



GARDEN OF PRAYER
Early Education Center

Parent Handbook

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Described herein are the policies of the Garden of Prayer Early Education Centers. The use of the term “parents” refers to: parents, guardians, or anyone having legal care and control of the children enrolled in the center.

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About the Agency

Agency Mission Statement

Garden of Prayer Youth Center's mission is to plant seeds of hope in every child by providing educational and mental health services that create a brighter future.

Agency Philosophy

Our philosophy is to provide trauma informed, strength based, family focused and person-centered programming to assist persons served with developing educationally, socially, physically and spiritually by building skills that will increase resilience and self-esteem.

Program Goal

Our goal is to provide children with educational and developmental support that lay a foundation for life-long learning and to assist our students reach their maximum learning potential.

Our Expected Program Outcomes

- Children have the skills necessary to maintain personal health.
- Children have the ability to begin to assume responsibility for their own safety within their environment.
- Children have the ability to seek help from and respond appropriately to adults.
- Children have a sense of personal identity and awareness of connectedness to others and they are able to recognize their abilities and value themselves.
- Children are able to exercise appropriate control in independent and group activities.
- Children are able to address challenges using appropriate social and coping skills.
- Children interact with adults and peers.
- Children have a sense of their own feelings and an ability to express empathy for others.
- Children have the ability to engage in a variety of activities to express ideas and feelings and to explore their own creativity.
- Children have the ability to understand and comprehend communication.
- Children have the ability to use language for expression and to communicate with others.
- Children have emerging literacy skills such as beginning letter recognition and phonological awareness, story comprehension and use of writing materials.

- Children have knowledge of quantitative concepts, spatial relationships and sequencing. Children show interest and the ability to apply measuring, categorizing and sequencing in real-life situations.
- Children have knowledge of the process of examining natural phenomena and investigating properties of their environment. Children show an awareness of using gathered information to solve problems and gain understanding of real life events and experience.
- Children have an innate motivation to master and control their environment.
- Children demonstrate an eagerness to know and initiative in pursuing the unknown.
- Children have the ability to combine previous experiences to form new ideas. Children demonstrate the ability to develop and follow through on plans.
- Children have the ability to maintain their position and move freely about in their environment for physical fitness, recreation and personal well-being.
- Children have the ability to use eye-hand coordination, strength and motor control to use age-appropriate tools and utensils effectively.
- Children have the ability to process sensory information and to coordinate movements.
- Establish and Increase Parent Involvement

Letter From the Center Director

Dear Parents,

We would like to welcome you to our center! It is with great pleasure and expectation that we thank you for affording us the opportunity to provide a quality education to your child. Our mission is to provide children with educational and developmental support that lays a foundation for life-long learning. We will provide a safe, loving, and nurturing environment for each child that is in our care. This will be an exciting journey with us as your child grows and makes developmental gains by learning to explore within our classroom environment!

We anticipate partnering with you throughout this education experience. We will provide a positive, creative, fun environment to promote social-emotional, cognitive, physical, and language development. Our entire staff is committed to ensuring that your child reaches their maximum learning potential. We look forward to having parents visit as often as their schedule permits, so please come, and share your child's world whenever possible.

This handbook is designed to help you understand the philosophy upon which our center was founded, and to give insight into your child's daily routines. Please read this handbook carefully and keep it in a convenient place for future reference.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call me at the office at (815) 933 -2493 ext. 714. We look forward to working with you and your family.

Once again, you are welcome!

Yetha Parks

Division Director (Center Director) ,M.S. Ed.

Michael Maloney

MA-LCPC, MBA, CWEL, CEO

Parent Guidelines

Child Preparation

On the first day of school each child should bring the following items. (You will receive a checklist that you will return with the items checked off and your signature.)

1. Personal blanket with child's name in permanent marker
2. A complete change of clothing
3. Pampers/Pull-ups (Infants/Toddlers)
4. Baby Wipes
5. Kleenex Tissue (Preschoolers)
6. Bibs (Infants/Toddlers)
7. Plastic container with lid.

Parent Access

Parents are permitted access at any time their child is in attendance in the center. Making an appointment is not necessary. However, we ask that you be courteous not to interrupt planned activities. An overview of the daily schedule is provided below.

Daily Schedule Overview

Welcome/Arrival	6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.
Breakfast	7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m.
Teeth Brushing	7:30 a.m. to 7:45 a.m.
Curriculum	8:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. planned activities, and circle time activities.
AM Snack	9:30 a.m.
Outdoor Play	10:30 a.m.
Lunch Time	11:30 a.m.
Naptime	12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
PM Snack time	2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Curriculum	3:00p.m. – 6:00 p.m. planned activities, gross motor play, interest center's storybook time, small & large group activities follow immediately after snack, clean-up & dismissal. Outdoor play, transitional activities and interest center time varies by classroom. Each classroom is required to post and follow a daily schedule. Parents can review the daily schedule, lesson plans, and calendar by looking at the Parent Board in each classroom.

Child Release Authorization

Children will not be allowed to leave the center with anyone other than those persons listed on the enrollment form. Please alert the people authorized to pick up your child that a picture I.D. license or non-driver's license as identification will be required.

Parent Involvement

We encourage parental involvement with the child development center by:

1. Inviting parents to participate in the center and other social functions.
2. Inviting parents to visit the center and share skills and interests with the children.
3. Inviting parents to accompany us on field trips when possible.
4. Providing informal opportunities for regular written and oral communication.
5. Providing the opportunity to participate in parent/ teacher conferences to discuss your child's development progress. Formal conferences are scheduled four times per year; fall, spring, winter, and summer. Anytime a parent has a concern or inquiry, a teacher and/ or administrator will be happy to schedule a time to meet.

Additional information of interest to parents is posted on the Parents Bulletin Board in each classroom. ***Parents will not be allowed to monitor children unsupervised and will not be included in staff ratios.***

Notification of Changes

Parents are expected to notify the center immediately and in writing of any change in name, address, employment location, and/or phone numbers so they can be contacted in case of an emergency. Parents' employment status will be checked regularly against campus databases for verification of tuition charges. However, it is the parents' responsibility to inform the center when changes occur. This information is of vital importance. Without accurate information concerning your place of employment, we cannot inform you if your child becomes ill or has an accident.

Our Staff

Each program is staffed at an approximate ratio of one adult to follow ratio ages of the children. We are dedicated to improving the quality of life for young people. Our staff has backgrounds in early childhood development, education, developmental therapy, parent educator and other child related areas. In addition, staff is provided with ongoing in-service training and supervision. Upon employment, all staff members are required to have a TB test, obtain First Aid/ CPR training, and undergo a background history check.

Center Policies

Days and hours of Operation

Garden of Prayer Early Education Center services children, faculty, and staff. The center is open daily from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. Regular full-time enrollment assumes a contract for 50 hours of service per week. Hours of operation are subject to change; parents will receive a written 90-day notice. A week begins Monday Morning and ends Friday evening. Service beyond 50 hours during a single week will be billed at an additional hourly rate. **THE CENTER WILL BE CLOSED ON THE FOLLOWING DESIGNATED HOLIDAYS.**

New Year's Day Martin Luther King's Birthday Memorial Day Juneteenth Independence Day Labor Day	Columbus Day Veteran's Day Thanksgiving Day Day after Thanksgiving Christmas Day
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Uniforms and Personal Belongings

The Center will provide a personal space for each child in attendance. All clothing and napping accessories must be clearly marked with your child's name.

Our Center requires every child to attend school in the required uniform.

- Uniformity at a young age, helps to build a sense of community within the school
- Uniforms create an atmosphere of belonging.
- School uniforms have a positive effect on students and teachers by promoting a single standard of dress.
- School uniforms make mornings easier. Through simplicity, uniforms promote time efficiency, organization, and neatness.
- School uniforms are cost effective.

Uniform Requirements:

- Center approved shirt & khaki pants or skirt. We will provide 1 shirt per child.
- At minimum parents are required to purchase two approved shirts from the center and three khaki pants or skirts from a store of their choice.
- Khaki shorts are permitted during the summer months.

Outdoor and Play Attire

Remember your child's comfort for outdoor play. This means bringing boots, hats, snow pants, scarves, and mittens for outdoor winter play. Also remember in the spring and fall of the year, weather changes very quickly and your child needs to have a jacket or sweatshirt in the center at all times.

Proper footwear is important for the safety of your child. A good pair of shoes, preferably gym shoes, is needed for safe and enjoyable play. Do not send your child in flip-flops or jelly shoes. If your child has reached the big step of toilet training, please remember to bring several changes of underclothing, socks, uniform pants and uniform shirts, and an extra pair of shoes.

Toys From Home

Except for toys that are needed to help ease your child's transition from home to school and "show and share days", we ask that you leave your child's toys at home or in your car. Children often have a difficult time sharing personal toys, and they become upset if their toy is lost or broken. We ask that "adventure toys" (superheroes etc.) are not brought to the Center since toys like these are often associated with aggressive play.

Garden of Prayer Early Education Center is not responsible for any lost or stolen items brought into the center.

Essential Protocol and Procedures

Notice of Withdrawal from The Center

The center requires a 30-day written notice immediately of your intent to withdraw a child from the center. If this notice is not received, tuition will be charged for 30 days after withdrawal of your child. If the center determines that a child should be withdrawn, parents will receive immediate notice.

Enrollment

All enrollment and permission forms (application, financial status form, consents etc.) must be completed prior to the child's first day in the center.

Immunizations

When immunizations are waived (for religious or medical grounds), a written statement requesting a waiver signed by the child's religious leader, or a licensed practicing medical doctor, is required. Otherwise, we expect the following:

1. The initial medical report shall be dated less than 6 months prior to enrollment of infants, toddlers, and preschool children. For school-age children, a copy of the most recent regularly scheduled school physical may be submitted (even if more than 6 months old) or the day care center may require a more recent medical report by its own enrollment policy. If a health problem is suspected, we may require additional documentation of the child's health status.
2. If a child transfers from another center, the medical report may be used at our center if it is less than one year old. In such a case, the center the child is leaving shall maintain a copy of the child's medical form and return the original to the parent.
3. The medical examination shall be valid for 2 years, except that subsequent examinations for school-age children shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Illinois School Code [105 ILCS 5/27-8.1] and the Child Health Examination Code (77 Ill. Adm. Code 665), provided that copies of the examination are on file.
4. The medical report shall indicate that your child has received the immunizations required by the Illinois Department of Public Health in its rules (77 Ill. Adm. Code 695, Immunization Code). These include poliomyelitis, measles, rubella, mumps, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, haemophilus influenza B, hepatitis B, and varicella (chickenpox) or provide proof of immunity according to requirements in 77 Ill. Adm. Code 690.50 of the Department of Public Health rules (<http://www.idph.state.il.us>).

5. If your child is in a high-risk group, as determined by the examining physician, a tuberculin skin test by the Mantoux method and the results of that test shall be included in the initial examination for all children who have attained one year of age, or at the age of one year for children who are enrolled before their first birthday. The tuberculin skin test by the Mantoux method shall be repeated when children in the high- risk group begin elementary and secondary school.
6. The initial examination shall show that children from the ages of one to 6 years have been screened for lead poisoning (for children residing in an area defined as high risk by the Illinois Department of Public Health in its Lead Poisoning Prevention Code (77 Ill. Adm. Code 845) or that a lead risk assessment has been completed (for children residing in an area defined as low risk by the Illinois Department of Public Health).
7. NOTE: We take updating the immunization card very seriously. Our center submits to an ongoing immunization card inspection by the school nurse. By complying with the health requirements set forth by Illinois Department of Health. We assure parents that children attending our center have not been exposed to communicable illnesses that could be deemed epidemic in nature, (Hepatitis, Tuberculosis, etc.)
8. All information concerning children and families is confidential. This includes addresses and telephone numbers. A written statement from the parent or guardian is required for the release of information to others.

Custody and Access

Persons identified as parents on the child's enrollment forms will be allowed to pick up that child. If a court has issued an order limiting or restricting access of a parent to a child, a court stamped "filed" copy of such an order must be presented to the Director of the center and a new enrollment form completed before we will restrict a parent's access to his/her child.

Children with Special Needs

Garden of Prayer Early Education Center will accept children into the center who will profit from the group experiences provided here. The center reserves the right to determine whether or not any particular child will profit from the program, and whether the program and/or facility can be adapted to meet a child's needs. Enrolled children who are identified as having special developmental, educational, or behavioral needs may be referred to community-based services.

When a Child May Be Ask to Leave Center

Parents are expected to follow the policies and procedures of the center and to cooperate with the center staff. All parents are provided with a Parent Handbook, which describes policies, procedures, and expectations. Parents receive notice of changes in policies and procedures through memos and through the monthly newsletter. Repeated failure to follow center policies and/or to cooperate with center staff may result in a child being withdrawn from the center. Children who cannot follow appropriate behavior limits, and whose behavior endangers the safety of other children in the group, may have childcare and EHS services withdrawn.

Handling Inappropriate Behavior

The safety and welfare of all the children at the Center are primary concerns. Center staff will make every effort to work with children and parents to promote appropriate behaviors. However, cursing, fighting, stealing, and the intentional destruction of property will not be tolerated. There are situations when additional action may be necessary.

Initial Meeting

If a child's extreme, uncontrollable behavior continues to endanger staff and other children physically or emotionally at the center despite positive guidance techniques or if a parent is uncooperative with staff in working toward their correction of their child's chronic disruptive behavior, a meeting with the child's parents will be requested by the Director/Assistant Director, and the child's teachers. The problem will be defined in writing and goals for correction will be established.

Second Meeting

If, after a predetermined time frame, the initial plan for helping the child fails, the Director will request a second meeting. The problem will be identified again and new approaches will be defined.

Suspension/Dismissal

If no progress occurs within the established timeline, suspension will result. Parents will be responsible for payment during the length of suspension. The period of suspension may vary from the remainder of a day to one week relative to the severity of the problem. Dismissal of the child will occur after two suspensions for the same behavior, or immediately if the child's behavior severely injures a staff member or another child.

Note: Parents will be given a referral list of childcare providers if or when a child is dismissed from our program. Garden of Prayer Early Education Center does not assume any financial responsibility for referrals or medical assistance/ counseling.

Licensing Regulations

GOP Early Education Center is governed by GOP Early Education Center, The Department of Children Family Services and GOP Board of Director. If parents have concerns, they are encouraged to discuss them with the Director.

Child Abuse

GOP Early Education Center adheres to the Illinois Child Abuse and Neglect. Copies of this law are available in the Director's office. According to the law, professionals who work with children, including childcare workers, are required to report suspected child abuse.

Center Expectations of Parents & Caregivers

During pick up or drop off of children, parents must be dressed appropriately. No pajamas, bonnets, do-rags, see-through clothing, or sagging allowed. Parents are not allowed to be on their cell phones while inside the center. Intentional destruction of property, profanity, arguing, threats, and fighting on or around the center's premises are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Daily Routines

Daily Check In And Check Out

Parents must bring children into their classroom each morning and come in the classroom to pick up the child in the evening. Children will not be allowed to leave the center with anyone except the persons designated on the enrollment form. Parents are required to check children in and out each day and make sure that the teachers are aware that their child has entered the classroom.

NOTE: A phone call is not sufficient authorization to have a child released to someone not listed on the Release application form. Authorization for someone other than the persons listed on the enrollment form to pick-up your child must be made in writing, in person and in advance to the center's office.

Supervision Of Children-Parents

Parents are to escort their child or children to their classroom. To ensure safety, please do not allow your children to run ahead of you to the front entrance of the building.

Discipline

The goal of our Center in the area of discipline is to develop independent, self-disciplined children. Self-disciplined children conform to acceptable standards of behavior from inner motivation rather than from external controls and fear of being

caught and punished. Discipline at GOP emphasizes limits and rules that are understandable and consistent to the children.

We try to prevent problems before they arise by arranging classrooms and programs to meet the developmental needs of the children. Such arrangement includes the number of children assigned to each teacher; having a wide selection of toys/ duplicates of popular items whenever possible; arranging the classrooms so that children can be as independent as possible and not have to wait for long periods; arranging the daily schedule to balance the needs of children to be physically active and to rest; allowing children a choice of challenging activities suited to their developmental level.

When a correction is necessary, teachers will use a kind, firm voice to redirect or restate the rule. No physical or harsh verbal discipline of children is allowed. Discipline that is associated with food, naps, or bathroom procedures is not permitted. Yelling, screaming, humiliating, shaming, threatening or frightening children or making derogatory comments about children or their families are not permitted.

Any form of physical discipline is not permitted, even if parents request such discipline. While as a parent you reserve the right to discipline your child in the manner you believe is best, we must require that you refrain from using physical discipline when you are on the premises of GOP Early Education & Intervention Center.

When a child will not or cannot respond to the above described disciplinary measures, parents will be notified. In some cases, parents may be required to come immediately and take their child home.

Meals And Nutrition

GOP participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program. The meals we serve follow the guidelines of the food program and reflect our concern for your children's health and development. Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack are served to those children in attendance. Please check your child's room for specific times. In accordance with the Food Program guidelines, parents will be asked to complete an income statement yearly, or during the year if their income significantly changes, *please do not send any other food with your child (unless you are providing infant formula, breast milk, or approved baby food).*

A monthly menu will be posted on the Parent Bulletin board at the school's entrance and a copy sent home prior to the beginning of each month. Meal times are the same for each class; please see the daily schedule posted in your child's class.

Meals are served “family-style” which gives the children opportunities to serve themselves in a homelike atmosphere. An adult sits at each table to assist children as needed and participate in a pleasant conversation while eating. The children will say grace/prayer before meals. After meals, children gain responsibility in clean up by putting the dishes in the proper place and cleaning their place. The children are encouraged to try new foods. Teachers will not force a child to eat, and food will not be withheld from a child for any reason or used as a reward.

If a child has specific food allergies or eating problems, it is the responsibility of the parents to inform the child’s teacher. Any special diet will be served upon written request of the child’s physician and the parent.

Naps

Children will be given an opportunity to nap or rest each day. Children who do not fall asleep may be permitted to get up and will be offered quiet alternative activities such as looking at a book or playing quiet games. Nap time is part of the daily schedule posted in each classroom.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is essential for providing adequate opportunities for large motor activities important for physical development. Outdoor exercise increases general fitness and resistance to infection.

At GOP Early Education Center, children play outside every day, unless it is raining, or the wind chill is below 32 degrees F/at the discretion of the Center Director. On days when the temperature is above 90 degrees, outdoor playtime will be shortened, but not eliminated. Please make sure that your child wears suitable uniform clothing each day. During winter months, hats/caps, warm jackets, and gloves/mittens are necessary every day.

Clothing

All enrolled children will be required to wear clean and appropriate clothing each day, which may include GOP EEC T-Shirts. A variety of activities including physical exercise, water/sand play, and art (using tempera and finger paint) are planned each day.

Children’s jewelry items, especially pierced earrings, present potential safety hazards. Earrings can become caught or be accidentally pulled causing a tear of the ear lobe. Earrings, rings, and other removable small objects present choking hazards for your child and other children in the group.

For these safety reasons, you are asked not to allow your child to wear jewelry to the center.

EACH CHILD MUST HAVE AT LEAST ONE COMPLETE CHANGE OF UNIFORM CLOTHING (INCLUDING SOCKS AND UNDERWEAR) AVAILABLE IN THE CENTER AT ALLTIMES. The center does not provide changes of clothing. If your child's clothing becomes wet or soiled and you have not provided fresh clothing, we will call you to pick up your child. Since children will play outside each day, and the temperature may fluctuate during the day, it is advisable to have a jacket or sweater left at school for use at outdoor time. All clothing (including underwear, caps, gloves, jackets, as well as extra pants, shirts, or dresses) must be marked with the child's name. The Center is not responsible for lost clothing.

Learning Experiences

The goals of GOP Early Education Center include providing a high-quality early childhood program that equally promotes physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development in a safe and caring environment. The philosophy of the center holds that young children learn from interactions with other children and from interactions with the environment, as well as from interaction with adults. Our Center bases its learning program on the recommendations of developmentally appropriate practice as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is the national professional association of early childhood teachers. The following statements are taken from developmentally appropriate practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8; Expanded Edition by Sue Bredekamp (NAEYC, 1998). GOP EEC will implement a state approved and Faith Base Curriculum. These statements serve as the framework for the activities and policies of the GOP Early Education Center.

Developmental appropriateness has two parts that are equally important:

Age Appropriateness: Refers to the universally accepted norms of human development- the "ages and stages" of childhood. These changes are typical and predictable phases that occur as children grow.

Individual Appropriateness: refers to the individual's unique needs, personally, family background and experiences. Principles of child development which are used for the basis of planning and implementing daily activities are listed below.

Curriculum

1. Developmentally appropriate curriculum provides for all ages of child's development: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive through an integrated approach.
2. Appropriate curriculum planning is based on teacher's observations and recording of each child's special interest and developmental progress.
3. Curriculum planning emphasizes learning as an interactive process. Teachers prepare the environment for the children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials.
4. Learning activities and materials should be concrete, real, and relevant to the lives of young children.
5. Programs provide for a wider range of developmental interest and abilities than the chronological age range of the group would suggest. Adults are prepared to meet the needs of children who exhibit unusual interest and skills outside the normal developmental range.
6. Teachers provide a variety of activities and materials; teachers increase the difficulty, the complexity and the challenge of an activity as children are involved with it and as children develop understanding and skills.
7. Adults provide opportunities for children to choose from among a variety of activities, materials, and equipment; and time to explore through active involvement. Adults facilitate children's engagement with materials and activities and extend the child's learning by asking questions or making suggestions that stimulate children's thinking.
8. Multicultural and nonsexist experiences, materials, and equipment are provided for children of all ages.
9. Adults provide a balance of rest and active movement for children throughout the program day.
10. Outdoor experiences are provided for children of all ages.

ADULT CHILD INTERACTIONS

1. Adults respond quickly and directly to children's needs, desires, and messages and adapt their responses to children's differing styles and abilities.
2. Adults provide many varied opportunities for children to communicate.
3. Adults facilitate child's successful completion of tasks by providing support, focused attention, physical proximity, and verbal encouragement. Adults recognize that child's misconceptions reflect their developing thoughts.
4. Teachers are alert to signs of undue stress in children's behavior and are aware of appropriate stress-reducing activities and techniques.

5. Adults facilitate the development of self-esteem by respecting, accepting, and comforting children, regardless of the child's behavior.
6. Adults facilitate the development of self-control in children.
7. Adults are responsible for all children under their supervision at all times and plan for increasing independence as children acquire skills.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE HOME AND PROGRAM

1. Parents have both the right and the responsibility to share in decisions about their children's care and education. Parents are encouraged to observe and participate. Teachers are responsible for establishing and maintaining frequent contact with families.
2. Teachers share child development knowledge, insights, and resources as part of regular communication and conferences with family members.

Developmental Evaluation Of Children

1. Decisions that have a major impact on children such as enrollment and group placement are based on developmental assessment or screenings along with other relevant information, including observations by teachers and parent's reports.
2. Developmental assessment of children's progress and achievements is used to adapt curriculum to match the developmental needs of children, to communicate with the child's family, and to evaluate the program's effectiveness.
3. Developmental assessments and observations are used to identify children who have special needs and/or who are at risk and to plan appropriate curriculum for them.

Infant And Toddler Information

Daily Report

Parents of children 6 months - 2 years will receive a written daily report of food and beverage consumed or appetite, rest, bowel movements, and general activity. For older children, only unusual occurrences will be reported in writing. Parents are encouraged to speak with teachers frequently to check on a child's progress of any problems.

Food And Diapers/Pull-Ups

Parents are responsible for providing adequate supplies. Diapers are checked frequently and are changed if soiled or wet. We suggest that you keep in mind the fact

that we check diapers of children under 1 year of age every hour, and that the diaper is changed even if only slightly wet. This is the procedure recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics for providing the best protection against the development of diaper rash. Older children are diapered slightly less frequently.

If disposable diapers are used, the center requires the use of disposable diapers that fit the child well enough to contain urine and stool.

Changes of clothing: If you fail to provide a change of uniform clothing and your child's uniform clothes become soiled, you will be notified by phone, whenever possible.

Parents of infants and toddlers are expected to provide these items for their children.

Biting

Biting is one of the most distressing behaviors of young preschool children. While biting is a painful and dangerous behavior, it is important for parents and teachers to realize that it is not an abnormal behavior. Children who bite are not "bad" or "disturbed". Biting is most often found among children younger than three years of age. Children may bite for a variety of reasons including over-stimulation, boredom, hunger, and frustration over the inability to communicate needs or wants. (See Appendix C)

When biting occurs, the following procedure is used:

The child who was bitten receives immediate attention. Appropriate care is provided for the bite. Closely following the biting incident, teachers explain to the biter that biting hurts and is not acceptable. Teachers may suggest an alternative behavior to relieve frustration (stamping feet, squeezing a "nerf" ball, biting a plastic toy, etc.) Teachers stress the pain and discomfort felt by the child who was bitten.

Teachers are required to fill out a detailed "Biting Incident Report". The purpose of this report is to help teachers analyze the factors that may have contributed to the incident. Such factors may include having to wait for a prolonged period, being crowded together, over-stimulation without relief, anger, tiredness, etc. Teachers are expected to use the information gathered to correct contributing factors whenever possible.

Information from the "Biting Incident Report" will be shared at the end of the day with parents of both children. Parents of the child who was bitten will not receive the name of the biter. If the measures implemented after the analysis of the biting incidents do not stop the behavior, the center reserves the right to ask parents of the child who bites to remove the child from the center until the behavior is under control. It is the

responsibility of the Director to make this decision using input from the Teachers and the Manger.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is a major accomplishment for every child. It is important to understand that the right time is different for each individual. Several factors need to be in place, before toilet training can be successful:

1. The child must demonstrate that he/she has control over the sphincter muscles. This control begins to be in evidence when a diaper stays dry for a long time, then is completely soaked through.
2. The child must have a fair amount of skill in managing clothing (pulling down pants inside independently).
3. Most importantly, the child must demonstrate some interest in the process of using the toilet and a desire to leave diapers behind.

Sometimes waiting for your child to be ready is frustrating and bothersome. Sometimes taking the time to provide consistent opportunity to use the potty is inconvenient. But your child's success in this important milestone of self-control is worth the wait and the inconvenience.

At GOP Early Education Center, teachers will give all children in these age group opportunities to experiment with using the potty. When the three major factors are evident, teachers will provide more encouragement, more opportunities, and more reminders. We will work with you to try to make the routines at the center similar to the ones used at home.

Information About Preschoolers & School Age

(3-5 years & 5–12 years)

A more complete description of the philosophy, curriculum, and daily routine for these age groups is available in the Center's Curriculum Statement. *The Creative Curriculum*, developed by Diane Dodge is used to guide the program in each classroom. This curriculum emphasizes that all three areas of development (social, emotional, cognitive, and physical) are equally important and are interdependent. The activities are planned by the teachers who actually work with the children. Planning is based upon principles of child's development and the individual abilities and interest of the children in the classroom. Children are allowed choices in the materials and activities they wish to pursue, and they are provided blocks of time long enough to become engaged in an activity or the completion of a project. Routines focus on accepting responsibility, becoming more autonomous and independent, learning to work out disagreements in

socially acceptable ways, and respecting others in the group. Curiosity is encouraged, and the value of play and cooperation as central to learning is recognized. School age children will be provided tutoring and social recreation during the school year and summer day camp during the summer.

Health And Wellness

EMERGENCIES AND ACCIDENTS

In the case of any accident or illness requiring immediate emergency treatment, parents will be notified as soon as possible. If the parents cannot be reached immediately the paramedics may be contacted. In some cases the child will be transported to the nearest hospital. A Child Development staff member will stay with the child until the parents are located. GOP Early Education Center and/or its designated employees shall be authorized to secure and consent to such medical attention, treatment, and services for a child as may be deemed necessary. Parents are reminded that many health insurance plans require parents to notify the primary care physician to obtain an authorization number for emergency medical treatment. The charges for this transportation and any medical care will be the responsibility of the parents.

In less serious situations, parents will be contacted and asked to transport the child. It is the parents' responsibility to be certain that the center have current work and home phone numbers. Without current information, the center has no way of contacting parents in an emergency.

Parents must leave information that will allow us to make contact in the event of an emergency or an illness. If a parent is not at their place of employment on a particular day, it is important that the office be given temporary contact numbers.

In the case of a minor accident, the teacher will call the parent and will fill out an incident report with the details of the event. A copy of the report will be made available to the parent when the child is picked up.

Allergies

If your child has allergies, please discuss them in detail with the Director and provide a written description on the enrollment forms. The staff of the center will take appropriate precautions. If at any time your child develops an allergy, please let us know immediately.

Infection Control And Personal Hygiene

GOP Early Education Center uses the Illinois Department of Public Health & DCFS Regulations as its guidelines for health and safety issues. Diapering procedures used in the center are those recommended by the Centers for Disease Control. Beginning with infants, children are encouraged to develop desirable habits of personal hygiene, including washing hands after toileting and diapering before and after meals, brushing teeth, and eating a variety of nutritious foods. In addition to instructing children in these habits, teachers model the behaviors. A toothbrush (labeled with your child's name) and toothpaste are requested to help your child develop an awareness of proper dental hygiene.

Children's fingernails can be sharp and they also collect germs. For your child's health and safety, please keep nails closely trimmed.

Illness

The goal of GOP Early Education Center is to provide quality care for healthy children. To avoid the spread of any contagions it is our policy that we do not allow parents to bring their children to school when they are ill.

We use the guidelines developed by *the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association* to protect the children and to minimize the inconvenience to parents. Parents who repeatedly fail to follow policies related to the exclusion of ill children from the center may be required to withdraw their child from the center.

Note: The Director reserves the right to require a doctor's excuse for the purpose of verifying that a child is well enough to return to group care and participate in the daily activities. GOP Early Education Center policies are reviewed annually by our health consultant.

When Should A Child Stay Home?

1. Fever

The child's temperature should be normal without medication for 24 hours before the child is brought to the center (this includes temperatures due to teething and/or ear infections). If your child has a fever in the evening, he/she should not be brought to the center in the morning, even if his/her temperature is normal. Temperatures often are lower in the morning and rise again in the afternoon.

Fever is defined as: 100.0 Axillary

101.0 Oral
102.0 Rectal

2. Vomiting

If your child vomits during the night, he/she should not be brought to the center the next day, unless you are confident that the vomiting was not due to an infectious condition and he/she can eat a normal diet.

3. Diarrhea

is defined by the Centers for Disease Control as more than one abnormally loose or watery stool. While loose stools can have many causes, a child who has two abnormal loose stools should not return to the center until bowel movements have normal consistency. A child can also be excluded from the center after one loose stool if the stool can't be contained.

4. Colds

If there is no FEVER associated with the cold, and if the child is not terribly uncomfortable/irritable, the child can come to the center.

5. Earache

Keep your child at home and see your pediatrician. The child can return to the center when the pediatrician advises with a doctor's clearance to return to school. In case of ear discharge, even without pain, contact your physician. After a physician has determined that a serious condition does not exist, the child can be cared for in the group, unless he/she cannot be comforted and/or if he/she runs a fever of 101 or higher. Your child must remain at home for 24 hours fever-free without medication.

6. Conjunctivitis (pinkeye)

Your child's eyes must be COMPLETELY free of discharge and your child must have been on medication for at least 24-hours before returning to the center with a doctor statement clearing your child to return to school.

In the case of impetigo, lice, ringworm, pinworms, scabies, rashes, hand foot and mouth, mumps, measles, chicken pox, thrush, etc. your child must be non-contagious before returning to the center and have a written medical clearance from a licensed physician before returning to school. See APPENDIX C for more information about infectious diseases.

Daily Health Inspection

For the safety and protection of children, each receiving teacher will follow the recommendation for the Department of Children and Family Service by providing each child with a daily health check prior to his/her entering the group. Each child will be checked for the following:

- Sore coughing
- Breathing difficulties
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Pinkeye (tear, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, swelling, discharge of pus, etc.)
- Infected skin patches
- Feverish appearance
- Unusual behavior - crying more than usual, less active, or seeming unwell.

When Children Leave the Center III

Parents are expected to have an alternative childcare arrangement to use when children are ill. Parents are also expected to promptly (within one hour) remove their children from the center when any of the following conditions exist:

Fever, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Pinkeye (as defined above)

Signs of possible illness: Lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs.

Mouth sores or white patches: Unless a pediatrician, a pediatric nurse practitioner, or the Center's Health Consultant determines the condition is non-infectious.

Rash with fever or behavior change: Until a health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease.

Presence Of Symptoms Of Known Contagious Disease Or Infestation

Examples: chicken pox, impetigo, pertussis, mumps, measles, shingles, hepatitis A, rubella, lice, scabies, herpetic, gingivostomatitis, etc. even in the absence of fever.

Communication With Parents

When a communicable disease has been introduced into the center, parents will be notified. The center also will report these occurrences to the local health department when required. **Parents are urged to notify the center when their child is known to have been exposed to a communicable disease outside the center.**

If a child is diagnosed with a communicable disease that could be considered dangerous to other children and staff, GOP Early Education Center leadership reserves the right to close the center to protect the health of the children and staff. The decision to close the center for illness and the decision for how long to remain closed will be made after consultation with local care professionals and the health and safety professionals of the institution.

The director may determine that a child who does not appear to be fully recovered from an illness cannot be re admitted to the Center without a statement from a physician stating that the child is able to return and participate in the activities of the center or is no longer infectious. Our Center reserves the right to refuse care due to illness.

Medications

Teachers will administer only prescribed medicine to your child under the following conditions:

1. Medication is in the original container, which is labeled with child's name.
2. An authorization to Administer Medication form has been signed and dated by the parent and physician and includes dosage and directions for administration. These forms are available from any teacher.
3. A signed and dated written authorization from the child's physician is on file if the dosage for the child's age is not included on the container from the manufacturer. (For example, many children's non-prescription fever-reducing medications do not include dosage for children less than 4-6 years.)

No over-the-counter medication will be given. Bring medication to the Center in a Ziploc bag labeled in permanent marker with your child's name. All medication is to be given to the teacher and will be placed in the school's (locked) medication box. There should be no medicine of any kind left in your diaper bag, or your child's pocket or cubby. This includes:

- ✓ Tylenol or other over-the-counter medicine
- ✓ Prescription medicine
- ✓ Oral-gel
- ✓ Chap stick/ lip balm
- ✓ Cough drops etc.

All medications given will be logged on a medical log sheet. Parents have access to entries concerning their child (upon request). A medicine spoon labeled in permanent marker with your child's name should accompany all medication. This will insure proper measurement. The Medication Authorization Form must be submitted. Unfinished medicines should be taken home on Fridays or will otherwise be disposed of.

The Director, Asst. Director & Teachers will only administer medication as prescribed by the doctor. ***All medications will be kept in a locked cabinet.***

Special Events And Parent Meetings

Holidays And Religious Instruction

At GOP Early Education Center we look forward to holidays because of the educational and rich cultural diversity it brings to our center. We recognize that our families do not celebrate holidays in the same manner. We desire to remain respectful and neutral when planning activities for the children. We invite and encourage parents to visit the older classrooms and share a family holiday tradition with the children. We believe our children benefit greatly knowing how other families celebrate the holiday season. Each classroom will send out a survey asking parents how they would like to celebrate in their classroom. Depending on the ages of the children in the class, it may be appropriate to engage them in a cooking activity, look at family albums, and sing a special song, make a special art project, or read a special book. This is quite appropriate providing parents present the information within the context of their family. We do not discriminate based upon culture, race, ethnicity, or religious beliefs.

Birthdays

A child's birthday is an event to celebrate, and we encourage you to include your child's center friends in the birthday plans! If you would like to provide a special treat for your child's birthday, please schedule the date and time with the teachers for your child's group. You need to plan to provide enough for each child in the group. Parents are asked to not bring chocolate and caffeinated beverages on birthday party menus. We don't want to discourage the custom of sharing small treats or "favors" with those children who participate in the celebration, but we ask you to limit the amount of sugary treats. At the same time, it is important to remember that NutraSweet and other artificial sweeteners are not appropriate for preschool children. Small toys, crayons, booklets, or stickers are good substitutes for candy. Please understand that children in the group cannot be expected to bring gifts for the birthday child.

Transportation/ Field Trips

From time to time, GOP Early Education Center may make field trip opportunities available to the children. Whenever a field trip is planned, parents will receive written

notice in advance specifying the date, destination, departure time, and time the children are due back at the center. Parents must sign a permission form for each field trip experience. Children without signed permission forms must stay at the center. Parents are always welcome to join in field trips when their work/class schedule allows this participation. The center follows established transportation procedures; the purpose of these procedures is to insure the safety of children. A copy of the transportation procedures is available in the Director's office.

Inclement Weather Plan Information

During hazardous or threatening weather, parents will receive voice and text notifications regarding closings or early dismissals. The Center will also send notifications to local television and radio news stations.

Parent Meetings

Parent meetings are held bi-monthly typically on the 4th Thursday of the month at the Jordan Community Center 1432 S. Fourth Ave, Kankakee, IL. Parents will receive a reminder at least 3 weeks in advance. These meetings are mandatory, and attendance is required by at least one parent/caregiver as identified on the application. During these meetings parents will receive information regarding new DCFS or DHS policy relating to childcare. Parents will also receive any new information regarding center or agency operations or changes in policy. Parents/Caregivers are also required to participate in program surveys. These surveys are used to address concerns and to improve services. Lastly the meetings are used to provide training and support to parents on various topics related to child development, child safety, and child nutrition.

Appendix A Tuition And Fees

Insurance

GOP Centers have liability covering all persons on property during business hours.

Tax Credit & Receipts For Tuition Payments

Many families may qualify for a tax credit under the provisions of Federal Tax Reform Bill of 1976 based on their income levels. Parents acknowledge that if they are not eligible for or do not receive any financial subsidy or tax credit, they shall be responsible for the entirety of the tuition balance.

Full-Time Tuition Rates

(Subject To Change Based Upon State & Accreditation Status)

Age Group	Maximum Staff Ratio	Fees
Under Age 2	1:4	\$64/Day
2 Year Olds (2 1/2-3 Years)	1:8	\$51/Day
Preschoolers (3-5 Years)	1:10	\$43/Day
School Age	1:20	\$43/Day

Part-Time Tuition Rates

Age Group	Maximum Staff Ratio	Fees (Part Day)
Under Age 2	1:4	\$32/Day
2 Year Olds (2 1/2-3years)	1:8	\$26/Day
Preschoolers (3-5 Years)	1:10	\$22/Day
School Age (6 Years and Up)	1:20	\$22/Day

Transportation Rates (When/If Enacted)

Trip	\$7/Trip (Each Way-Not to Exceed 5 Miles)
Trip	\$12/Trip (Each Way- Not to Exceed 10 Miles)

Late Pick Up.

The GOP Early Education Center wants your child to receive the full attention and supervision from our excellent teachers. When a parent comes to pick a child up after original pick-up time or if a parent clocks their child out but remains in the building after original pick-up time, a late fee will be imposed as follows:

1 MINUTE TO 20 MINUTES	\$15.00
OVER 20 MINUTES	\$1.00 ADDITIONAL FOR EACH MINUTE

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING WHEN MAKING PAYMENTS FOR CHILD CARE

- Biweekly amounts are based on a 24-weekly pay period and should be paid as such.
- All payments are due in advance of the care being provided for your child.
- All late payments are assessed a \$20.00 late fee and must be paid prior to the child's return to the Center or by the 10th of the month.
- Payments/co-payments can be made with cash, cashier's check, or money order at the Administrative Office (657 E. Court Street, Suite 200, Kankakee, IL).
- Payments/co-payments can be made online through our website by using credit or debit cards with VISA or MASTER CARD logos. Payments may also be made via Cash App and Zelle.
- We do not accept personal checks, debit cards, credit cards, or cash at the Center (on-site).

Garden of Prayer Early Education Center may use a third-party collection agency for outstanding balances that remain uncollected. Additionally, chronically late, or uncollected payments may be reported to credit bureaus. Parents agree that in any successful legal action to collect outstanding balances, GOP shall be entitled to an award of all enforcement costs, including court costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

Appendix B Waiting List

When all spaces in the center are filled, parents have the option of having their child being placed on the waiting list. Parents must complete an enrollment application and pay a placement hold fee of \$30.00 for EACH child needing care. This fee is non-refundable. However, upon enrollment in the center an additional \$20.00 is required which will pay the remaining balance for the registration fee.

How Long Will I Be On The List?

The average waiting period is 12 months. We cannot guarantee your child a slot for enrollment. Please feel free to call on the **last** Friday of each month to find out your child's new waiting list status.

When My Child Is Offered An Enrollment Slot, How Long Do I Have To Decide?

If we have a space available, we will notify you immediately. You will have 3 days from the date of notification to accept and to enroll.

If you refuse the space when we notify you, we will call the next person on the list. It is advisable that you contact our office immediately! If we leave messages at home and/or work, and we do not hear from you, your failure to respond will be counted as a pass or refusal. The third time you refuse, we will drop your child's name to the bottom of the list.

NOTE: We do understand that you may have to enroll your child in another center, but we will still contact you, if we have an opening.

You must notify us, if there are changes regarding your phone number(s), address, and GOP affiliation. Failure to do so may result in losing an available space.

When I Receive A Space For Enrollment, What Else Will I Need To Do?

When you are offered a space in the center, the following are required PRIOR to your first day in our center:

1. Complete and return an enrollment packet.
2. Pay the non-registration fee of \$50.00
3. All field trips are included in the cost of tuition, except weekends.
4. Turn in the physical form
5. Read the Parent Handbook and the Curriculum Statement

6. Set up an appointment to meet your child's teachers

Touring The Center

We give tours of our programs by appointment only. For security reasons we do not allow drop-in visits until after your initial tour. Give us a call; we will schedule a tour for you with our center director.

Appendix C

More About Why Young Children Bite

Biting is fairly common amongst young children, and it is one of the things that worries adults most. Biting is often very painful and frightening for the child who is bitten. It can also be frightening for the child who bites, because it upsets the other child and makes adults very angry. Biting can make the child who bites feel very powerful because of the strong reaction that it brings. This feeling of power can also be frightening for children because they need to feel secure that their feelings can be controlled.

Four kinds of biting:

1. **Experimental Biting:** Biting is the way that infants explore the world. They put everything into their mouths. At some stage many infants will try biting the breast when they are feeding or biting the parents or care giver. Sometimes it almost seems like a game to the child.

What you can do for experimental biting: Don't let the children see that you think it is funny or a game. Say firmly, "No! Biting hurts!" Remove them quickly from the breast or arm or whatever they are biting. Infants and toddlers will usually soon learn not to bite in this situation. When children are teething, they need lots of things to bite on because often their gums sore. Give them things that they can safely bite on i.e., teething rings.

2. **Biting from frustration:** Frustrating happens when children get into situations that they can't handle. Children under three or so are not usually ready to play in a cooperative way with other children in groups. If they are in a group and another child takes their toy, they may respond by hitting or biting. They have not yet learned other ways to cope. If biting gets a strong response, which likely, they will see that it is successful and may try it again. Sometimes, too, the youngest children bite when they are playing with others who are bigger and stronger than they are.

What you can do about biting from frustration: If you can, get in first cut down the situations that the child cannot cope with. Try to keep group play to short periods and small groups. Children in this situation need close adult supervision, especially if they are known to bite. However, even the best supervision, unless it is one-to-one, will not prevent some children from getting in a quick bite.

If your child does bite, say firmly "We don't bite, biting hurts" and remove him

immediately from the situation. Keep him with an adult for a while. The child needs you to understand his feelings and start teaching him to manage them differently. This takes a long time to learn. Feelings are very hard for young children to control. You might say something like, "You were very cross when Peter took your truck" or "You wanted to play with the truck. If you feel cross tell me and I will help you."

3. Biting because of feeling of powerless: Often it is the youngest child in the family who bites. The older children seem stronger and more able to get what they want and the youngest feels small and powerless. The same can happen in groups. The child can then discover that biting is a way of getting some power in the situation.

What you can do about biting because of feeling powerless: the first step is to try to make sure child's needs are protected so he/she doesn't need to bite. Make sure that he/she is not getting the worst of the deal.

If he/she is playing with other children, explain to them how the younger one might be feeling. Get their help to make things more equal.

If biting happens between very young children, more adult help is needed. Try to get in first and make sure that the needs of the less powerful child are taken care of.

Make separate play places for older and younger children if necessary. If the child has already bitten, quickly tell him/her that he/she is not to bite and remove him/her from the situation. Keep her with you for a while before letting her return.

4. Biting under stress: Biting often occurs when a child is under emotional stress that he/she cannot handle. This biting is an expression of distress and pain and the child may seem very upset or angry. Young children are not easily able to know what they are feeling. They just act!

What you can do about biting under stress: Try to find out what is causing the stress if you can. Keep watch on when the biting happens and what is happening just before. For example, one child always bit someone when a new child arrived at the playgroup and took the leader's attention. Another child started biting soon after his much loved grandfather had died.

It isn't always possible to remove the cause of the stress, but sometimes if you

can work out what is triggering the biting, you can get in first. The child will need to help find other ways to express his/her feelings through play and stories.

When the child bites, remove him from the situation promptly and respond as above. Sometimes it helps to offer something else to bite on. Offer as much comfort and you can at other times.

Reminders: Plan ahead, if possible, to avoid situations where you know your child might bite. Respond promptly, firmly, and calmly to biting. Show your disapproval, remove him from the situation.

Statement of Understanding

By signing this contract, parent(s) / guardian(s) agree to abide by the written policies of the center; **GOP Early Education Center** and its Childcare Facilities may amend or change the policies by giving the parent(s) guardian(s) a copy of the new or amended policies.

Director's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mother or Legal
Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Father or Legal
Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Co-Signer's Signature: _____ Date: _____
(If parent is under 18)

Co-Signer's Signature: _____ Date: _____
(If parent is under 18)