

Share and Care Learning Center  
12 John Street  
North Aurora, IL 60542  
(630) 892-2818

---

[www.shareandcarelearning.com](http://www.shareandcarelearning.com)

## *Family Handbook*

---



**Preschool and Extended Childcare  
Before and After School**

### *Mission Statement.*

*Share and Care provides an inviting and safe environment for children from infancy through fifth grade that embraces children's desires to play and explore. We partner with diverse families to provide quality care and education that characterizes Christian values as we treat their children as individuals.*

## *Share and Care Center Goals*

- To provide a safe environment that allows channels of expression for the children's thoughts, feelings, and ideas
- To inspire each child to creatively express him/herself through a variety of media
- To stimulate the children's intellectual development by providing activities in the areas of art, language, literature, science, math and music
- To encourage language development through questioning and expanding knowledge and vocabulary
- To incorporate the development of and the coordination of large and small muscles
- To develop auditory and visual perception by listening, viewing, and manipulating objects
- To encourage social interactions and cooperation between children
- To help the children adjust to and enjoy their experiences at Share and Care
- To provide opportunities for the children to interact, guided by models of socially acceptable behavior
- To enhance the child's self-esteem, self-awareness and self-confidence by providing many opportunities for a child to succeed, express ideas, and understand his/her emotions and to attain skills to control them
- To stimulate and encourage curiosity and provide opportunities for problem solving
- To encourage children to take care of their own needs with the trust, respect, and support from adults in their environment

The center's basic philosophy of childcare is one that believes all children are unique individuals who must pass through certain developmental stages. However, realizing that each child is an individual and develops at his own rate, our environment and learning centers are structured according to individual needs. This provides enough challenge for every child, and still meets the needs of the very youngest child. Through play, the child will be provided with opportunities to learn about himself, the world he lives in and his feelings.

Necessary cognitive skills (such as numbers, letters, colors, etc.) will also be taught "artfully" through the use of various centers of interest. Children will be unaware that they are being taught these principles and skills because they will be learning them through play. The "work" of learning will be transformed into the entertainment of play. The learning centers will consist of various areas of specific activities. These will include a housekeeping corner, an art corner, a block building area, a reading and quiet area, and a manipulative area. We feel a stimulating environment will provide for the basic needs of each individual, allowing children to grow, explore and create!

Since staff members feel that all children are unique individuals, a program is designed to meet their needs through play. The experience of play provides an integrated situation wherein areas of study are recognized and encouraged.

# *Inclusion Policy*

## Share and Care Learning Center Inclusion Policy

### **Policy Statement:**

Share and Care Learning Center welcomes all children and is committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences that support the full access and participation of each and every child. We believe that each child is unique and work in partnership with families and other professionals involved with the child to provide the support every child needs to reach their full potential.

### **Procedures:**

#### **Admissions/waiting list:**

Children of all abilities are accepted into Share and Care and families interested in having their child attend the program will be given an equal opportunity for admission. A waiting list may be maintained and children will be accepted from the list on a first come first served basis.

#### **Inclusive Environment:**

Early childhood educators at Share and Care use developmentally appropriate practices and consider the unique needs of all children when planning. Staff will make every attempt to make any adaptations or modifications necessary to meet the needs of the children. Schedules, routines and activities are flexible and early childhood educators will work with therapists, special educators and other professionals to integrate individual accommodations, modifications and strategies into classroom routines and activities. Any adaptations will be reviewed with families and other professionals **supporting the child.**

#### **Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality applies to all verbal and written information about potential, enrolling and previously enrolled children and their families. All staff will be briefed on the need for confidentiality and will be expected to fulfill their obligation to respect the protection of privacy. Written records will be stored in a secure location with access limited to the director and the child's teacher. No information will be released about a child and the parent/legal guardian during enrolment or transition to another receiving program or school without first receiving the written permission of the parent/guardian. This excludes the responsibility held by early childhood educators as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect as outlined in Illinois law or when information is subpoenaed by the court.

#### **Family Centered Practices:**

Share and Care acknowledges and respects the priorities each family has for their child. Families are encouraged and supported to collaborate with staff to ensure that each child has an opportunity for optimum success. Share and Care communicates with each family daily and has regular meetings to discuss the child's successes and challenges.

#### **Professional Development and Support for Staff Training:**

Support is provided to ensure that all staff are comfortable, confident and competent to meet the developmental and educational needs of all children. All staff receive an orientation on inclusion policies and attend training focused on effective inclusion and/or other disability topics whenever possible. The director provides additional support and resources as appropriate.

**Collaboration with Other Professionals:**

Many children with disabilities or other special needs are supported by developmental and educational professionals such as therapists, teachers and others. Share and Care welcomes those professionals and works with them to assure the child's success. The service provider is encouraged to provide services to the child in the context of the early childhood classroom environment and the child's teacher and the service provider work collaboratively to determine the best strategies to support the child in the group setting. Share and Care supports the teacher's participation in Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

### *What We Offer...*

Share and Care Learning Center, Inc. is a for profit quality facility that offers childcare and preschool experiences to families for children ages six week to twelve years. Our programs include many care options as we seek to find the fit that meets everyone's needs. This includes full time or daily care options. Preschool aged children will be enrolled in classrooms based on age and developmental stages. These classrooms will include the "preschool curriculum". Enrollment in our program is available to all children, without regard to race, disability, color, national origin, sex or age.

Our before and after school program serves parents of children from kindergarten to thirteen years of age. Additionally, we offer a full day summer camp for school age children.

It is our promise to create a warm and inviting environment, enveloped with a spirit of caring love, in which your child will be motivated to learn at his or her own rate of development.

### *Hours of Operation...*

We are open from 6:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday. For the well-being of your child, we strongly urge that the child remains in the center no more than nine hours per day.

### *Religious Instruction...*

A simple prayer or grace will be offered before snack and lunch. We recognize that the children attending the center come from varying backgrounds. Each child will be recognized as an individual whose personal privacy, choice of activities, cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds are respected.

### *Personal Information...*

Personal information will not be released without your written consent.

## *Curriculum...*

Share and Care Learning Center has very high curriculum standards. We focus on all domains of development (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive) and this is reflected in every area of lesson planning including everything from art to literature, to small manipulative skills, and beyond. Monthly skill sheets have been devised to help address developmentally appropriate achievements. Every activity and event planned has an objective or purpose that is attempting to be achieved. We firmly believe that children learn best through play while being actively engaged in what interests them. Our teachers strive for academic excellence with the children as everyone strives for success together.

## *Guidance And Discipline Policy...*

*(rev: 06/07/23)*

At Share and Care Learning Center, we view discipline not as a means of punishing a child who has acted inappropriately, but rather as a means of teaching a child. Positive discipline/guidance teaches children where limits are set, how to maintain control over their bodies, and how to problem solve in the event of a conflict. Our staff "may never neglect, or use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child" (NAEYC Standard and Assessment Items). Staff may never withhold comfort items, food, water, or bathroom access from a child. Discipline is most effective when it follows logical consequences. The consequence for behaviors must make sense to the child. If a child is throwing sand outdoors, it is logical to tell the child that the sand stays in the sandbox and that if it gets thrown again the child will have to find somewhere else to play. But let's not leave it at that. We get the child involved in a discussion about what would happen if all the sand was thrown out of the box.

Since the purpose of discipline is to teach, more verbal children will be encouraged to talk to their peers when conflict arises. This helps children to empathize with one another's feelings and really see the results of their actions. We do not ask a child to apologize for their actions. Generally, they are not sorry for what they did. If they are truly sorry, they will apologize on their own. Share and Care helps children to develop self-control and assume responsibility for their own actions. Limits and consequences will be clear and understandable to the child and consistently enforced and explained. Limiting a child's choices of activities due to inappropriate behavior is an effective means by which to teach children to respect property and one another. Separation of children may become necessary in the case of two or more children having extreme difficulty playing together without conflict. The teacher then needs to assign appropriate play areas for the children, with the message that they may try playing together again later if they do well on their own. Inappropriate behavior shall be viewed as exactly that. Children shall NEVER be referred to as naughty or bad. We always address behavior as the problem, not the child. We will constantly assess the environment and make sure we are providing materials and activities that are appropriate for their age and level of development. This includes developing schedules that meet the needs of the children and avoid long periods of wait time, yet flexible enough to follow the interest and needs of them physically, socially, emotionally, and biologically. We will communicate with our families to ensure consistency in guidance between home and school and educate the children in our care in appropriate ways to handle conflict in a healthy manner by using appropriate words and actions and developing skills that help self-regulate their emotions and to build confidence. We will regularly collaborate with infant/ early childhood mental health consultants to support individual children and the classroom as a whole and to give the children the best foundation for academic and life success.

**Our behavior support policy** includes the following effort for the well-being of the children: Early intervention, and/ or School District services received by children shall be documented in the behavior support plan, as well as whether they were found eligible or ineligible to receive services.

If our behavior support policy is not effective, the childcare center reserves the right to implement our **transition policy** as outlined below:

Infants, toddlers and preschool children, who, after documented attempts have been made to meet the child's individual needs, demonstrate an inability to benefit from the type of childcare offered by our center, or whose presence is detrimental to the group, shall be transitioned to a different program. For infants, toddlers and preschool age children, in all instances when our center decides that it is in the best interest of the child to transition to a different program, the child's and parents' needs shall be considered by planning with the parents to identify the new program and working with the parents and pending program on a transition plan designed to ensure continuity of services to meet the child's needs. We shall adhere to the requirements regarding our plans to transition a child based on our discipline and behavior support policies. If at any time during the process the parent/ guardian refuses to comply with the recommendations/ requirements of Share and Care, we reserve the right to implement our transition plan.

These policies describe the progression of disciplinary actions which Share and Care Learning Center will follow in response to inappropriate behaviors, depending on the severity and the duration. It is assumed at all times that Share and Care is acting in good faith, and with the best interests of the individual child as well as the other children and staff in mind. It is also assumed that the parent/ guardian of the child is acting in partnership with Share and Care staff throughout the process. Share and Care may also, at its discretion, bring in consultants to observe, review, or advise them at any point in the situation. We will also notify the Department of Children and Family Services Licensing of transition plans. None of our center's policies preclude a parent's or legal guardian's right to withdraw his or her child from our center. A written statement from the parent or guardian shall be requested by Share and Care Learning Center (hereafter referred to Share and Care) and kept on file, stating the reason for the decision to withdraw the child. If parents/guardians are unable to provide a letter, Share and Care shall maintain documentation that includes requestor's name and relationship to the child, along with the withdrawal date. Share and Care will also sign and date documentation. As a provider of childcare to infants, toddlers or preschool age children, Share and Care shall maintain documentation regarding steps taken to ensure that the child can participate safely in the program, in accordance with the behavior support policy and transition policy. **This shall include attempts to utilize qualified professional resources, including when parental consent is attempted and whether it is obtained.** Share and Care will collect, report annually to the Illinois State Board of Education, in compliance with 23 Ill. Adm. Code 235.340 (Reporting) information on children and Department of Children and Family Services licensing standards for daycare centers 407.270.

## *Our Classrooms At a Glance...*

### *Love Bugs-*

Our infant program provides the home-like atmosphere that is so important to a child's development. We have a 2:1 (child to staff) ratio which far exceeds the state minimum standards and provides us the opportunity to sing, hold and interact with every infant in our care. We develop relationships with the children that allow us to recognize them for the individuals that they are as lines of communication are explored with families. Our baby room affords the occasion to grow, explore and learn through sensory experiences, conversations and play.

### *Bitty Bugs-*

Our toddler program is exploration and play at its best. Together teachers and children create art, read stories and discover the world around them. Play is our work as children develop social concepts of self and others. Each teacher strives to promote verbal skills and independence daily as teachers work both one-on-one with children and in small groups.

### *Frolicking Frogs-*

The Frog room serves as our toddler-twos classroom. In this room our older toddlers and younger two-year-olds continue to hone social and emotional concepts such as sharing and beginning self-help skills. This classroom focuses on helping children learn to interact with one another. Concepts of shapes, colors, letters, art, science, and discovery. The children will enjoy a variety of hands-on learning experiences through a variety of play and sensory experiences.

### *Spunky Monkeys-*

The Monkey Room is the class of transition. We welcome you to the preschool world. Here teachers and children continue to talk, read and play together; however, cognitive concepts are stressed more prominently. Shapes, colors, numbers and beginning writing are introduced. Children take on helper roles as they become part of their classroom community and the need to be needed is met. Additionally, concepts of sharing and cooperative play are looked at in depth. The Frolicking Frogs is a room that creates an atmosphere of fun while promoting individual progress.

### *Perky Penguins-*

The Penguin Room works to reinforce and build upon early concepts of color, shape and symbol. Children will begin to write and recognize individual letters. Our teachers explore concepts and interests that the children express as curriculum is planned and executed. Together teachers and children will learn through scheduled activities, exploration and free play.

### *Busy Bees-*

Our Busy Bee room keeps the focus on play based learning. Through a variety of hands-on experiences, the children continue to learn about themselves and the world around them. The Busy Bees classroom strives to help children learn to problem-solve and think critically. In preparation for pre-kindergarten group times and learning activities are scaffolded. Activities include, but are not limited to, the areas of language-arts, science, dramatic play, mathematics, and creative arts. Field trips will be introduced to children in this classroom.

### *Furry Friends-*

Our Pre-Kindergarten Program is one that emphasizes independence. Students will learn all their shapes, colors, letters and be able to count quite successfully. Zippers and buttons will be mastered and children will explore tying their own shoes. Pre-K is a program that exercises new themes with field trips, hands on experiences and cause-and-effect activities. Children will eagerly learn as they discover new things not only about the world around them, but also themselves.

## *School Age-*

Our School Age Program works to provide a structured yet relaxing atmosphere where students can be successful, productive and happy. Large motor experiences, along with creative expression and group activities are provided for.

## *Enrollment and Admission Procedures*

Prior to the family's first day at Share and Care Learning Center families will be given a tour of the center where they will be able to see their child's prospective classrooms and meet their child's prospective teaching staff. Families will also be shown the gross motor areas, restrooms, administrative offices, and where they can find community and family resources offered. All required paperwork including the Identification and Emergency contact information sheet, application form, state of Illinois certificate of child health examination, two copies of the parent consent form, two copies of policy financial agreement, developmental history form, state of Illinois Department of Family and Child Services Verification of Receipt, a copy of the child's original birth certificate, Illinois Board of Education annual enrollment form child and adult food care program, and family and cultural preference form, will be sent home and explained. Administrative staff will clarify policies and procedures set forth in the family handbook including but not limited to our goals, philosophy, hours of operation, curriculum, guidance and discipline, religious instruction, arrivals and departures, health procedures, and parent-school communication.

On a family's first day of attendance they will be greeted by a member of the administrative staff. The family will be escorted to their child's classroom and shown where the child's belongings may be stored. Once the child is settled in his or her new classroom a member of the administrative staff will make sure family members have received an invitation link to join Brightwheel used for daily updates and communication. The administrator will also confirm that all required enrollment forms have been received. Families will be asked if they have any other questions or concerns and encouraged to call the center or reach out via Brightwheel.

## *Mandated Reporting*

Share and Care is responsible for the care and well-being of the children and families that it serves. Consequently, Share and Care will not tolerate any abusive behaviors on the part of an employee or parent. Employees are trained as Mandated Reporters through DCFS and are therefore required by law to report any suspected abuse or neglect. If someone who does not work at Share and Care accuses an employee of abusing a child at Share and Care, all staff members involved will cooperate completely in all aspects of the investigation. The accused staff member will be removed from any duties pertaining to the care of children while the authorities determine if the allegation is founded. All efforts will be made to preserve the confidentiality of the accused staff member, the child allegedly abused, plus all surrounding circumstances. If authorities determine the allegations are unfounded, the employee will return to duty. If the allegations are founded, the employee will be dismissed immediately. If a family would like to report abuse, they must call 1-800-252-2873.



## *Arrival And Departures...*

There will be no transportation provided for the children to come to and from the center. Parents must supply means of transportation. This excludes the before and after school program, whereby specific arrangements in written form must be made for the school-age children between parents, public school, and the day care. Promptness of parents in their arrangement of the arrival and departure of their children is of the utmost importance. It will benefit both staff and your child if we know approximately the time you plan to drop off and pick up your child. Your cooperation is a must! You or some responsible adult must bring your child into the center and sign him or her in on the daily sign-in sheet. Similarly, at "pickup time," the child must also be signed out. The child will only be released to those persons stated on the admission forms. For your child to receive maximum benefits from our program, it is necessary for him or her to arrive before 9:00 am. Please notify the center if there is any change in your schedule. The center must also be notified if there is any change as to whom will be picking up your child. We will require identification of anyone, other than the mother or father before the child may leave the center. A written request is required in order for us to release a child to anyone except the parents.

## *Parking...*

Parents are asked to park in front of the center and use the front entrance. Please do not park at any of the neighboring businesses, block any walkways or doorways.

## *Security...*

A security system has been installed at the main entrance to Share and Care. The door opens with an office supplied security code. Your code will only work during operational hours, from 6:30 am until 5:30 pm. for a safe and secure environment. All doors to the outside remain locked throughout the day. If a door is ever seen propped open, please notify the office immediately.

## *What to Wear to School...*

Think of your child's comfort and provide simple clothing that is free of complicated fastenings. Consider the messy art projects, playground play, and the ever changing weather when dressing your child for school. Please provide washable, sturdy clothing and layers are always best. It is much easier to remove an unneeded item than to put on something you don't have. As far as footwear, it is important to make sure that the children's shoes are secured to their feet and have enclosed toes.

## *Field Trips...*

Parents will be notified of any and all field trips. Walking field trips do occur frequently, especially during the summer and fall months. Consent forms will be sent home with your child each time the children leave in the vans/bus on a field trip.

## *Fees and Plan for Payment...*

At the time of your child's enrollment, we will require a non-refundable registration fee of \$75.00 along with the first week's payment for childcare. Thereafter, payment will be due on the Friday **before** the week of your child's attendance.

Any questions regarding the fees should be discussed with the Directors. Children must be enrolled either on a full-time basis or on specific scheduled days when enrolled part-time. We are only allowed a certain amount of children in each room by state law. To make maximum use of our facility, it is necessary for parents to arrange specific days and make tuition payments for those days every Friday preceding enrollment. If tuition is not paid by 9:00 am Monday and a balance is due, a \$5.00 late fee will be added. Payments may be made by check, cash or credit card (there is a 2.75% add on for credit card payments). Staff and operating expenses must be paid regularly regardless of your child's attendance. Ongoing delinquent fees will result in dismissal of your child from the center. If there is a special need or problem, please feel free to discuss this with the Directors. At the end of five days of unpaid attendance, your child will be dismissed. Two weeks written notice, dated and signed, is required in all cases of withdrawal. At that time, two weeks tuition must also be paid.

### *Tuition Adjustments . . .*

If a child does not attend school for a full week (up to a maximum of four weeks per year) due to vacation or illness, notify Share and Care in writing or by direct phone contact, and tuition will be adjusted to 1/2 the normal amount. If a parent/guardian has used the four week half-tuition allotment, full tuition will be charged whether the child is in attendance or not.

In the case of vacation, the check must be left before departure to avoid late fees and to hold your child's place. In the case of illness, the check must be dropped off before Tuesday to avoid the late fee. Tuition is paid for major holidays in which we are closed (New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day) so that we can provide staff with paid time off.

**\* Share and Care is CLOSED the week of July 4th and NO tuition is charged\***

All tuition is based on the total yearly cost of the program. The weekly fee is a breakdown of this yearly cost to facilitate parent payment. When the account holder requests, a statement of fees paid for childcare services will be prepared each calendar year.

### *Bad Weather Days . . .*

In the event of poor weather conditions, please consult either radio station 95.9 FM or TV news channels. When West Aurora School District 129 is closed, Share and Care Learning Center will be closed, only if the roads are hazardous. Share and Care reserves the right to open or close the center depending on outside conditions.

### *Health Procedures . . .*

On occasion, children will become sick. Please keep your child home if he/she demonstrates the following symptoms:

1. Rectal temperature of over 100.4 degrees F or oral temperature over 100 degrees F in the morning.
2. Conjunctivitis, which is an eye infection commonly called pinkeye. The eye is generally red with some burning and a thick yellow drainage is secreted.

3. Bronchitis that can begin as hoarseness, cough and a slight elevation in temperature. The cough may be dry and painful but gradually becomes productive.
4. Rashes that you cannot identify or that have not been diagnosed by a physician.
5. Impetigo of the skin shows as red pimples. These eventually become small vesicles surrounded by a reddened area. When the blister breaks, the surface is raw and weeping. The lesions occur in moist areas such as creases of the neck, groin and underarm, face, hands or the edge of diapers.
6. Diarrhea, watery or greenish bowel movements that look different and are much more frequent than usual.
7. Vomiting.
8. Severe cold with fever, sneezing and nose drainage.
9. Your child seems really sick without obvious symptoms. In this case a child may look and act differently. There may be unusual paleness, irritability, unusual tiredness or lack of interest.

With contagious diseases a child must be kept at home. Some of these diseases are: measles, chicken pox, mumps and roseola. A child must be on prescription medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Additionally, a child must be fever and vomit free for 24 hours before re-admittance to the program.

## *No Guns, War Toys or Other Toys of Destruction...*

These items are not allowed in our school. We realize a child must have a means to express feelings and aggression. We suggest clay to pound (manual dexterity), hammer and saw to use (good for visual-motor perception), punching bag to hit (and to vent anger while developing perceptual abilities), fingerpaints (to smooth jangled feelings while practicing a developmental rhythmic movement).

## *Birthdays...*

We celebrate birthdays during the snack period. Please do not send cakes or full-sized cupcakes. Some students only eat the tops, some students eat the bottoms and some eat everyone else's crumbs. We prefer that you send cookies or miniature cupcakes. These are easier to handle and are greeted by the children as a special treat. We also ask that all special treats be store bought. Please, no homemade snacks. Your child's teacher will add special stories, songs, etc., to make this a special time for your child.

## *Personal Belongings...*

Children will need to bring a toothbrush, pillow with pillowcase and blanket to school at the start of their time here. The pillowcase and blanket will be sent home at the end of your child's weekly enrollment so that it can be refreshed and returned for the start of the next week's enrollment. These parameters apply to all children who take a nap here at the center.

Children may also bring a favorite blanket and/or stuffed toy which may only be used at naptime. The toy needs to be completely soft with no hard plastic and soundless. We do encourage families to bring items that can be left at the center for the entire week.

A change of clothing (individually labeled) is also required for each child. Please include: a shirt, pants, underwear and socks in a ziplock bag with your child's name printed on the outside.

We request that your child leave any other personal belongings at home (except for the above-mentioned items). There will be plenty of toys and activities available for each child. This policy eliminates the problem of "mine"- everything at the Center can be shared equally.

However, if your child would like to share a special CD or activity idea with everyone- that is more than welcome. We love family input and look forward to sharing ideas. Please notify your child's teacher ahead of time. **Please note- ALL items must be labeled with your child's name. Share and Care is not responsible for lost items.**

### *Late Pick Up Policy...*

Share and Care Learning Center's policy when a parent or guardian does not pick up or arrange to have someone pick up his or her child at our closing time of 5:30 pm consists of the following:

- If your child is not picked up by 5:30 pm, a \$2.00 fee per child for every 5 minutes after 5:30 pm will be added to your charges.
- If your child is left at Share and Care past **6:30 pm**, the North Aurora Police Department will be contacted and the parent or guardian will pick up the child at the police department.
- Share and Care will call each emergency number listed on your card twice if we have not been contacted by you or the guardian. This is why it is **very** important to update your emergency numbers with our office.
- The Share and Care staff member will be responsible for your child until the parent, guardian or Police Department personnel arrive.
- Our staff member will not hold the child responsible for the situation and the discussion of this issue will only be with the parent/guardian and never with the child.

### *Late Pick Up Fees...*

Children must be picked up promptly at 5:30 pm. Although we do not encourage parents to leave children past closing time (in consideration of closing staff), in case of emergency or if you are unavoidably detained, there will be a late fee of \$2.00 per child every five minutes late after closing.

If a child is left at Share and Care past **6:30 pm** the North Aurora Police Department will be contacted and the family member will need to pick the child up at the department.

### *Picture Policy...*

Consent for recording both visually and audibly while at Share and Care Learning Center, Inc. for use in advertisement and classroom portfolios is understood and accepted.

## *Parent-School Communication*

- ❖ Visits-We encourage parents to visit and observe ongoing class activities. It is best to talk to your child before a visit. We have an "open-door" policy for families who have currently enrolled children. You are welcome visitors anytime!
- ❖ Newsletters- Monthly "updates" to keep parents aware of classroom activities, ongoing themes and special happenings are emailed to families. Share and Care has a "business" FaceBook page in which pictures and information is posted weekly to inform families of daily learning experiences.

## *Assessment Plan: Why We Assess*

**Purpose:** To better provide the focused education and attention each individual student can benefit from as we share the opportunities that promoted age- appropriate development each child truly requires.

**Method:** Our methods of assessment include daily interactions, working student portfolios, objective observations, formal observation record assessments (three times a year), family communication, and teacher- family conferences. Our goal is to know the child and further his or her educational and individual potential.

**Plans:** Daily learning experiences/ interactions are observed and documented to provide the foundation on which our knowledge of each child is built. From there, curriculum is planned and designed to meet the needs and interests of the students. Family is consulted on a continuous basis as communication is shared. All backgrounds and cultural differences are respected.

Formal assessments are filled out with the knowledge garnered from daily observations and planned thematic activities. These assessments are due twice a year, 60 days after enrollment informally, then in November and April/May. Additionally, conferences are available to parents at any time so that any questions or concerns they have can be addressed immediately. Planned/ scheduled parent-teacher conferences are held annually in the Spring.

Results of all assessments and conversations/ interactions are planned with the intention of helping each child reach their potential at his/her own rate.

**Privacy:** Documentation and assessments, along with parental input, are kept contained and put away in each child's individual portfolio. Work that has been completed (ie. Cutting, and writing samples) along with supporting photographs, will be stored and logged to better aid in the assessment process.

Portfolios will be kept in the classrooms and updated in an as needed basis, but away from general view. Parents and families are always welcome to review the contents of the file on their own child.

**Referrals:** Developmental screening and assessments are always used to promote a child's development and aid in his or her learning. In the case of learning delays or concerns, the child shall have documented evidence supporting the teaching staff and/ or family's apprehensions. At which point, those issues are presented to the families and recommendations/ suggestions

are made based on the shared information. Never at any time is teaching staff to diagnose or label a child. Community resources are always available.

Curriculum: Activities and units of study are based on student's interests and their abilities as assessed.

Assessments aid in determining a child's skill level and then curriculum supports a student's growth. Should teaching practices or activities need to be adapted, teachers plan accordingly.

Assessments/Conferences-All children (birth through 5 years) are evaluated in Spring and Fall by classroom teaching staff. These assessments are distributed to families. The center uses "Teaching Strategies" assessment booklets (ages 2-5) and *Ages and Stages Questionnaires* (Infant/Toddler). The skills that are assessed align with the Illinois Early Childhood Learning Standards which can be found online at the Illinois Department of Education website ([ides.org](http://ides.org)). These evaluations provide parents with specific progress of your child's growth and development as well as their adjustment to the program. If the screening results denote a developmental concern, center teaching staff and parents discuss options. A child with a developmental delay is referred for further evaluation by the school district they will attend. Parents may request a conference at any time to discuss any topic or concern.

Child Screening-All children are screened no later than 60 days into the program as well as annually. Parents will be provided information on screening results.

Family Committee-meets monthly and membership is encouraged. This is an actively involved group of families. Participation is a top priority of our programming to help children, parents and teaching staff make a strong connection between home and center. We share support, ideas and develop a partnership with the families we serve.

### *To Our Parents...*

Being aware of working parents' schedules, we realize that it is sometimes difficult to communicate as quickly or directly as desired. If a formal meeting cannot be worked into the schedule, everyone at Share and Care is available by phone or note. Feel free to stop at the office at your convenience and share ideas as well. Additionally, we do have a suggestion box located in the vestibule just inside our front door. No matter the form of communication, do not hesitate to share. We want parents to feel as much a part of our program as the children. Positive parent and staff relations add to the quality of care we provide your child.

- We want you to know, to understand, and to discuss with us our goals.
- We want you to look often into our busy, happy, noisy, creative classrooms and see your child at play.
- We want you to realize the validity of that play and the importance of what your child is learning.
- Families and teaching staff can help your child develop his/her full human potential.