

Potential Parent Handbook

OUR PROGRAM

Our purpose is to provide the very best environment for young children. Although the program may seem very informal, the curriculum, and the Center are set up to be "Discovery Learning" experiences. What this means is to provide the materials, guidance, and opportunity for youngsters to learn at an appropriate rate for his/her individual level of development. In our planning, staff utilizes their knowledge and center resources to design activities that fit individual and group needs of young children. Each child is an individual, so many varied opportunities will be introduced to enhance development in physical, social emotional, and intellectual areas.

Our staff is trained in Focused Portfolio. The Focused Portfolios process involves teachers authentically assessing children by carefully observing them in everyday interactions in the classroom. Teachers put together a simple but comprehensive portfolio which captures the learning, documents observations, and relates the child's development to recognized milestones. . Staff will use these milestones for curriculum planning, individualizing curriculum and parent conferencing.

We know that PLAY is a young child's work. Children learn best through hands-on experiences and through active participation. Our main emphasis will reflect this knowledge. Large blocks of free play and short periods of teacher guided experiences will be alternated through the day. Trained staff are always available for assistance, guidance, and encouragement as your child moves through the learning process.

Materials will be available for self-expression-blocks, clay, paints, water, sand, and mud. There are also materials available to lay basic foundations for academic areas including language arts, science, math, and social studies. Puzzles, games, stories, singing, and rhythm activities will be a part of each day. Opportunities for large muscle activities and vigorous play will be available each day.

Although the program seems informal, a relaxed setting can still provide a consistent sequence and a basic routine that is followed each day. Young children need consistency to

provide a feeling of security. Our program makes every effort to provide consistent staff and to keep change at a minimum. To prevent overtiring, a schedule of active and quiet play alternate throughout the day.

NAEYC ACCREDITATION AND THREE STAR FACILITY

Our program is proud to be one of an elite group of programs in the state to have obtained National Accreditation through the National Association of Early Childhood Education. This is truly a mark of quality and excellence in programming for young children. We are also a Three Star Facility.

Parent Association

We have a Parent Association which assists us in several ways. Membership is an option available to all parents/guardians. The Association gives us input as to topics of interest for our Parent Meetings. They organize and assist with our various parties. This association has one formal meeting a year to offer ideas and suggestions for program improvement. The Parent Association questionnaire gives parents/guardians opportunities to express their views on multi cultural emphasis plus an opportunity to volunteer their expertise. The questionnaire also provides families an opportunity to volunteer as a guest speaker or to provide a demonstration on a given topic. It also provides parents/guardians an opportunity to participate in the early screening and developmental testing offered by the Oklahoma City-County Health Department.

Indoor Play

Self-selected learning blocks will include planned learning centers and activities that relate to academic, social, physical, emotional, and motor development. Specific units (see tentative schedule) of study will be going on through the year with information available as new things begin. Remember, learning should be fun; so when children are laughing and having fun, relax and enjoy the experience with him/her.

Outdoor Play

Activities in which large muscles are used are very important to a child's development and health. Outdoor time is planned daily unless the weather is severe. The length of outdoor time may vary. We are unable, due to staffing, to keep individual children indoors. Proper clothing should be sent or labeled and left at school to ensure the child can be properly dressed for outdoor time.

Communication

Communication between parents and staff regarding children is extremely important in meeting the needs of our children. If you wish to leave a note for your child's teacher, it is best to leave it on the director's desk. The message will be delivered as soon as the director arrives for the day. In addition, the younger class sends out daily notes, the older two groups, weekly notes. We have an incident report form for those minor accidents that parents need to know about.

We send out monthly newsletters, brochures, informational handouts and reminders. You will find a Parent Bulletin Board and a Parent Resource area in the entry area. Teachers many times send individual notes or make phone calls when there is a concern. We make available both blanket and individual notes on the computer screen at check-in/out time. Finally, we publish our monthly newsletter, notes and various thumbprint photo galleries on our web page: www.eoctech.org

Class Assignments and Waiting List

September 1 birthdate cut-off sets class assignments and contract fees-in accordance with public school policy. For the most part, groups of children remain together as a class until the following August. At this time children will promote to the next appropriate class based upon their birthdate.

Basically, applicants are accepted in the order of receipt date of completed Waiting List form and enrollment fee. Other factors may go into the ranking on the waiting list; however, such as need for full- or part-time care. Requesting how you rank on the waiting list is therefore, a very complicated and illusive subject. We will send out an annual waiting list update survey each spring. At this time we are able to compile information concerning families' continued

child care needs. From this information we are able to begin building summer and fall classes. If you are on the waiting list, please be sure to return the survey. If you do not return the survey, we will assume you no longer wish to remain on the waiting list.

We are fortunate to have several support services available. The expertise of these agencies and individuals can be consulted for suggestions on programming and placement. This provides the most successful schedule and learning environment to meet individual needs. The order of enrollment may be altered through administrative approval to address special circumstances. The Center administration reserves the right to address special circumstances. The Center administration reserves the right to balance groups.