing and Learning center has several afterhours events that allows for our staff and families to interact in a non-formal setting. Every year the center has its preschool open house to kick off the school year, the Fall Carnival in November, the Christmas play in December, and the Easter Breakfast and Egg Hunt in the spring. Each classroom also hosts holiday parties that parents are encouraged to attend to help promote strong relationships amongst the staff and the families we serve.

The director will periodically invite the parents to take a short survey to help identify any shortcomings and/or best practices they would like to see the center continue implementing. The director also periodically holds policy meetings with parents and staff to discuss different viewpoints on potentially confrontational issues. The center has an open-door policy and parents are encouraged to contact us with any concerns or comments they may have regarding their children and the center.

Setting Goals and Tracking Data & Universal Screening

Our staff are required to complete the ASQ training, offered on the PA Key Registry, and how referrals are made before administering the ASQ/ASQ:SE. Staff members of the Growing and Learning Center will also complete training on the usage of the Tracking Behaviors Report and the Monthly Program Actions Tracking form. Staff that have completed all available training on the ASQ/ASQ:SE will conduct the screening within 45 days of each child's start date. In addition, the ASQ/ASQ:SE screening will be completed with each classroom advancement or each year (whichever comes first). Reassessments will be conducted based upon the indicated results as instructed by the ASQ/ASQ:SE guide. Results of the ASQ screening, along with the activities provided in the ASQ/ASQ:SE guide, will be shared with the child's parents. The program director will offer assistance when a referral is needed.

Twice a year, our early education teachers conduct parent teacher conferences to help create and monitor individualized goals for our children. Additionally, all our teachers are available for additional conferences as needed for all our children. Goals established during these conferences are recorded, and progress is frequently measured by the teacher and goals are reevaluated based upon individual need.

When there is a behavioral incident, in the classroom, the Behaviors Tracking Report will be completed by the teacher. Needed actions resulting from the behavioral incident will be discussed by the classroom teacher and director. Additionally, these actions will be recorded on the Monthly Program Actions Tracking form. These reports will be reviewed frequently by the director and teachers to determine any additional steps or responses needed to meet the individualized needs of the child and our staff. The director will seek support via multiple online and community resources available to our center. Should an expulsion occur, the director, with the guidance of industry professionals, will analyze data from any previous expulsions. Reviewing the data will help in identifying any root causes or program deficiencies.

Childcare Provider Rights

Our goal at the Growing and Learning Center is to provide quality developmentally appropriate programs to the children of our community. To be effective we need our parents/guardians to partner with us to meet our children's individualized goals. Should a parent/guardian be unwilling to partner with us in meeting their child's developmental goals we retain the right to suspend or expel the child.

Family partnership and engagement opportunities

It is our policy to encourage parents to feel welcome to be involved in the activities and decision making at the Growing & Learning Center. All parents are welcome and encouraged to share their ideas with their child's teacher or the director. Annually we ask parents to fill out a survey about their own and their child's experiences. These surveys are analyzed by the director and then shared with the staff. New plans and policies are developed and implemented. Annually we ask the parents of the School age children to help us develop the summer program. At the end of the program, parents and children are again asked to fill out a survey of their own and child's experiences. Besides welcoming parents' opinions and suggestions the following opportunities exist for further involvement.

- Fundraising committee
- Volunteers for classroom parties
- Guest speakers for classrooms
- Four annual family get-togethers

Additional Information

- For tax purposes our Federal Tax ID Number is 37-1930208
- You may be entitled to claim Earned income Credit (EIC) on your taxes. More information is available at www.irs.gov.
- Low cost children's health insurance (C.H.I.P) may be available to you. For more information please visit www.state.pa.us. You may also call 1-800-986-KIDS
- Subsidized childcare funding can be acquired through the ELRC Erie County 1-800-860-2281
- Information on mental health/mental retardation can be obtained from the Children & Youth Services at 154W 9th street Erie Pa. 451-6600.

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook if you have any additional questions feel free to talk to a Growing & Learning staff member or Tom

Growing and Learning: 734-5164

Email: Growingandlearning@outlook.com

Tom's cell phone:

814-460-4719

Remember...

You are *Always* Invited

Parents are not only welcome but are encouraged to come and participate **ANYTIME!**

Unless a formal consultation with the directors is desired, no appointment is necessary. Drop in and see how your child is doing. The innovative ideas provided by parents and guardians greatly enhance our program and are sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,



Tom Lytle