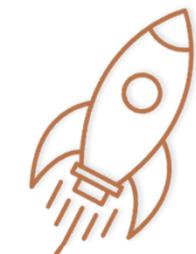


# EXPLORE *and* DISCOVER

Center for Early Learning



# Parent Handbook

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# PART ONE: HISTORY

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide all children with a quality early learning experience. We strive to provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment where children cultivate a natural desire to learn and provide families support to ensure enrichment both in the classroom and in the community.

## Philosophy

At *Explore & Discover Center for Early Learning* we believe the preschool years are a crucial part of a child's education. We believe in play with a purpose and through such play children are developing the cognitive, socioemotional, and physical skills necessary for success. We understand the power of the community and strive to incorporate its tools and provide a holistic approach to all children and their families. We consider parent participation critical and strive to deliver all parents with the necessary support to best care for their children. We believe that all children are infinitely capable, creative, and intelligent and it is our role to support their qualities and challenge them to grow.

Each day in our classrooms, our children engage in purposeful structured and unstructured play. This allows each child to learn at his or her own rate, make choices, and practice individual decision-making. Each of our classrooms, encourages children to explore materials related to imaginative play, blocks and other building materials, art and sensory play materials, music and movement, books and other print-rich materials on a variety of topics, writing tools, cooking experiences, outdoor and gross motor play.

## Nondiscrimination Policy

This facility will not discriminate against anyone (child, adult, staff, or parent) on the basis of sex, age, religion, national origin, color, race, marital status, physical or mental disability, or veteran status.

## Anti-Bias Statement

Explore and Discover does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability or handicap, veteran status or sexual orientation. Explore and Discover's

administration, teachers, and staff understand that at an early age children can absorb our society's biases of gender, age, color, language, and physical characteristics. We strive to educate children of all races, religions, family, backgrounds, cultures, gender, abilities, and ethnicity with equal respect and consideration. Our program provides children with equal opportunities to take part in all activities. Books, dolls, toys, photos, artwork, and recordings that reflect diverse images are immersed throughout the curriculum.

## Inclusion Policy

Explore and Discover abides by the laws set forth under the Americans with Disabilities Act and provides for all children, including those with identified disabilities and special learning and developmental needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing arrangements in order to include children with such needs. Teachers are made aware of the identified/diagnosed special needs of individual children and trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. Whenever possible local agencies are asked to provide in-service trainings to our teachers to educate them on best practice approaches and tools. When teachers feel they need additional support and training from a specific professional to better accommodate a specific child, they will work collaboratively with the program director and parents and solicit additional services from the community. If decided collaboratively, a professional may aid in making recommendations for a specific child. If professional services are deemed necessary, Explore and Discover's staff are committed to working together with all parties to help each child grow to his/her fullest potential.

## Licensing Information

This program is licensed by the State of Florida and will comply with the regulations of the State Department of Children & Families. Quarterly inspections are conducted by the Department of Children & Families. The State Fire Marshall conducts inspections annually to ensure the center meets or exceeds all standards.

## PART TWO: ENROLLMENT POLICIES

### Admission Requirements and Enrollment Procedures

Upon initial visit and tour of our facility, all interested parents receive our information and enrollment packet. Parents are required to complete all forms in their enrollment packet prior to their child's first day. Current physical exam and immunization forms must also be provided. In addition, a \$50.00 non-refundable initial registration fee is required to attain enrollment.

#### Center Waiting List

In the event that the center enrollment is at capacity, families wishing to enroll will be asked to complete the waiting list form located in the front office. When there is an opening in a room the Director will find a child to fill the opening by starting at the beginning of the waiting list looking for a child in the same age group of the opening. The waiting list priority is based on the date the family signed up.

#### Hours and Days of Operation

Explore and Discover is in operation 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Each August a yearly calendar is distributed, detailing holiday closings. Additional copies are made available in the parent resource area and on our website.

Explore and Discover typically closes the following holidays each school year:

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

#### Drop-off / Pick-up Times, Procedures, and Safety

Upon arrival, parents are asked to sign their child in using the *Procare* system and then walk their child into his/her classroom and assist him/her in following their classroom morning procedures. We encourage parents to share with teacher's important information concerning your child. Morning drop off times are from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Please be sure to drop-off during this time and be aware that morning learning time begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. Late drop-offs can often interrupt the classroom's morning routines and decrease the quality of instruction.

Infants are permitted to drop-off until 11:00 a.m.

Depending on a child's schedule (i.e. mornings only, full time, VPK, etc.) pick-up times are preset according to that schedule. Upon pick-up, please be sure to sign out your child using the *Procare* system before visiting your child's classroom. Upon arrival into the classroom, your child's teachers will share information relevant to your child's day. Papers will be in your child's folder located in the classroom.

## Special Closings

Explore and Discover can also close due to inclement weather or utility outages beyond our control. This may include full or partial days. Information regarding these closings will always be distributed via parent handouts, posted bulletins, phone calls, and your child's teacher or listening to your local news for Brevard County school closings.

## Extra Hours

If your child is enrolled in one of our part-time programs (i.e. mornings only, 3 days per week, VPK, etc.) extra hours are available at a fee of \$10.00 per hour. Please be sure to contact the office prior to the use of additional hours.

## Fees and Procedures for Payment

Fees vary depending on your child's age and their scheduled time at the center. Tuition can be paid either weekly or monthly.

If weekly payments are selected, tuition is due every Monday for the current week of attendance. If a holiday falls on a Monday, tuition is due on the last business day before the holiday. A \$25.00 late fee will be added to your account if tuition is not paid by Tuesday morning. \$5.00 will be added to your account on each day after Tuesday until your account has been brought up-to-date, including all late fees.

If monthly payments are selected, tuition for the coming month is due on the last business day of the month before. Simply multiply the weekly tuition amount by the number of Mondays in the month to determine the correct tuition amount.

## Staff to Child Ratios

|                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Infant 0 – 12 Months   | 4:1               |
| Toddler 12 – 24 Months | 6:1               |
| Toddler 24 - 36 Months | 10:1              |
| Pre-K 36 – 47 Months   | 15:1              |
| Pre-K 48 – 60 Months   | 20:1 (VPK - 10:1) |

- The child to staff ratio must be in effect at all times, with the exception of nap time, provide additional staff is available on site.
- Infants – age 2 children must be supervised by sight and sound at all times.
- Children ages 3 – 5 may be supervised by sound only for short periods of time to use the bathroom, etc.
- Staff must know where their students are at all times and check on them every few minutes to ensure their safety.

## Parent/Child Classroom Orientation

Each August, Explore and Discover hosts its Classroom Orientation and Open House for all of Explore and Discover's parents and their children. This event provides all families the opportunity to visit their classroom, meet their new teachers, and discuss preschool policies, curriculum, discuss parent responsibilities, and opportunities for parent participation throughout the year. Establishing a trusting relationship with parents and staff is important to us and continues way past the initial orientation.

For students that begin attending at other times of the school year, a one-on-one orientation takes place with each new family, our director, and the child's new teachers. Using the parent handbook as a guide, parents will review our policies, curriculum, parent responsibilities, and opportunities for parent participation. We will also ensure all parents have access to our digital parent communication tool, *KidReports* as well as our email system. We believe ongoing communication is vital to a successful early childhood experience.

## Re-registration Procedures

Beginning in March, all current students are required to re-register for the new upcoming school year. Re-registration paperwork will be sent home and a due date will be posted. In addition, an annual non-refundable registration fee is due,

despite the original date of registration. The registration fee will reserve your child's placement and will allow us to more accurately plan for staff and materials for the upcoming year.

Class spots will not be held for any child absent for more than a two-week period if tuition is not paid in advance. Re-registration for class placement will be necessary and will be based upon availability at the time of re-registration.

## Absence Policy

In the event that a family plans to be absent from the center for an extended period of time, the following absence policy will be used:

If your child will be absent for more than 2 weeks, parents have the option of paying half of the weekly tuition for your child until they return which will hold their spot or re-enrolling their child upon returning. Parent will be responsible to pay another registration fee as well as taking the chance of being placed on a waiting list until a space becomes available. **HALF THE TUITION FOR ANY WEEK THEY ARE ABSENT.**

## Late Pick-up Fees

Children picked up after 6:00 p.m. will be charged \$1.00 per child for every minute after closing time. This fee is due on or before morning drop off the following day. The center has no choice but to call appropriate authorities if a child has not been picked up by one hour after closing and if no relative or emergency contact can be located.

## Dress Policy

Explore and Discover maintains that even from a young age, appropriate dress and appearance influence positive learning and citizenship. Further, active indoor and outdoor play is a regular part of our school day. As a result, please dress your child in clothing that is suitable for running, climbing and other stimulating activity, and that is appropriate to the weather. Because the children work with paint, play dough, glue, and other messy materials, they should wear clothes that can be laundered easily. Sneakers or other closed-toe rubber soled shoes are required. Sandals or other open-toed shoes are not permitted due to the potential safety hazard.

# PART THREE: EMERGENCY / HEALTH CARE POLICIES

## Contingency Plan for Emergency Situations

### Responsibility during Emergency Situations

In case of an emergency, the following parties are asked to follow the procedures outlined below:

1. Explore and Discover – The school will retain responsibility of all children on premises until they are released to a parent, guardian, or other designated person, or until they have been transported to an official evacuation center, in which case selected staff will remain with the children until they have reunited with their families.
2. Teachers and Staff – All employees will remain on the premises assisting in executing emergency procedures.
3. Parents – Parents should listen to news outlets for progress reports on the disaster taking place and follow official instructions relayed by officials. If parents are able to reach the school without danger to themselves or without interference with disaster workers, they should come to pick up their children. Children will be released only to parents, guardians, or other designated persons listed as Emergency contact.

### Fire Drill Procedure / Evacuation Plan

Each month, a fire drill is conducted for all Explore and Discover's students and staff. In case of a fire, the staff shall determine the safest route of exit, according to their evacuation plan and quickly lead the children to that exit and out of the building. The children are lead to the front or back of the building and gather at the end of the parking lot. Teachers are required to take attendance upon arrive and report the count to administration. This count will be checked to match the count posted in the classroom. Classroom teachers are required to know the number of students in their care at any given time. Please note evacuation plans are posted on each classroom's bulletin board as well as in the main office and other common areas such as the kitchen.

### Severe Storm Procedure

During thunder storms, children and adults should be kept away from windows and doors. Children should play inside only. Staff will be on the alert for safety issues such as close lightning strikes that may cause a power outage or fires. If an emergency situation

arises, the Director will call 911.

## Tornado Drill Procedure

In case of a severe storm / tornado warning, the staff shall quickly lead the children to an interior hallway away from windows. Children will be instructed to assume the “crouch and cover” position. Infants will be covered with blankets. It is our staff’s priority to keep the children calm during these drills. Attendance is taken and counts are conducted. In compliance with State regulations, we conduct a tornado drill once each quarter.

## Power Outage Procedure

In case of a power outage, emergency lights will be activated. Teachers are permitted to continue daily activities if the amount of light is adequate. If the rooms are too dark to use and weather permitting, students may be brought to the playground. If the power does not reactivate within the hour, parents will be called to pick up their child and the center will close.

## Loss of Water Procedure

As per Palm Beach County’s Health Department requirements, Explore and Discover must meet minimum requirements regarding temperatures, hot water, flushing of toilets, running water, etc. in order to operate. Upon the loss of water, proper personnel will evaluate the problem. After the problem is evaluated and a determination regarding the duration of the loss of water is established, the director will make a decision regarding whether or not Explore and Discover should close. If the school must close, parents will be notified to pick up their child.

## Bomb Threats / Civil Unrest Procedure

In the event that our center has concerns related to a bomb, threat, or other civil unrest the following procedures will take place:

If our facility receives an unknown package and there is reason to believe it is intended harm, all individuals will evacuate immediately under emergency personnel have cleared the building. If a threat of a bomb is received via phone, office staff will remain calm and will attempt to get the following information from the caller: location of the bomb, time it will go off, type of bomb, person calling. Additionally, office staff will notify other school personnel, contact 911, and initiate our lockdown procedures. Ongoing contact will take place with emergency personnel regarding further action. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible

and will be notified if evacuation was required. The incident will be documented and shared with the Department of Children and Families.

In the event of an act of civil unrest, such as a protest or riot, that occurs without the vicinity of our facility, lockdown procedure will be initiated. Individuals will be prevented from entering or leaving our facility during the lockdown. Parents will be notified via phone and our parent communication system (text, email) when the lockdown has ended and they are permitted to re-enter the facility.

## Suspicious Individuals / Cars Procedure

Upon the identification of a suspicious individual or car, the Center Director or next-in-charge will call the police to investigate the situation and consult with them to determine the level of potential crisis.

- If the situation is of marginal concern or greater, the Director will require that the entire school remain inside and immediately require any groups outside to come inside.
- Teachers shall lower blinds to further obscure visibility and consider bringing those classrooms in the direct line of site into the “core” play space or another classroom/area until the situation is resolved.
- Teachers shall be prepared to fully evacuate the facility should police or other emergency services make this request. Consider whether existing evacuation routes will suffice or if an alternate route must be taken due to the location of the incident. The director shall make staff aware of any changes to their evacuation routes if necessary.
- The Director will stay in communication with the police and will ensure parents are made aware of the situation. The Director will write an incident report.

## Health Policies and Care of Ill Children

### Health Requirements / Sick Policy

Health Regulations are determined by the Florida Department of Children & Families. For the protection of all children enrolled in the program, Explore and Discover requires current immunization records at the time of enrollment. (See ENROLLMENT PACKET) Explore and Discover will report all cases of contagious diseases to the Florida Department of Children & Families and to the parents as soon as the disease is identified.

Parents will be called to pick up their child(ren) from the Center and the child must remain out of the Center for 24 hours if:

- The child has a fever over 100°.
- The child has diarrhea for the second time during the day.
- The child vomits.

The child should be kept home if he/she:

Has a heavy nasal discharge either green or yellow in color, which disrupts normal activity.

- Have symptoms of a virus.
- Have other signs of illness (earache, stomachache, reddened eyes, rash, etc.) -
- Is unable to participate in the normal daily activity/routine.
- Requires one on one care from the care provider.

#### COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

| DISEASE                     | INCUBATION PERIOD | RULES FOR ATTENDANCE  |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Chicken Pox                 | 14 – 21 Days      | Child must be absent until scabbed over and dry                                   |
| Impetigo                    | 4 – 10 Days       | Prescribed medication and 48 hours.<br>Child must be absent until area is clear.  |
| Lice or Crabs (Pediculosis) | 7 – 10 Days       | Child must be absent until treatment; Physician's note is required                |
| Measles                     | 8 – 14 Days       | Child must be absent for 7 days after rash appears.                               |
| Mumps                       | 12 – 21 Days      | Child must be absent until all swelling Disappears                                |
| Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)   | 24 – 72 Hours     | Prescribed medication and 48 hours.<br>Child must be absent until eyes are clear. |
| Ringworm (Tinea Infections) | 10 – 14 Days      | Child must be absent until treatment and negative under Wood's Lamp Test.         |
| Rubella                     | 14 – 21 Days      | Child must be absent for 4 days.  |
| Scabies                     | 4 – 6 Weeks       | Prescribed Medication and 24 hours.   |
| RSV                         | Varies per case   | Physician's note required.  |
| Rotavirus                   | Varies per case   | Physician's note required.  |

## Immunization Requirements

All children are required to have a completed physician's examination form and all immunizations up to date at the time of enrollment. Immunizations are to be kept up to date thereafter following the Center for Disease Control's immunization guidelines schedule (see table below).

Immunization is an important public health policy effecting children. As a matter of state law, children in the program must:

- be fully immunized, or
- be in the process of becoming fully immunized according to the approved schedule, or
- have a physician's statement that immunization is contraindicated for medical reasons or a note from the parent stating that the child is not immunized due to religious beliefs.

Updated physical and immunization forms are to be provided to the office prior to their marked expiration date. Office personnel will notify any parent with an expired form and the child will be unable to attend until an updated form is provided.

| Vaccine   | Birth                | 1 mo                    | 2 mos                | 4 mos                | 6 mos                                      | 9 mos  | 12 mos                  | 15 mos | 18 mos | 19–23 mos                                     | 2–3 yrs              | 4–6 yrs              | 7–10 yrs |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--|--|-------------------------|--------|--------|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Hepatitis B <sup>1</sup> (HepB)   | 1 <sup>st</sup> dose | ←→ 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose |                      |                      | ←→ 3 <sup>rd</sup> dose                    |  |                         |        |        |   |                      |                      |          |
| Rotavirus <sup>2</sup> (RV) RV1 (2-dose series); RV5 (3-dose series)                      |                      |                         | 1 <sup>st</sup> dose | 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose | See footnote 2                             |  |                         |        |        |   |                      |                      |          |
| Diphtheria, tetanus, & acellular pertussis <sup>3</sup> (DTaP: <7 yrs)                    |                      |                         | 1 <sup>st</sup> dose | 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose | 3 <sup>rd</sup> dose                       |  | ←→ 4 <sup>th</sup> dose |        |        |   |                      | 5 <sup>th</sup> dose |          |
| Tetanus, diphtheria, & acellular pertussis <sup>4</sup> (Tdap: ≥7 yrs)                    |                      |                         |                      |                      |  |  |                         |        |        |   |                      |                      |          |
| Haemophilus influenzae type b <sup>5</sup> (Hib)  |                      |                         | 1 <sup>st</sup> dose | 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose | See footnote 5                             | ←→ 3 <sup>rd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> dose<br>See footnote 5 |                         |        |        |   |                      |                      |          |
| Pneumococcal conjugate <sup>6</sup> (PCV13)   |                      |                         | 1 <sup>st</sup> dose | 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose | 3 <sup>rd</sup> dose                       | ←→ 4 <sup>th</sup> dose                                      |                         |        |        |   |                      |                      |          |
| Pneumococcal polysaccharide <sup>7</sup> (PPSV23)   |                      |                         |                      |                      |  |  |                         |        |        |   |                      |                      |          |
| Inactivated poliovirus <sup>8</sup> (IPV: <18 yrs)  |                      |                         | 1 <sup>st</sup> dose | 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose | ←→ 3 <sup>rd</sup> dose                    |  |                         |        |        |   | 4 <sup>th</sup> dose |                      |          |
| Influenza <sup>9</sup> (IIV; LAIV) 2 doses for some: See footnote 8                       |                      |                         |                      |                      | Annual vaccination (IIV only) 1 or 2 doses |  |                         |        |        | Annual vaccination (LAIV or IIV) 1 or 2 doses |                      |                      |          |
| Measles, mumps, rubella <sup>10</sup> (MMR)   |                      |                         |                      |                      | See footnote 9                             | ←→ 1 <sup>st</sup> dose                                      |                         |        |        |   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose |                      |          |
| Varicella <sup>10</sup> (VAR)   |                      |                         |                      |                      |  | ←→ 1 <sup>st</sup> dose                                      |                         |        |        |   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose |                      |          |
| Hepatitis A <sup>11</sup> (HepA)  |                      |                         |                      |                      |  | ←→ 2-dose series, See footnote 11                            |                         |        |        |   |                      |                      |          |
| Human papillomavirus <sup>12</sup> (HPV2: females only; HPV4: males and females)          |                      |                         |                      |                      |  |  |                         |        |        |   |                      |                      |          |
| Meningococcal <sup>13</sup> (Hib-MenCY ≥ 6 weeks; MenACWY-D ≥ 9 mos; MenACWY-CRM ≥ 2 mos) |                      |                         | See footnote 13      |                      |  |  |                         |        |        |   |                      |                      |          |

 Range of recommended ages for all children

 Range of recommended ages for catch-up immunization

 Range of recommended ages for certain high-risk groups

 Range of recommended ages during which catch-up is encouraged and for certain high-risk groups

# Emergency Medical Situations

Emergency medical situations are defined as a medical condition under which emergency care and treatment is warranted. Such emergencies include, but are not limited to: loss of consciousness, breathing difficulties, severe bleeding, seizure, stiff neck, repeated forceful vomiting, severe abdominal pain, etc. The following procedure shall be followed:

1. Check the individual
2. Begin CPR / First Aid if necessary
3. Call 911
4. Call Parent/Guardian
5. Continue CPR / First Aid until paramedics arrive
6. If the child is taken to the emergency room, an authorized personnel will accompany the child until the parent/guardian arrives.
7. A written incident report documenting events will be written.

# Infection Control / Universal Precautions

Hand-washing procedure for adults and children are posted at each sink throughout the preschool. Each day, teachers prepare and use a solution of one tablespoon of bleach to one quart of water, labeled, and placed out of children's reach. Daily cleaning is conducted by the hired cleaning service each night. Further, teachers follow a daily and monthly cleaning schedule: daily disinfecting toys, tables, chairs, toilets, sinks, faucets, floors, counters, etc. All cleaning supplies stored out of reach of children in a locked cabinet. Teachers disinfect table tops before and after any snacks or lunches are served. After each meal, all dishes and utensils are properly washed and air-dried and returned to proper cabinets. Water play equipment is disinfected and properly stored after each use. All soft items are washed utilizing the on-site washer and dryer. Each Friday, each child's sheets and blankets are sent home to be washed and return by Monday.

## Hand Washing

Proper hand washing is essential to keep children and teachers safe and healthy and to reduce the spread of intestinal infections.

The following procedure for hand washing shall be followed:

1. Using liquid soap and warm running water, wash hands by briskly rubbing hands together. Full and proper hand washing includes the tops of the hands and the wrists.
2. Rinse hands under running water.
3. Washing hands properly takes about 20 seconds or the amount of time to sing the Happy Birthday song.
4. Dry hands using single-use paper towels or air dry with a blower. Paper towels may not be shared.
5. Paper towels need to be disposed of in a trash can. Trash cans need to have a hands-free lid or foot-operated lid.
6. Care must be taken to avoid the recontamination of hands after washing before eating.

Hand washing shall be done upon arrival at the center and whenever hands become soiled or contaminated throughout the day.

The following list contains some of the times when hand washing is required:

After: Outdoor play, touching pets, toileting or assisting a child with toileting, diaper changes, wiping noses, touching items that are soiled or contaminated (such as children's soiled clothes or bedding), sneezing, coughing

Before and After: Eating, drinking, food preparation or distribution, cooking, water play, play dough play, other fluid or messy play, helping a child with injuries, attending to a child who is ill

## Medication Policy

*Explore and Discover* adheres to strict guidelines related to the administration of medication to children in our care. Medication should be given at home, if possible. The director is the designated individual responsible for administering any medication to children. In order for our facility to administer any medication, a *Medication Consent Form* must be completed.

Prescription medications must be in their original packaging and must be labeled with your child's name. The name that appears on the printed prescription label must exactly match the name of your child. If a medical professional has advised the use of an over-the-counter medication, a doctor's note must accompany the medication. The amount dosage and frequency of all medications must be labeled and specified on the consent form. If the medication label states "as needed," the exact administration timing desired in lieu of "as needed" must be specified on the consent form. Additionally, in the event that the dosage information must be

changed, per medical professional instruction, a *Medication Modification Form* must be completed. Expired medication will not be administered.

In the event that a child is to attend a field trip during the time of the medication administration, the child's parent will be notified in advance, and a plan of action will be discussed. If a parent would like their child to be administered the medication while attending the field trip, a designated person will be assigned.

All administered medication is logged on the *Medication Log*. Medications are placed in a locked cabinet in the main office, out of the reach of all children unless they must be refrigerated. If refrigeration is necessary, the medication is stored in the kitchen on a high shelf out of the reach of all children.

## Policy on Use of Sunscreen and Bug Spray

Parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen and bug spray before dropping off their child each day. Teachers are permitted to apply both sunscreen and bug spray upon the written permission of the parent. Permission slips are available in the office upon request and are kept on file for continued use.

## Child/Abuse Neglect Policy

Children who attend our program are cared for, nurtured, and kept safe at all times. Because child abuse is a very serious allegation, policies are intended to protect both the children in our care as well as colleagues at *Explore and Discover*.

It is the Center's goal to employ child care professionals who are committed to the highest standards of ethical behavior. To ensure the health and safety of young children in care, a policy of "Zero Tolerance for Child Abuse" is strictly enforced. Children at the Center should expect to be treated with kindness, concern, and respect at all times. Any employee who exhibits unprofessional behavior that could be construed as abusive may be dismissed from work without any accrued benefits or assistance in legal representation. Any evidence of physical or sexual abuse or misconduct will be grounds for immediate dismissal. Employees are advised that corporal punishment or physical discipline are considered abuse.

Any employee accused of abuse or neglect shall have an opportunity to respond to the allegations. Until the issue is resolved, an employee suspected of abuse or neglect may be reassigned, suspended or placed on administrative leave, without pay, at the discretion of the Director.

In addition, all employees are mandated reporters and shall report suspected child abuse or neglect. Any person who has information about behavior that may reasonably

be characterized as known or suspected child abuse or neglect shall make a report to the Director. The Director shall gather information from the employee involved report the suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families' Abuse Hotline. Employees shall cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect as required by law.

## Missing Child Policy

Explore and Discover holds safety as its highest priority at all times. Prevention measures are immersed in our daily routines and procedures, including frequent head counts and strict supervision guidelines. In the unlikely event that a child goes missing, the classroom teacher immediately notifies the office staff who contacts the police department and the child's parent. The office staff conduct a thorough search of the facility and outside area. Doors and gates are searched to see if there has been a break of security where a child can wander. The director holds a discussion with the classroom teachers to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this. Within a week, a thorough investigation is carried out by the director to prevent further incidence.

## Policy on Releasing Children

Only the authorized parent(s) or others identified by the parents can pick up a child from Explore and Discover. Children will only be released to a parent or authorized person listed on the enrollment form. A photo ID is required from any person who is unknown by the office staff at the time of pick-up. Children will not be released without a photo ID. If a parent wants a person who is not identified on the enrollment form to pick up their child up, the parent must notify the Center in advance. If an unauthorized person attempts to take a child, authorities will be called.

If a parent/authorized person appears to staff to be unwell/intoxicated when they arrive to pick up a child and our facility is concerned for the safety of the child, staff will insist the person not leave with the child. Staff will offer to call another authorized contact person to assist. In the event that another authorized contact person is unavailable or if the unwell person insists on leaving with the child, local law enforcement authorities will be contacted.

# Potential Parental Custody Disputes / Abduction Threats

Explore and Discover strives to be aware and sensitive to the families we serve. As discussed previously, children can only be released to those listed on the Child Enrollment Form. In the event of a custody dispute, we must rely on legal documentation and information provided by the enrolling parent. A certified custody order must be on file on site to prevent a natural parent from picking up a child. Explore and Discover strictly adheres to statements outlined on these documents. Please note, that without a legal document (i.e. copy of custody settlement or restraining order) we cannot presume one parent has more or less rights than the child's other parent.

## Unauthorized Individuals Policy

When an unauthorized person enters the facility, the office staff will make every concerted effort to ensure the individual does not proceed past the lobby. If needed, the Center Director may issue a Lock Down and Hide procedure. Upon individual staff members encountering a potential intruder, it is advised that the staff member locate the Director instead of approaching the individual. If necessary, the staff member may politely greet individual and identify yourself. Ask the individual the purpose of his/her visit. Inform the individual that all visitors must sign-in in the front office. If the individual's purpose is not legitimate, ask him/her to leave. Accompany intruder to exit. If intruder refuses to leave and the Director is unavailable, contact 911 and give a full description of the intruder. Walk away from intruder if he/she indicates a potential for violence. Do not physically restrain or block their movements. Be aware of intruder's actions at this time (where he/she is located in school, whether he/she is carrying a weapon or package, etc.) Maintain visual contact with the intruder from a safe distance. Ensure no other individuals, other than emergency personnel, enter the space where you have isolated the potentially violent individual. Upon police arrival, follow all procedures communicated by the police. The Director will write an incident report.

## Policy on Infant Sleeping Position

The U.S. Public Health Department and the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommend that infants be put to sleep on their backs to reduce the chance of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). All infants at Explore and Discover should be put to sleep on their backs unless otherwise ordered by the child's physician; physician must sign authorization to put the child to sleep

another way. The parent/guardian must then sign authorizing the center to make an exception to its policy and release Explore and Discover and its employees from any liability. All infant sleeping equipment must meet the standards of the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission to be used in our infant room.

## Policy on Toilet Training

Explore and Discover approaches potty training in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of our families. As we know, toilet training is a multi-stepped process and setbacks are common, should be anticipated, and need not be seen as a failure, but rather as a temporary step-back to a more comfortable place and, indeed, another natural step toward progress. When you feel your child is ready for potty training, we ask that you begin teaching at home during a weekend or vacation. We ask that you share with your child's teachers the techniques and approaches that are being utilized at home so that they may be utilized in the classroom as well. During this potty-training period please be sure to provide additional pull-ups, underwear, and wipes.

## Nutrition Policies

### Meal Time

Throughout the school day children will be served breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. If you are planning on bringing your child after the scheduled mealtime, please plan on feeding your child before you come to the Center.

Explore and Discover provides all children with breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. A calendar listing each day's meals is published each week.

Explore and Discover abides by the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines for serving meals to our each of our students. Each of our breakfasts, snacks, and lunches follows these guidelines outlined below.

Furthermore, students bringing meals from home should follow these guidelines to ensure proper balanced and nutritious meals.

**Snacks:** All snacks should include two of the four components

|                 | <u>Ages 1-2</u> | <u>Ages 3-5</u> | <u>Ages 6-12</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Milk            | ½ Cup           | ½ Cup           | 1 Cup            |
| Fruit/Vegetable | ½ Cup           | ½ Cup           | ¾ Cup            |
| Grain/Bread     | ½ Slice         | ½ Slice         | ½ Slice          |

|  |                  |                  |      |
|--|------------------|------------------|------|
| Meat/Alternative (cheese, egg, bean, yogurt) | $\frac{1}{2}$ oz | $\frac{1}{2}$ oz | 1 oz |
|--|------------------|------------------|------|

### Lunch: All lunches should include all four components

|  | <u>Ages 1-2</u>                             | <u>Ages 3-5</u>                             | <u>Ages 6-12</u>                |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Milk   | $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup                           | $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup                           | 1 Cup                           |
| Fruit/Vegetable                              | $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup                           | $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup                           | $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup               |
| Grain/Bread                                  | $\frac{1}{2}$ Slice<br>or $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup | $\frac{1}{2}$ Slice<br>or $\frac{1}{4}$ Cup | 1 Slice<br>or $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup |
| Meat/Alternative (cheese, egg, bean, yogurt) | 1 oz  | $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz                           | 2 oz                            |

### Food Brought from Home

As stated above, all food brought from home should abide by the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines.

All food must be cut into bite size pieces (grapes in half, apples sliced, cheese cut in pieces, etc.) No whole nuts, peanuts, or popcorn should be sent. These are licensing regulations.

Children younger than four years are not to bring and are not provided the following: hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonful of peanut butter, chunks of raw carrots, or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. The following are suggested meal ideas for parents choosing to prepare meals at home.

### Lunch Suggestions

#### Drinks

|              |                 |                                    |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Milk         | Orange Juice    | Apple Juice                        |
| Tomato Juice | Cranberry Juice | Water (offered throughout the day) |

#### Fruits

|                |                     |                    |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Banana         | Sliced Peaches      | Melon Cubes        |
| Apple Slices   | Applesauce          | Sliced Pears       |
| Strawberries   | Cut Grapes          | Pineapple Slices   |
| Orange Wedges  | Grapefruit Sections | Pitted Plums       |
| Fruit Cocktail | Raisins             | Tangerine Sections |
| Cantaloupe     | Blueberries         | Blackberries       |

#### Snacks

|                        |                     |                      |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Graham Crackers        | Mini Muffins        | Cinnamon Toast       |
| Peanut Butter Crackers | Banana Bread        | Cheese and Crackers  |
| Oatmeal Cookies        | Peanut Butter Toast | Fruit Cookies        |
| Veggie Slices and Dip  | Yogurt              | Whole Grain Crackers |
| Veggie Chips           | Whole Grain Cookies | Dried Fruit Snacks   |

### Lunches

|                      |                   |                     |
|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Soup                 | Turkey Sandwich   | Pita Sandwich       |
| Whole Grain Macaroni | Chicken Pieces    | Grilled Cheese      |
| Tuna Salad           | Rice and Chicken  | Chicken Salad       |
| Peanut Butter and    | Whole Grain Pizza | Whole Grain Ravioli |
| Banana Sandwich      | Pocket            |                     |

## Allergies and Food Reactions

If your child has food allergies, a written doctor's note is requested. Parents are asked to complete, sign and submit the Parental Allergen Advisory Form to the office upon enrollment. Teachers are made aware and provided with a list of all student allergies in their classroom. Upon an allergy to a certain food, such as a peanut, families will be notified the allergy exists in the classroom and a request will be made to not bring those foods. If a child is brought that food, the child will eat lunch or snack in a nearby classroom. If a child requires a special diet, parents are asked to complete, sign, and submit in writing their child's special dietary needs. The family is responsible for providing their child's food each day.

## Accidents

Scratches and scrapes are inevitable when children play or as they are learning to walk and are becoming more mobile. Minor accidents will be treated properly, immediately, with lots of care and attention, and an accident report completed. Parents will be called upon the incident and will sign and receive a copy of all reports written. To treat minor incidents, first aid kits are located in the hallway of our facility as well as on both vehicles used to transport children on field trips. If a serious situation should arise, parents will be notified immediately. An ambulance will be called and an Explore and Discover staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and await parent arrival.

## Transportation Policy / Field Trips

Explore and Discover takes students age four and up on occasional field trips. The field trips are to places locally in our area. Parents are encouraged to volunteer with these trips, if possible. Signed permission slips will be necessary for all field trips unless the child is enrolled in our camp program during which the initial enrollment packet includes permission for all trips. While on a field trip, all students are required to wear an Explore and Discover t-shirt. During all trips, staff will take attendance book, schedule, emergency medication (e.g., EpiPen's, etc.) first aid kits, and emergency information sheets for each child. Teachers keep strict attendance records and utilize alarms installed on the vehicles to ensure all students are accounted for when transitioning from the bus.

## Confidentiality Policy

Information contained in child's record and staff files shall be privileged and confidential. Unauthorized removal of records or unauthorized divulgence of parents, staff or program's confidential information is a strict policy of the Explore and Discover. All staff and student observers must comply with these professional ethics at all times and never discuss children, families or staff elsewhere.

Observations made in the classroom and all information discussed at staff meetings and at staff trainings are to be kept in strict confidence. Explore and Discover does not release information in a child's record to anyone without parental written consent. The child's parent shall, upon request, have access to his or her child's record. Explore and Discover does not release information in a child's record to anyone without parental written consent. In order to protect the privacy of Explore and Discover's students, families and staff, parents and staff cannot not share, distribute, or post images of others via telephone, e-mail, online social networking or other websites without prior consent of the Director.

## Policy on Personal Belongings

Each child is assigned a personal area in their classroom (i.e. cubby) where personal belongings are stored. Each child should keep a complete set of extra clothing in their classroom and replace as needed. A crib-sized sheet and small blanket should be provided for all students who are enrolled full-time and

participate in naptime. All personal belongings should be labeled with your child's full name.

## Toys from Home

Bringing toys from home is discouraged. A snuggle toy is permitted for use during naptime only.

# PART FOUR: OUR PROGRAM

## Curriculum

We believe in a multi-sensory integrated approach to education that is evidence-based and child-focused. This exposes children daily to literacy practices, hands on science and math, stimulating art, music, and physical education. Our approach is to intentionally guide and extend your child's play to ensure key developmental milestones are achieved across the learning domains.

Both direct instruction and play have roles to play in high-quality early childhood education. Children develop and learn principally through play and reinforce the necessary academic skills through direct teacher instruction. Critically, teachers who pay attention to children's interests and help them to play is paramount. We want children to be both knowledgeable about facts and details as well as creative and good problem solvers. We believe exploration and play during preschool turns children into adults who are flexible and sophisticated thinkers.

Explore and Discover believes a well-designed and well-organized learning environment that is inviting to children, full of interesting materials, and set up to accommodate a range of activities and play, supports children's growth in all areas of development. Each classroom is strategically set up utilizing best practice standards, filled with interest areas that promote learning and facilitate teacher guided and unguided instruction.

Explore and Discover has a uniquely designed curricular framework, incorporating the core tenants believed to be critical to early childhood development. Each of the tenants is incorporated into the program and specific goals have been established for each age group. Additional information on each classroom's specific goals is available from your child's teacher.

# Classrooms

Explore and Discover believes a well-designed and well-organized learning environment that is inviting to children, full of interesting materials, and set up to accommodate a range of activities and play, supports children's growth in all areas of development. Each classroom is strategically set up utilizing best practice standards, filled with interest areas that promote learning and facilitate teacher guided and unguided instruction. We ask that parents help our teachers become familiar with certain family/cultural traditions whenever possible. Please feel free to bring in items into the classroom whenever desired to ensure your child's classroom is a favored and comfortable place for him/her to be.

## Daily Schedules

Each classroom follows a daily schedule to provide a consistent and predictable routine for the children. The schedules are posted in your child's classroom and copies are available in the office upon request. Please note, during the summer months all classrooms (except infant classrooms) follow a modified schedule to allow for exciting summer themed activities. Information packets are distributed before any schedule changes.

## Assessments

Explore and Discover is strongly committed to authentic assessment of each child in our program. Throughout the year, teachers continually document your child's progress. These observations are expected to illustrate each individual student's skills in the various developmental domains. Ongoing documentation allows teachers the ability to track individual student progress and plan appropriately a challenging curriculum to tailor and meet each child's strengths, needs and interests. In addition, the three-year-old program also utilizes the Frog Street Assessment to measure student's vocabulary, letter knowledge, counting, numeral recognition, patterning and name writing abilities. The VPK program follows assessment procedures established by the Florida Department of Education including the VPK Assessment which is conducted three times per year measuring each child's print knowledge, phonological awareness, mathematics, oral language, and vocabulary. Three times per year (October, February, and May) parent-teacher conferences are held to share assessment results and share individual student progress (see parent-teacher conferences for additional information).

## Classroom Transition

For a child to be moved to the next room, a number of factors are taken into consideration. Some of these factors include the child's age, developmental progression, and availability in the next room. In some cases, input from the teachers and parents may be necessary prior to the room change. When it becomes time for a child to move to a new room, parents will receive a room change notice. This notice will give parents important information about their child's new daily schedule, items needed, if any, and information of their child's new teachers. In the weeks prior to the transition, a meeting with the new teachers will be conducted and the child will slowly begin participating in activities in his/her new classroom.

## Behavior Management / Discipline Policy

Explore and Discover utilizes the Conscious Discipline approach to classroom management. All teachers are trained on how to thoroughly understand children's behaviors, social skills and emotions. Through the utilization of positive guidance and redirection, children are taught how to build their own self-control, and to modify behavior that is socially unacceptable or non-productive in nature.

It is our belief that children can be influenced by their surroundings. If the environment is not developmentally appropriate, children can become frustrated. To alleviate this, we will provide a developmentally appropriate program with plenty of opportunities for the children to make their own choices. However, conflicts will arise and teachers will respond in a positive, appropriate manner.

To promote children's positive social and emotional growth, the discipline process must be fair and consistent. It should include clear and appropriate expectations for all children, and recognize the wide range of developmental abilities of children as well as the differences in behavioral expectations between home and school.

Explore and Discover teachers primarily utilize behavior management techniques that work to prevent problem behaviors from occurring. When problem behaviors do occur, intervention strategies that encourage and guide students to developing the necessary behaviors are employed. Outlined below are prevention and intervention strategies utilized. The majority of problem behaviors are expected to

be eliminated through the utilization of the behavior management procedures outlined below. But, there may be students who are in need of additional support. In this case, the director is to be contacted and observations will be conducted. If necessary, an individual Behavior Support Plan will be developed for the student experiencing difficulties.

Parents will be notified of any behavior management concerns and will be asked to work along with the teachers in helping the child with inappropriate behaviors. Prior to notifying a parent of behavior concerns, teachers will meet with the Director to discuss the behavior as a team.

Below are the prevention and intervention practices as explained above utilized at Explore and Discover.

### Prevention

Prevention is defined as those strategies that are implemented before undesirable behaviors occur in the classroom.

- Promote a safe environment where children and adults share control. Observe students closely and focus on individual strengths. Provide consistent support for students' activities. Play and active learning dominate the day.
- Greet each child. Make eye contact. Establish classroom rituals. Welcome absent child's return. Infants and Toddlers need a consistent, primary caregiver.
- Follow a daily schedule that is regular, predictable and flexible enough to meet individual needs. Communicate the daily routine to students orally/visually. Infants and Toddlers may be on an individual schedule to meet their diapering, feeding, napping and playing needs.
- Ensure students feel they have control over themselves and their environment. Providing opportunities to make choices promotes independence and self-responsibility.
- Ensure students have a variety and abundance of materials that meet safety standards. Ensure items can be independently accessible to children with a clear plan for returning them to their proper place. Items should be organized, labeled and stored at the children's level. Infants and toddlers should have multiples of the same toy provided.
- Remember the developmental levels, individual needs, and age of each child when setting expectations. Identify a targeted behavior and the steps needed

for meeting the expectations. Changing behaviors involves the combination of modeling, practice, and support to meet the desired outcome.

- Children need to know the limits of their behaviors. Set those limits, explain why you have established the limits, and be consistent in maintaining those limits.
- Teaching students effective conflict resolution requires modeling desired behaviors and teaching effective strategies and language to students.
- Successful transitions require planning ahead, modeling the transition, and reinforcing desirable behaviors. Transitions need to include an established routine for students. They need to be short and clearly defined.
- Identify individual needs of students and plan for their individual successes.
- Observing when, where, and why problems arise in the classroom environment and in daily routines is an ongoing process that will require making adaptations often to provide for a successful early childhood program.
- A positive attitude and approach to each potential problem situation is one of the most important prevention strategies that can promote a successful outcome.

### Intervention

All interventions should involve a discussion with the child concerning the incident.

The child must clearly understand why intervention is necessary.

- Giving choices is not only an appropriate intervention, but may be the most effective discipline strategy. It permits children to make their own decisions, encourages independence, facilitates problem solving, and gives them a sense of control over their world.
- Children may engage in irritating/disruptive behaviors to get attention. Ignoring these behaviors, when safety is not threatened, is an effective strategy. It is important to keep in mind that the removal of attention needs to be replaced by the reinforcement of positive behaviors.
- Encourage children to utilize the “Calm Down Corner.” Some children may, at times, find themselves overwhelmed with the noise, activity level, and general stimulation of the group. A quiet, less stimulating area needs to be available within the classroom environment. This gives the child an opportunity to gain control of him/herself.
- Children need to know what is expected of them. As situations warrant, modeling and reminding children of a particular rule is more appropriate than frequently reviewing all the classroom rules.

- Role-playing is a helpful tool for guiding young students to solve their disputes. Having children switch roles enables them to experience how the other child feels and helps develop empathy.
- Young children imitate influential adults during dramatic play, conversation, and interactions with other children. Even when we think children are not watching, they are paying close attention. Modeling encourages appropriate behavior.
- We must not only teach children how to treat others, but should also give them strategies for peacefully resolving conflicts they do not initiate. Once the child is calm, begin the steps to resolve the situation.
  1. Attend to the victim first.
  2. Solicit the victim's perception of what happened.
  3. Let the aggressor explain what happened.
  4. Calmly restate the position of each child.
  5. Let the victim tell how he feels about the incident.
  6. Calmly restate the victim's feelings.
  7. Allow both children to suggest ways to handle the situation differently.
  8. Both parties agree on a solution.
- Although the aim is to keep the child in the classroom, sometimes a successful discipline strategy may involve leaving the learning environment, with adult supervision, for a brief period of time. This should be viewed as a time to develop a positive partnership with the child to promote appropriate behavior.
- Any behavior, which threatens the safety of the child, others, or the environment, needs immediate intervention. Behaviors requiring immediate intervention might include but are not limited to: fighting, kicking, biting, pushing, hitting, spitting, throwing objects, or the destruction of materials.

### Prohibited Interventions

The following prohibited interventions are defined.

- Time out or isolation is defined as any time a child is required by an adult to be in a place not of his/her choosing such a corner, an unsupervised area inside or outside of the classroom, another classroom, or the office.
- Corporal Punishment is defined as any physical action taken against a child, such as spanking, slapping, hitting or punching by an adult.
- Verbal Punishment is defined as words spoken by an adult that hurt, shame, humiliate or destroy the child's healthy self-esteem.
- Deprivation is defined as withholding of food, play or field trips.

- Removal from room is defined as anytime that a child is removed from the regular classroom when it is not his/her choice. When a child is removed to another place for discipline, it sends a message that may cause insecurity, hostility, or the feeling that "the adult does not know what to do with me, and now I am in control." Student's needs at school are best met by the classroom teachers in cooperation with children's parents.

In the event that the child develops a behavior pattern that disrupts the classroom on a regular basis, the parents will be contacted to meet with the classroom teacher and director to develop an individual behavior plan that specifically targets the behaviors in need of improvement.

### Additional Guidelines: Disenrollment Policy

As stated above, Explore and Discover adheres to a policy of prevention and intervention practices to support children's behaviors. Our facility recognizes that each child's rate of social-emotional development, or his/her experiences, expressions, and management of his/her emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others will vary from child to child. Part of our role as an early childhood education center is to support the development of these skills. As such, we follow guidelines set forth by the Florida Department of Education in their *ELC's Expulsion and Suspension Prevention Policies and Practices*. Our facility does not engage in practices that suspend, expel, or disenroll students based on the display of disruptive behaviors. Alternatively, we believe the policy stated above thoroughly supports each of our students. In the event that additional concerns are present, an individual problem solving approach take place with parents and appropriate referrals to community-based services are made.

## Nap / Rest Time

We provide mats for each child who naps. Naptime is scheduled daily depending on the age group beginning at 11:30 a.m. and ending at 2:30 p.m. Adjustments to sleep time can be made as needed. Infants nap as needed.

## Television / Video Viewing Policy

Children watching television is not permitted at our facility. Computer videos are not to be utilized in children two and younger. Teachers in our upper-level classrooms (ages 3 and up) must submit in writing on their lesson plan if they desire to utilize a curriculum-related video. An example of a video includes observing a volcano erupting when discussing “Giants Made by Nature.” A classroom may not utilize a video more than once per month.

## PART FIVE: PARENT COMMUNICATION / INVOLVEMENT

### Parent Communication, Involvement, and Volunteers

Explore and Discover values the importance of parent involvement and communication in their child’s early education. To ensure the highest level of involvement, a variety of methods are utilized. Throughout the week, teachers will place pertinent documents, curriculum-related information, completed work, upcoming events, as well as other relevant information in folders/pockets labeled individually with child’s name. Additional information is on classroom bulletins, monthly newsletter or posted on parent information boards. Parents are encouraged to check their child’s pocket or folder daily.

Additionally, Explore and Discover values the use of digital technology to further aid in parent communication and interaction. Our facility utilizes the platform *Kidreports* allowing teachers to share with parent’s daily reports, pictures, and information about curriculum-based activities and upcoming classroom events. Parents can receive this information to their smartphone via email or through the app. Further, school-wide information is also regularly communicated via our *Procare* message board and via e-mail. Parents are strongly encouraged to ensure an up-to-date email is on file.

Above all, Explore and Discover values and recognizes the importance of building positive relationships with our families. To ensure detailed and child-specific communication takes place regularly, parents are encouraged to spend time in their child’s classroom at drop-off and pick-up time to share information about any pertinent information about their child’s health, behavior, family events, or related

information. For more formal events to discuss individual child progress, please see information regarding parent-teacher conferences below.

Moreover, Parents are always welcome to visit and spend time throughout the day in their child's classroom. Periodically throughout the year parents are welcomed for specific events and activities such as our annual Fall Festival or Mothers' Day Tea. In addition, we encourage parents to come into the classroom to share their special skills, interests and experiences with the children.

Possibilities include:

- Reading favorite children's book
- Assist during art class including drawing, painting, sculpture
- Perform science or math experiments
- Visit during our Community Helpers Theme to discuss your career
- Participate in cooking activities or assist during lunchtime
- Play an instrument, teach specific songs
- Share information about your culture/country, teach a language
- Talk about your favorite artists, musician, bring examples of their work
- Assist in gardening or planting throughout the year

## Parent Responsibilities

Please abide by the following rules so we may provide the best possible service and care for your child(ren).

- Always walk your child into their designated classroom and sign him/her in.
- Whenever a change occurs in the family's information file, please provide current information to the center.
- All immunizations must be current and documented on the child's file prior to enrollment. Please make sure updated shots are also given to the office as well.
- Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school unless they are asked to. This eliminates problems with loss, sharing, and breakage. Toy guns and weapons are not allowed for any occasion. We are not responsible for any lost or broken toys.
- Please dress your child appropriately for school. Make sure clothing is comfortable and washable. Do not send your child in with open toed shoes of any kind.

- Please provide an extra set of clothing clearly marked with your child's name in case of spill or accident.
- Children must be picked up on time. We realize emergencies can cause parents to pick up their child late. If this happens, please call so we can make the proper arrangements. (See Late Fees).
- If your child is to be picked up by someone other than the parent/guardian, the director or staff must be notified. Photo ID will be required for any new person added to pick up list of your child.
- It is the parents' responsibility to communicate with the staff about any health/medical problems your child may have.
- Open communication between home and the center promotes the growth and security of the child. You are encouraged to call or send notes to the center staff whenever a question arises. Please read all parent newsletters and any other information sent home.

## Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will be held three times throughout the school year. These conferences are designed to keep communication lines between the parents and teachers open. During the conferences teachers and parents will discuss developmental assessments of the child, transition to a new room, day to day concerns, and any other issues the parent would like to discuss with the child's teacher. Parents may request a conference with their child's teacher at any time.

## Open Door Policy / Visitors

Explore and Discover maintains an open-door policy with all parent/guardians of enrolled children. Parents are welcome visitors in the classroom at any time and are highly encouraged to volunteer and visit their child's classroom as often as they are able. All visitors must register with the office. Please inform your child's teacher if you have a special talent or interest you would be willing to share with the children and/or if you can assist with field trips or special projects. In addition, classroom newsletters and calendars share the date each month when parents, grandparents, and siblings are invited into the classroom to participate with various activities and events. If you have further questions regarding visiting and participating in your child's classroom, please visit the office.

# Parents' Rights

Each of our parents are provided with the following rights:

1. Right to Visit: You have a right to make unannounced visits to your child's room while your child is present.
2. Parent input: The program must have a procedure for allowing your input in the development of center policy and procedure. The program must allow you to make suggestions, but it is up to the program to decide whether or not they will be implemented.
3. Conferences: Parents have the right to request an individual conference with the program's administration your child child's teachers.
4. Meeting prior to admittance: Parents have the right to request a meeting with program administrators prior to admitting your child to the center. At the meeting, the administrator will provide you with: the center's written statements of purpose; types of services provided; referral policy; behavior management policy; a list of suggested nutritious foods you could send for snacks and meals; the transportation plan; a copy of the health care procedures; procedure for administration of medication; procedures for providing emergency health care; and a copy of the tuition rate sheet. All of this information is contained in the parent handbook. You should also be given the opportunity to visit the preschool's classrooms either at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of your child.
5. Progress Reports: All parents receive progress reports on their child three times per year, as specified on the school's calendar. Parents have the right to request an individualized assessment at any time throughout the year and to request a meeting with the preschool's staff to discuss your child's progress, or receive a written progress report of your child's activities and participation in the center.

## Parent Resource Area

The Parent Resource Area is located in the main lobby. This area was designed for parents to meet informally and use available resources. Pamphlets, brochures, books, or other resources on topics including child development, challenging behaviors, toilet training, nutrition, child psychology, reading readiness, etc. are available. Pertinent school information, community events, and local business information are also available in the Parent Resource Area.

## Newsletters

Explore and Discover has its own monthly newsletter. The newsletter is sent electronically to parents' emails. Additionally, paper copies are made available in the office.

## Annual Surveys

Parents and staff are asked to complete a survey at the beginning of each year to reflect on the previous year's strengths and weaknesses. This information helps to assess how the program is meeting the needs of our students and their families, as well as to identify and set program goals for the year. A copy of the report is made available to all parents and staff with suggested recommendations and improvements.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are special events for children. If you are planning a birthday party at home and wish to invite children from your child's class, please do not distribute birthday invitations yourself. We request that you give the invitations to your child's teacher to distribute. On the day of the celebration, you may bring treats or a birthday cake. Parties are held after naptime. You are welcome to come and share this time with your child or leave a camera for the teacher to take come candid shots!

## Holiday Celebrations

At Explore and Discover, we strive to honor the traditions of the children and families in our program. Holiday celebrations are handled in response to child and family input. We invite families to share seasonal and holiday traditions that have personal meaning to them. Our goal is to ensure that children learn about various cultural traditions in developmentally appropriate and educational ways. Each holiday season, we hold a festival in each of our classrooms including a Winter Festival, Fall Festival, and Spring Festival. During these festivals our students engage in fun curriculum-related activities that help celebrate the season and its related holidays. During these festivals, parents are invited and encouraged to attend and assist in the classroom to make these events a success.

## Donations

The Center encourages donations of household items such as tissue, first aid supplies, art supplies, napkins, paper towels, etc. Please contact the Director if you would like to make a donation. A receipt can be provided by the Director for your tax records.

## Available Services / Referrals

Explore and Discover shall use the following procedures for referring parents to appropriate social, mental health, educational, and medical services for their child should teachers feel that an assessment for such services would benefit the child. Whenever any teacher is concerned about a child's development or behavior and feels there is a need for further evaluation, the teacher will bring the matter to the director's attention, write a statement for the reason for the referral, and a brief summary of the teacher's observations related to the referral. A conference may be scheduled between the parent(s), teacher(s), and the director to discuss the concern. Explore and Discover sends referrals to Early Steps (infants to age two) and Child Find (ages three to five). These services provide screening, evaluation, and placement into appropriate services based individual needs.