

Underwood Community Schools



Preschool Policies & Procedures Handbook

**Underwood Preschool
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WELCOME TO UNDERWOOD PRESCHOOL

Underwood Preschool was first awarded the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program Grant in 2010. We have continued to be awarded this grant year after year due to our team's dedicated work. The program's goal is to provide a high-quality preschool program meeting each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background. The preschool provides a rich learning environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new skill development. It is a setting where children feel safe, respected and cared for. This is an opportunity for all four-year-old children to take part in planned, active learning experiences to build their readiness skills. This program also serves children on individualized education plans (IEP), along with children on Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) that are transitioning from Early Access Services into the public-school system. The preschool program has been adopted from the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS), administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices. The preschool program uses Teaching Strategies GOLD® (an authentic observation-based assessment system) to document children's learning over time, inform instruction, and facilitate communication with families and other stakeholders.

MISSION, PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

Mission

Underwood Preschool will create an engaging environment that fosters inquisitive learners who can effectively apply their skills in an ever-changing world.

Preschool Philosophy of Education

We believe:

- Student learning is the most important element of our society.
- Students learn best in a safe and caring environment.
- Innovative learning activities and various teaching strategies enhance learning.
- Respect for diversity develops tolerance within the school and our society.
- Effective learning produces life-long skills.
- Leaders never lose sight of best practices.
- Teaching the importance of citizenship benefits the school and the community.
- Productive discipline incorporates control, consistency, and care.
- Memorable and enjoyable activities foster learning.
- School, home, and community cooperation facilitates and reinforces learning.

Goals for Children

- Children will show competence in social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language development skills.

- Children will be enthusiastic and curious learners.
- Children will be safe and healthy.

Goals for Families

- Families will feel welcome in the classroom and school.
- Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to help their children be better prepared to learn to read and write.
- Families will advocate for their children.

ENROLLMENT

Equal Education Opportunity

It is the policy of Underwood Preschool not to discriminate in its education programs or educational activities on the basis of sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, marital status or disability. Students are educated in programs, which foster knowledge or, and respect and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society. Students who feel they have been discriminated against are encouraged to report it to the school district Affirmative Action Coordinator, Mr. Edward Hawks, and he can be reached at 712-566-2332. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to *The Director of the Region VII Office of Civil Rights, US Department of Education, 310 W. Wisconsin Ave., Ste. 800, Milwaukee, WI, 53203-2292, 414-291-1111* or the *Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA, 50319-0146, 515-281-5294*. Procedures and levels are outlined in district policy for resolving complaints. They are available upon request from the curriculum director's office.

Eligibility

Children must be four years of age prior to September 15th of the current school year, excluding those with an IEP/IFSP. Students are eligible to join a waitlist, or pre-register, the fall before their beginning year. Final registration will be in August of their starting year. Registration will be ongoing until all spaces are filled.

Hours

Preschool classes are on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The morning class runs from 8:25 - 11:25, with drop off beginning at 8:05. The afternoon class runs from 12:25 - 3:25, with drop off beginning at 12:15. The school will provide a yearly and monthly calendar. The hours that classes meet will be adjusted for scheduled late starts and early outs based on their dismissal times. See the inclement weather section for unscheduled late starts or early out hours.

Fees

Underwood Preschool is part of the SWVPP so there is no monthly tuition fee. There is a one time registration fee of \$50 to be paid at the beginning of the school year.

General Information

- Prior to participating in the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- The maximum class size in each session is based on square footage of the classroom in use. Our district has a maximum number of 20 students per preschool class.
- Our district maintains a ratio of 1 adult to 10 children at all times. Additional staff may be provided based on the individual needs of children.
- All children will be within the “line of sight” of adults both indoors and outdoors unless toileting.
- When toileting, students will be monitored by sound and checked visually when necessary.
- First Aid Kits are available for use in the classroom and taken outdoors at all times.
- Adult-student ratios are maintained for field trips.
- The elementary principal will maintain a current list of available substitutes for both the teacher and paraeducators. Should one of the teaching staff need to temporarily leave the room, arrangements will be made to cover the classroom and maintain the adult-student ratio.

Inclusion

The preschool program includes all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff is aware of the identified needs of individual children and is trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience for teachers, students, other children, and their families. The preschool facilities meet the American with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.

Inclement Weather

In the event that the Underwood Preschool must be closed due to bad weather, we will notify school patrons by email, automated phone call, on the schools social media accounts, and local TV stations. It will also be posted on the school’s website. If there is an unscheduled two hour late start for the elementary or an unscheduled two hour early out for the elementary, there will be no morning preschool or no afternoon preschool respectively.

A CHILD'S DAY

Our Preschool Team

Program Administrator

The elementary principal is designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool program. The principal meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.

Teacher

The preschool teacher will be a full-time teacher, licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners. This teacher must hold an Early Childhood and Special Education endorsement.

Teacher Assistant

If needed, due to ratio or inclusion, a full-time teacher's assistant will be assigned to the preschool classroom. This teacher carries out activities under the supervision of the teacher. This teacher will have specialized training in early childhood education.

School Nurse

The preschool will have the assistance of the school nurse. The school nurse is a certified RN that is available to Underwood Community Schools full-time. The school nurse will house and maintain student health records by updating them quarterly and attending to the health needs of the students while they are at the school.

Support Staff

Green Hills Area Education Agency support staff provides resources and assistance to the preschool team upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include, but are not limited to: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, and physical therapist.

Additional paraeducators will be brought into the classroom if a special adult-student ratio is stated in their IEP/IFSP.

Daily Activities

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking; group activities with solitary time; indoor activities with outdoor activities; quiet play with noisy play.

Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities everyday:

- Class Meeting
- Self-directed Play

- Including the following learning centers: Art, Blocks, Technology, Discovery, Dramatic Play, Library, Writing and Sensory
- Music and Movement
- Story Time
- Large and Small Learning Groups
- Outdoor Activities (Weather Permitting)

Curriculum

Curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. It is a process by which learners obtain knowledge and understanding, while developing life skills. It is continually revised and evaluated to make learning fun and exciting.

The preschool program uses Creative Curriculum, Connect 4 Learning (C4L), and Michael Heggerty's Phonemic Awareness. These comprehensive curriculums are research and evidence based that are designed for three to five-year-olds. It addresses all areas of early learning: language and literacy, math, science, physical skills, and social skills. It provides children an opportunity to learn in a variety of ways - through play, problem solving, movement, art, music, drawing and writing, listening, and storytelling. Suggestions for modifications and adaptations are an integral part of the curriculum.

Child Assessment

Guiding Principles

It is the school district's belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. The results will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All results will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file.

Children are assessed in the following ways:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD® (an authentic observation-based assessment system) is an ongoing observation assessment tool that is used throughout the year that is finalized twice a year.
- Observational data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities.
- Academic assessments are completed quarterly. For these assessments preschool teachers will assess children in a quiet place. Included in these assessments are letter recognition, sound recognition, counting (rote and one to one), shape, color, and phonemic skills.
- Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and include the assessments, observational data, and child work samples collected on an ongoing basis.

Families are asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development.

The information from families is used in the following ways:

- To provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for them;
- To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones;
- To indicate possible areas that require additional assessment.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. The preschool teacher will communicate weekly regarding children's activities and developmental milestones. The preschool teacher will send home a copy of the child's progress at the end of each quarter. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or information on the assessments given, the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she/he will communicate this to the family during a conference, sharing documentation of the concern. Suggestions for next steps may include the following, with the knowledge of the parents:

- The teacher requests assistance from the Area Education Agency (AEA) as an early intervention process. This team engages in problem identification, plan interventions, provide support, and make outside resources available to those individuals requesting assistance. The AEA team is available and functional for all students and teachers in the building.
- A request made to Green Hills Area Education Agency for support and additional ideas or more formalized testing can be made.

The preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

- The program provides families with information about programs and services from other organizations.

Program Assessment

Underwood Preschool implements the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. The program completes a desk audit annually to confirm we are meeting these standards.

Administrators, families, staff, and other routinely participating adults will be involved in a program evaluation that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives. The annual evaluation process includes gathering information on all areas of program, including program governance, indoor learning environment, outdoor learning environment, assessment, data-based decision making, health and safety, teaching staff professional learning, daily schedule, partnering with families, and families and communities.

Supervision Policy

Before children arrive at school, the preschool teacher will complete the following daily safety checklist indoor and outdoor:

- All safety plugs and electric outlets covered, heat/AC, water temperature, toilets, etc. in working order.
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of children's reach and stored properly.
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground.
- Supplies checked-first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
- Daily monitoring of environment-spills, sand, etc. Other serious problems will be reported to the head custodian.
- Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.

No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two or three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. while using the restroom). Indoor and outdoor spaces will be zoned by teaching staff with special attention given to areas where injury could occur.

Child Guidance and Discipline

Teaching staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, and planning ahead to prevent problems. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self disciplined. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

Challenging Behaviors

The teaching staff in the preschool is highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors, teachers promote prosocial behavior by:

- Interacting in a respectful manner with all children.

- Modeling turn-taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors.
- Helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- Engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- Encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed.

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect themselves and all of the children. Teaching Staff will encourage more acceptable behavior.

Permissible Methods of Discipline

For acts of aggression and fighting (biting, scratching, hitting) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved.; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured.; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident.; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident.; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

Prohibited Practices

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

- Harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
- Physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
- Any punishment that would humiliate, frightens, or subjects a child to neglect.
- Neither withholds nor threatens to withhold food as a form of punishment.

Sensory Activities

There is a sensory table in the classroom for children to engage in learning activities through play. During sensory play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate in the sensory table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink or eat the contents in the sensory table during play activities. Children must wash their hands with soap and water before and after playing at the sensory table. The sensory table is drained, sanitized and refilled often. Outdoor sensory play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers as well as

the sensory table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervises all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and sensory tables.

Snacks/Foods and Nutrition

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their wellbeing, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

A snack is served mid morning and mid afternoon daily. The preschool serves a wide variety of nutritional snacks, and encourages children to expand their tastes by at least trying a portion of the food offered. Meals and snacks are at regularly scheduled times, two hours apart and not more than three hours apart, see daily schedule.

All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Snacks brought from home must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Clean, sanitary drinking water (city water source) is available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program in an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. Program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and provide parents with that information.

High risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be served. For younger than four years old, these include hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas and hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

The school district does not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will teaching staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Outside Play and Learning

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. We use the Child Care Weather Watch guidelines produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside, it is important to dress him/her according to the weather. When it is cold outside, please have your child wear a coat, mittens or gloves and a hat (labeled with your child's name). For the warmer days, dressing your child lightly is just as important. For those in-between days, dressing your child in layers is a practical idea. It is expected that all students will go outside unless there is a doctor's note indicating the reason why the child cannot go outside.

There are areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. We encourage you to bring a hat or other clothing for your child to wear as another protection from the sun. Sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher will be applied to your child's exposed skin (only with your written parental permission to do so). We will also use an insect repellent containing DEET (only with your written permission) no more than once a day to protect your child from insect bites when the public health authorities recommend its use.

Clothing

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. We can't guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Clothing should be free of words, graphics, or pictures that are profane, immoral, illegal, or disruptive in nature. Families may be asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please place the clothes in a sealed clear plastic bag clearly labeled with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

Toilet Learning

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. For children who are in the program, the following procedures are in place:

1. Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area, i.e. the bathroom adjacent to the classroom with a fold down changing table or in the school nurse's office. Food handling will not be permitted in this diapering area.
2. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards: Standard 5, Criteria 7:
 - Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.

- Staff checks children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every 2 hours. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
 - Staff changes children’s diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
 - At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.
 - Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.
 - Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can). Containers are kept closed and clearly labeled to show its intended use.
 - Diapering and gloving posters will be posted in the changing area showing procedures through the use of visuals and words. These procedures are used by the program administrator to elevate teaching staff that change diapers.
3. Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.

Objects from Home

The preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, so in turn we ask that you do not bring toys from home. If your child brings an “attachment” item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toys to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

Weapon Policy

No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real weapon or a look-alike weapon on any school premises, in any school vehicle or any vehicle used by the school or for school purposes, in any school building or other buildings or premises used for school functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. “Look-alike weapon” means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon.

Classroom Animals and Pets

If you, as a parent or legal guardian, want to bring your family pet to share with your child's classroom, you are welcome to. The preschool teacher ensures that the animal does not create an unsafe or unsanitary condition. The animal would appear to be in good health and have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animal is fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and suitable for contact with children. The teacher would ensure staff and children practice good hygiene and hand washing when coming into contact with the animal and after coming into contact with the animal. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals.

Any child allergic to the pet will not be exposed to the animal. Reptiles are not allowed because of the risk for salmonella. The classroom teacher is responsible for checking that requirements have been met.

Birthdays

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. They afford the opportunity for children to be given special recognition. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. Food that comes from home must follow the guideline listed in the Food and Nutrition section of this handbook. Those who have summer birthdays are welcome to choose a school day to celebrate with their class. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversation or e-mail. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Staff will use these notes to inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and well-being. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs-email, in person, notes, or phone calls.

Open Door Policy

Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. As a safety feature, all parents and visitors will enter through the designated doors. Visitors are asked to please use discretion with regard to bringing babies and toddlers to school as young children may disrupt class sessions. Photo identification will be required for any unknown visitor to the classroom.

Arrival and Departure of Children

All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or others designated by parents or legal guardians will include the use of age-appropriate and size-appropriate seat restraints.

When bringing your child to school, we ask that you pull up to the designated preschool drop off spot. A staff member will meet preschool students at the door and ensure that they make it to class safely. Preschool drop off doors will open at 8:05AM and 12:15 PM. No child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult.

Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior written authorization (Parent Consent Form) will be allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them.

When all children have arrived, staff will walk the child to the classroom where the preschool teacher will record attendance for the day. Throughout the day, each time children transition from one location to another, i.e. classroom to outdoor, the teacher will be responsible for counting the number of children whenever leaving one area and when arriving at another to confirm the safe whereabouts of every child at all times.

Transportation

Parents or legal guardians may request transportation at enrollment, indicating the pickup and drop off address, the name of the responsible person at the address, and emergency contact information for all parties involved. Parents or legal guardians are asked to keep their information current by reporting changes to the preschool teacher and elementary school secretary. All information will be updated at least quarterly by teaching staff.

For children who have special needs for transportation, the facility will use a plan based on a functional assessment of the child's needs related to transportation. Any accommodations indicated in the child's IEP will be implemented as described.

Field Trips

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. The Underwood school buses may be used for these field trips. Parents will be informed of each field trip through a newsletter and calendars well in advance. A parent or legal guardian must sign an informed consent form for trips for each child before each trip. Adult members may be asked to volunteer to go on these trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios. A notice posting the dates, time of departure, time of return, and the destination location will be given at least 48 hours before the field trip. Each child will be assigned to an adult for every part of the trip.

A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization information for the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children will be counted every 15 minutes while on a field trip. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

Attendance

Students who are enrolled for classes in the Underwood Preschool are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others as teachers find themselves taking class time to repeat information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. Please call the Underwood School Office or email your child's classroom teacher with the reason for an absence no later than 8:00 a.m. For safety's sake, if a student is absent without notification, the teaching staff will mark the student as absent unexcused and an automated call will go out to the families through JMC to verify the child's absence from school.

Ethics and Confidentiality

Staff follows an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. Children are people who deserve respect. One way we demonstrate this respect is to refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation and to refrain from labeling a child negatively or positively. No information regarding any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.

All teaching staff will receive training on ethics and confidentiality on the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Code of Ethical Conduct as part of their orientation. Each staff person will sign a Statement of Commitment to document their willingness to hold close the values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood education.

Children Records

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest, are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's

records during regular office hours. Parents may also file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if they feel their rights regarding their child's records have been violated. For a complete copy of the school district's policy on student records or the procedure for filing a complaint, contact the board secretary in the district administration office.

Parents or guardians will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

Parent Advisory Committee

Underwood schools has a parent advisory committee composed of parents, school staff, and other community members. This group meets monthly to provide feedback on services that meet children and family needs. They also serve as a sounding board for new ideas and services. Please let the preschool teacher know if you are interested in being part of the Parent Advisory Committee.

Grievance Policy

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for the assistance from the Underwood Principal.

If you have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, please contact the Underwood Principal who is the program administrator for the preschool. If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the Superintendent of Underwood Community Schools.

Family Involvement

Underwood Preschool encourages families to be very involved in their child's education by observing their children during the day when possible and meeting with staff. Family members are welcome to visit at any time during class sessions.

Teachers and administrators use a variety of formal and informal (including conversations) ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of child-rearing practices and communication;

and information about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds as they wish to share. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the year regarding their family, beliefs, and preferences. Home visits are conducted at the beginning of the school year. Program staff communicates with families, on at least a weekly basis, regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared caregiving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of the children. Family teacher conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters, as well as when either party requests. At least one Family Night is held during the year.

Underwood Preschool values the time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. As the teacher learns from the families' expertise regarding their child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, goals for your child's growth and development can be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time.

Although in-person daily contact cannot be replaced, preschool staff also rely on notes home, emails, phone calls, newsletters, and bulletin boards as alternative means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

Underwood Preschool invites you to become involved in one or all of the following ways, and welcomes other ideas as well.

1. Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities. Keeping the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child, allows the teacher to be more responsive to your child's needs.
2. Attend family meetings.
3. Return all forms, questionnaires, and so on, promptly.
4. Attend Parent Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring semesters.
5. Take time to read the Underwood Preschool bulletin board.
6. Check your child's backpack each day.
7. Participate in field trip activities.
8. Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, preparing visuals, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken.
9. Share any of your families' cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
10. Read all the material sent home with your child.
11. Help with special events. Helping takes many different forms such as preparation of materials at home, making telephone calls, preparing or posting flyers,

recruiting other volunteers, collecting donations or prizes, run errands, photography, setup before the event, or clean afterwards.

12. Serve on the Parent Advisory Committee

It is the policy of the Underwood Preschool not to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, creed, age, marital status, or physical disability in its education programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title VI or VIII of the 1964 Civil Rights Acts, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, and the Federal Rehabilitation Acts of 1973.

The school district will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of the families with children with limited English proficiency, families with children with disabilities, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats on request, and, to the extent possible, in a language families understand.

The school district believes that families should be supported in making decisions about services that their children may need. The teaching staff will provide information to families about available community resources and assist as requested in helping the family make connections.

Home Visits

Home visits are made prior to the start of school and are required for your child to start in the program. This is an opportunity for the preschool teacher to get to know you, your child, and your family and for you to begin to create a partnership between home and school in order to best meet your child's needs. It also allows your child to become familiar and comfortable with his/her teacher and have any questions you may have answered. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the teacher understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you'd like addressed. Parents are encouraged to share these preferences, concerns, and questions at any time with either the classroom teacher or administrator.

Parent Teacher Conferences

The preschool program will have formal parent teacher conferences at the same as the elementary school - fall and spring. The teacher will send home a short sheet before the conference asking you to consider what new skills you see your child developing at home or in the community, to think about what you'd like more information about the classroom, and whether you have new or different goals for your child. During the

conference the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Together you can make a plan to continue to encourage your child's growth and development.

Transitions

Home-school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program, such as special education. The child's family provides the consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child whether the transition is within the same building or in another location. Teaching staff will partner with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible by connecting family members with the next program's staff. Preschool staff will provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, program options, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible. In addition, kindergarten round-up is held annually in the spring. Preschool staff and families attend this event to support children as they prepare to transition to kindergarten.

Health and Safety

Underwood Preschool is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency procedure plans are available upon request from the program administrator. Emergency procedures are also posted in each classroom.

Health and Immunization Certificates

Before a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunization for which parents are using religious exemption.

Health and Safety Records

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school nurse's office. Files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records; the child's parents or legal guardian; and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

1. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
2. Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results;
3. Current emergency contact information for each child, that is kept up-to-date by a specified method during the year;
4. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;
5. Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergic or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes);
6. Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support).
7. Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional or the family's beliefs). Staff implements a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

General Health and Safety Guidelines

- All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.
- Under the supervision of the preschool teacher, all staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.

- All staff are to follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and follow universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.
- All teaching staff complete “Occupational Exposure to Blood borne Pathogens”
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric and adult first-aid and CPR AED training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing is always present with each group of children. Program staff are required to stay up to date with their certification and renew every two years.

Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children

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

- Fever greater than 100.4 degrees F
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Pink eyes with drainage
- Cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge
- Cold sores or lesions

The schools policy for an ill child’s return:

- Fever free for 24 hours
- Chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- Strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- Cold sores or lesions shows signs of healing (scabbed over)
- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage

Upon arrival at school, each child is observed by teaching staff for signs or illness or injury that could affect the child’s ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. Children will be excluded when a child is not able to participate comfortably; if the illness requires more care than staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group; or if keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other person authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child’s

pediatrician. In the meantime, we will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian or designated person arrives under the supervision of someone familiar with the child. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then, until she/he can be picked up, the child is located where new individuals will not be exposed.

Reporting Communicable Diseases

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, made contact with those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur.

Medication Policies and Procedures

Policy: The school will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. Since administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside preschool hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

Procedure: The school nurse coordinates and/or administers medication during school hours only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant. Any other person who would administer medication has specific training and a written performance evaluation, updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration: (1) verifying that the right child receives (2) the right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. Medication errors will be controlled by checking and recording these five right practices each time medication is given. Should a medication error occur, the Regional Poison Control Center and the child's parents will be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the school.

For prescription medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the school with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication; the date the prescription

was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage, and disposal instructions.

For over-the-counter medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the medication in a child-resistant container. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names; specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer; and the name of the healthcare provider who recommended the medication for the child.

Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the teaching staff in writing (by a signed note or a prescription label) or dictated over the telephone by a physician or other personal legally authorized to prescribe medication. This requirement applies both to prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Medications will be kept in the nurse's office at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child-resistant container that is locked and prevents spillage.

Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.

A medication log will be maintained by the school nurse to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount, the time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of medication. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take medication will be noted on this log.

Cleaning and Sanitation

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately.

Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and disinfected after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be disinfected by using a fogger. To disinfect, the surfaces will be sprayed until glossy. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be

laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials, and information required by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents.

Routine cleaning will be supervised by the preschool teacher and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table in Section III, page 47 of the QPPS manual. A checklist will be completed as indicated in the table.

Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure of the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Non Toxic substances will be used whenever possible. Staff are trained yearly prior to the start of the school year.

Hand Washing Practices

Frequent hand washing is the key to preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
- Staff assists children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- Upon arrival for the day;
- After diapering or using the toilet (use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants);
- After handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching or mucus, blood or vomit);
- Before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry)
- After playing in water that is shared by two or more people;
- After handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals.

Adults also wash their hands:

- Before and after feeding a child;
- Before and after administering medication;
- After assisting a child with toileting
- After handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include:

- Using liquid soap and running water;
- Rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around and jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel or turn off water).

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute for, hand washing in any situation listed above:

- Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
- Staff does not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal material.

In situations where sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

First Aid Kit

It is inaccessible to children, but readily available for adult use. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Healthy Child Care Iowa. Following each use of the First Aid kit, the contents will be inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The First Aid kit will be inspected monthly. The first aid kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

Fire Safety

A fire extinguisher is installed in the preschool classroom with a tag indicating its annual service date. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. Fire drills are conducted monthly and recorded on a log.

Medical and/or Dental Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents

The Underwood Preschool has in place a “Safety Procedures Booklet” that describes the following situations and procedures to follow:

- Fire Procedures
- Utility Failures (electric power failure, water line break, gas line break)
- Severe Weather
- Bomb Threats
- Physical Threats/Armed Intruder
- Evacuations
- Crisis Intervention Plan, Crisis Intervention Steps, and Media Procedures
- Accidental Injury or Illness procedures for life threatening and non-life threatening situations
- School crisis team members and a checklist to use
- List of CPR/First Aid experienced persons in each building

This booklet will be posted by the telephone and included in the first aid kit. The booklet will be reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year and when changes are made to it.

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, our teacher will assess the situation and determine the steps to take. Children may be taken to the nurse's office or preschool staff will apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area.

All staff will have immediate access to a device that allows them to summon help in an emergency. The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, Hospital, and Poison Control will be posted by each phone with an outside line. Emergency contact information for each child and staff members will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

Protection from Hazards and Environmental Health

Program staff protects children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns, or scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping or slipping.

The preschool classroom building has been tested for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass, and other hazards that could impact children's health with documentation on file. Custodial staff maintains the building's heating, cooling, and ventilation systems in compliance with national standards for facility use by children.

The program maintains facilities so they are free from harmful animals, insect pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children. The program uses the techniques known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) so that the least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation.

Smoke Free Facility

In compliance with the Iowa Smoke Free Air Act of 2008, Underwood Schools buildings and grounds are smoke free. A "No Smoking" sign meeting the law's requirements is posted at the entrance to the building to inform people that they are entering a non-smoking place. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds.

Child Protection Policies

The health and well-being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility. An application or volunteer for temporary or permanent employment with the preschool program involves direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children must execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

The program has written school board policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, or both by families, staff, volunteers, or others to the appropriate local agencies. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. All teaching staff complete "Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse" at least every two years and within six months of employment.

The school district does not tolerate employees physically, or sexually abusing or harassing students. Students who are physically or sexually abused or harassed by an employee should notify their parents, legal guardians, teacher, principal, or another

employee. The Iowa Department of Education has established a two-step procedure for investigating allegations of physical or sexual abuse of students by employees. That procedure requires the school district to designate an independent investigator to look into allegations. The school district has designated Mr. Jeff Privia at 712-566-2326.

Substance Abuse

Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of the Underwood Preschool. At no time will children be released to a person under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Volunteers

Parents, friends, grandparents, and other adults are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of the children. Please contact the teacher if you would like to be a school volunteer. We have a volunteer job description that defines the role and responsibilities of a volunteer. For safety's sake, if a volunteer will be working with children, he/she will be expected to execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children. If a volunteer works more than 40 hours per month with children, he/she will also need to provide a current health assessment, not more than one year old. People interested in volunteering should contact the principal at 712-566-2326.

STAFF

General Information

Underwood Preschool has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff and volunteer positions. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluation. Policies detail job descriptions for each position, including reporting relationships; salary scales with increments based on professional qualification, length of employment, and performance evaluation; benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievance procedures. Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional development opportunities. The policies are provided to each employee upon hiring.

Hiring procedures include completion of the following checks; criminal-record check, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials,

verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references and a current health assessment.

Confidential personnel files, including applications with record of experience, transcripts of education, health-assessment records, documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation, are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Superintendent's office.

Orientation

Employees must know their role and duties. New preschool teaching staff will be required to participate in an initial orientation program and introduces them to fundamental aspects of the program operation including:

- Program philosophy, mission, and goals;
- Expectations for ethical conduct;
- Individual needs of children they will be teaching or caring for;
- Accepted guidance and classroom management techniques;
- Daily activities and routines of the program;
- Program curriculum;
- Child abuse and reporting procedures;
- Program policies and procedures;
- Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Criteria;
- Regulatory requirements

Follow-up training expands on the initial orientations. See Staff Orientation Checklist.

The employee's immediate supervisor should provide the new employee with a review of the employee's responsibilities and duties. The school board secretary will explain payroll procedures, employee benefit programs and accompanying forms to the employee. Regular employees ineligible for the school district's group health plan will be given information regarding where they can obtain healthcare or health care insurance.

Staffing Patterns and Schedules

The preschool program is in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our program follows requirements for staffing for Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards of maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 at all times. The program administrator will maintain lists of current substitutes for both the preschool teacher and the preschool teaching assistant in case of absence.

Staff is provided space and time away from children during the day. Should staff work directly with children for more than four hours, staff is provided breaks of at least 15 minutes in each four-hour period. In addition, staff may request temporary relief when they are unable to perform their duties.

Staff Development Activities

Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional development opportunities. All teaching staff continuously strengthens their leadership skills and relationships with others and works to improve the conditions of children and families within their programs, the local community, and beyond. Teaching staff are encouraged to participate in informal and formal ways in local, state, or regional public-awareness activities. They may join an early childhood group or organization, attend meetings, or share information with others outside the program.

Teaching staff will be informed of professional development activities provided by Child Care Resource and Referral, the local Empowerment areas, and the area education agency. Staff is expected to attend all trainings and meetings throughout the year. Training will focus on early childhood topics relevant to the program and community.

Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan

All staff is evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor or, in the case of the program administrator, by the superintendent. Staff also evaluate and improve their own performance based on ongoing reflections and feedback from supervisors, peers, and families. From this, they develop an annual individualized professional development plan with their supervisor and use it to inform their continuous professional development.

Last Revised Spring 2023