



# Employee Handbook

Revised June 2020

LaRee Jessop

Director

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This handbook is intended to familiarize staff members with current Sapphire Early Learning Center policy, practices, and standards. An electronic version (PDF) of the handbook is available on our website at [www.bitterrooteearlylearningcenter.com](http://www.bitterrooteearlylearningcenter.com). A print copy of the handbook is available upon request. Sapphire Early Learning Center reserves the right to revise its policies, practices and standards as deemed appropriate by the Director. Staff members will be notified of updates to the staff handbook as they occur.

## Mission Statement

At Sapphire Early Learning Center, we believe in the value and uniqueness of each child we serve. Our childcare experience is designed to promote each child's own individual social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. As caregivers and educators, our mission is to provide a safe and developmentally appropriate learning environment, which fosters a child's natural desire to explore, discover, create, and become a lifelong learner.

Note: Mission statement will be revisited by the staff at least every 5 years or when needed to be addressed.

## Philosophy

Our program is built around the concept that children are born ready to learn. As caregivers, we strive to create a learning environment that is safe, stimulating and encouraging. The following principles are excerpted from the Montana Learning Standards (2006) and serve as the foundation for our curriculum.

- Children develop an awareness of and appreciation for the similarities and differences between themselves and others
- Children develop imagination, inventiveness, originality, and interest as they explore and experience new things.
- Children develop skills to interact and communicate with others in effective ways.
- Children use all the senses to explore the environment and develop skills through sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound
- Children develop an understanding that each place has its own unique characteristics. Children develop an understanding of how they are affected by- and the effect that they can have upon- the world around them
- Learning begins in the family, continues in early care and education settings, and depends on parent involvement and caregiver guidance.
- All children have the potential to achieve the Montana Early Learning Standards with appropriate supports and instruction.

## General Center Information

### Administration

Director:

LaRee Jessop

lareejessop@bitterrooteearlylearningcenter.com

Office: (406) 961-0123

### Hours of Operation

Sapphire Early Learning Center is open Monday through Friday from 6:00am to 6:00pm.

The center is closed for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Labor Day
- Memorial Day
- Thanksgiving (2 days) 23rd and 24<sup>th</sup>
- Independence Day and Summer Break 4th, 5th and 6th
- Christmas (2 days) 25th and 26th

### Programs

There are 6 childcare programs offered at Sapphire Early Learning Center. They are:

- Infants 6 weeks to 12 months
- Infants 1 12 months to 24 months
- Toddlers 24 months to 36 months
- Preschool 3 3 years to 4 years
- Preschool 4 years to 5 years
- School age program 5 years to 12 years

In addition, Sapphire Early Learning Center provides half-day preschool programs to children 2 years old to 5 years.

### Ratios and Supervision

At Sapphire Early Learning Center, we maintain the following staff-to-child ratios always in our classrooms:

<u>Age of Children</u>	<u>Minimum Ratio of Staff to Children</u>
2 weeks to 2 years	1 staff for every 4 children
2 years	1 staff for every 4 children
3 years	1 staff for every 8 children
4 years	1 staff for every 10 children



5 years to 12 years

1 staff for every 14 children

Whether care is being provided on-site or away from the facility, directors and caregivers must properly supervise children and ensure that ratios are met always. Direct and active observation is essential to safety and prevention of injury. This means that caregivers must be actively involved with the children and be able to directly observe children always. There is a variety of play equipment that consists of hidden areas where children can be out of caregivers' view. Caregivers must be aware of these areas and monitor them regularly. In addition, caregivers may not allow children to play or nap behind closed doors. If multiple rooms are being used, it is the caregiver's responsibility to be present in the room with the children.

Keeping accurate attendance records always is important and a great tool to ensure that all children are accounted for at any point in the day. It also assists caregivers in determining whether they meet the required ratios. It is the Department of Public Health and Human Services' recommendation that "head counts" be conducted every 15-30 minutes.

## Licensing

Sapphire Early Learning Center is a public program voluntarily licensed to serve 83 children by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. A copy of the licensing rules is available for review in the office, and on the web

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/qad/Licensure/LBCCL.aspx>

## QRS

Sapphire Early Learning Center participates in Stars to Quality Rating System, or QRS. There are a variety of requirements for Sapphire Early Learning Center to maintain its current QRS Rating. Staff members should familiarize themselves with those requirements by visiting:

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/STARS.aspx>

## Weather Related Closings

Sapphire Early Learning Center will remain open during most severe weather. The Director and/or Assistant Director will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day. If Sapphire Early Learning Center closes early or cancels care for the following day, parents will be contacted and informed of the situation. Children should be picked up in a reasonable amount of time to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home.

## General Staff Expectations

### Professionalism, Business Ethics, and Conduct

The successful business operation and reputation of Sapphire Early Learning Center is built upon the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of our employees. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The continued success of Sapphire Early Learning Center is dependent upon our customers' trust and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Employees owe a duty to Sapphire Early Learning

Center, and its customers, to act in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

Sapphire Early Learning Center will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its director and employees to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct.

In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide you with respect to lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with the Owner for advice and consultation.

Compliance with this policy of business ethics and conduct is the responsibility of every Sapphire Early Learning Center employee. Disregarding or failing to comply with this standard of business ethics and conduct could lead to disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination of employment.

Each Bitterroot Early Learning staff member is a childcare professional and is expected to act as such. The following general guidelines for professionalism should be maintained always:

- Arrive on time and stay entire shift, if needed.
- Is not absent from work on a regular basis and finds a substitute when necessary.
- Dress appropriately for interaction with children.
- Take directions, suggestions and criticisms, and follow through to improve performance.
- Respect confidential information regarding children, families, and co-workers.
- Display a positive attitude toward the entire center (the program, children, families and co-workers).
- Attend staff meetings and other Center events.
- Complete Licensing required training courses in a timely fashion.

### Equal Employment Opportunity

Sapphire Early Learning Center does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status or any other characteristic protected by law. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

### Dress Code and Personal Appearance

Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the business image Sapphire Early Learning Center presents to customers and visitors.

During business hours or when representing Sapphire Early Learning Center, you are expected to present a clean, neat, and tasteful appearance. You should dress and groom yourself according to the requirements of your position and accepted social standards. This is particularly true if your job involves dealing with customers or visitors in person.

Your supervisor or department head is responsible for establishing a reasonable dress code appropriate to the job you perform. Consult your supervisor if you have questions as to what constitutes appropriate appearance. Where necessary, reasonable accommodation may be made to a person with a disability.

Without unduly restricting individual tastes, the following personal appearance guidelines should be followed:

- Tank tops or shorts may be worn if they are professional looking.
- Extreme hair colors and extreme hairstyles, such as spiked hair and shaved heads, do not present an appropriate professional appearance.
- Offensive body odor and poor personal hygiene is not professionally acceptable.
- Facial jewelry, such as eyebrow rings, nose rings, lip rings, and tongue studs, are permitted unless concerns from customers are raised.
- Visible excessive tattoos and similar body art must be covered during business hours.
- Pajamas are not professionally acceptable.
- Spandex or tight leggings are only appropriate if worn with a long top.

Staff members are expected to observe the 3 C's for appropriate attire at work as follows:

- **COMFORTABLE** – Staff is expected to play with the children and be down at their level whenever it is appropriate. To do this, staff must be dressed in comfortable clothes that allow free movement and activity. Staff members should wear clothing they feel comfortable getting dirty or stained, as staff members are expected to participate alongside the children during all daily activities. Flip-flops and sneakers are appropriate footwear.
- **CLEAN** - All clothing should be clean with no stains, rips or tears, and must smell appropriate. This also applies to personal hygiene.
- **COURTEOUS** - Staff members interact with children and parents daily and should dress professionally. Clothing may not contain alcohol, drug, or cigarette references. Vulgar sayings or suggestions are forbidden. Certain articles of clothing are never appropriate for the work environment, including halter tops, strapless “tube” tops, short skirts/shorts (must hit at fingertip length or below), sweatpants, excessively torn jeans/shorts, and low-rise jeans/shorts which expose undergarments. It is expected that all staff members will present themselves and Sapphire Early Learning Center in a professional, respectable manner. Any staff member not adhering to the dress code may be asked to leave and return dressed appropriately.

## Communication Between Program and Staff

A variety of methods will be used by the program to communicate with staff members. These methods include casual and routine conversations and meetings, emails, and text and phone communications. In addition, we use an app/website called Slack to communicate essential information to all staff members. This app can also be used for staff members to communicate with each other. For this reason, each staff member is required to create a Slack account and be responsible in checking it for periodic communications. After providing the program with their email, staff members will receive an invite to join SELC's Slack workspace.

## Cell Phones

It is important that every staff member's attention remains on the children always. A second's lapse in attention could result in a serious accident, which, with appropriate supervision, would have been prevented. Therefore: **Cell phones are not permitted in any of the program rooms.** Cell phones should remain turned off and stored in a purse, bag, coat, classroom cell phone box, or the office,

etc. while a staff member is clocked in. Cell phone use is permitted only during an approved break, and never in a classroom. It is never appropriate to make a personal phone call, send a text message, check voicemail, etc. while in the presence of children, even while on an approved break.

It is expected that when leaving the center for any reason (walk, field trip, etc.), one staff member will carry with them a cell phone. In this circumstance, the cell phone should only be used in the event of an emergency and not for personal calls/text messaging.

In the event of an emergency, the staff member must inform the Lead Teacher and Director and/or Assistant Director of the situation. In this case, cell phones must be set to vibrate. Calls may be answered only after a substitute has arrived to replace the staff member, and outside of the classroom. Ratios must be maintained always.

### Technology

All Sapphire Early Learning Center -owned computers are to be used for work purposes only. Under no circumstances may software be installed without the prior permission of the Director and/or Assistant Director. Staff members may bring in a personal computer to use during nap time only. The wireless network password may be obtained from the Director and/or Assistant Director. Computer use is forbidden during all times other than nap/rest time. Do not deliberately visit, view or download any

In classrooms there are iPad that are for using apps to keep open communication between families and team members. These tools are too only be used for use with the apps. They are not for personal use.

Emails are also used for communication between personal, perspective families, current families, and other businesses throughout the community. The company email is primarily for business use. SELC may inspect email at any time without notice. Keep all passwords secure. Email system must not be used to send inappropriate content or materials. Use for any illegal or criminal activities, send offensive or harassing emails to others. Send messages that could damage SELC image or reputation.

### Unmonitored Contact

For the protection of each staff member, we always work in teams. No staff should ever be alone with a single child. Another staff member should be within sight/sound always.

### Timecards and Payroll

Federal and state laws require Sapphire Early Learning Center to keep an accurate record of time worked to calculate employee pay and benefits. Time worked is all the time spent on the job performing assigned duties.

Each hourly staff member is responsible for clocking in and out each scheduled workday using the time clock. Staff members may not clock in more than 15 minutes before their scheduled shift and are expected to clock out immediately after their shift ends. If a staff member forgets to clock in or out, the Director and/or Assistant Director must enter the time and therefore should be notified promptly when this situation arises. Failure to follow the above guidelines may delay processing of a staff member's payroll check until the following pay date.

Salaried and nonexempt employees should accurately record the time they begin and end their work, as well as the beginning and ending time of each break period. They should also record the beginning and ending time of any split shift or departure from work for personal reasons. Overtime work must always be approved before it is performed.

Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording time on another employee's time record may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Payroll is separated into two pay periods. The first pay period is the 1st through the 15th of each month. The pay date for this period is the 20th. The second pay period is the 16th through the end of the month. The pay date for this period is the 5th. If a pay date falls on a weekend day or holiday, the pay date will then be the next business day after the weekend or holiday. For example: if the 7th is a Saturday, the pay date will be Monday 9<sup>th</sup> and checks will be ready by the end of the workday. If a regular payday falls during an employee's vacation, the employee's paycheck will be available upon his or her return from vacation.

### Direct Deposit

We are in the process of implementing direct deposit of pay checks upon request. If you are interested in using direct deposit, please talk with the Director.

### Personal Belongings

Backpacks, purses, phones, and other personal belongings not used during job performance should be stored in a staff member's designated locker in the program staff room. Sapphire Early Learning Center will provide a lock and key for lockers upon request. SELC is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

### Food/Meals

Sapphire Early Learning Center is a peanut free facility. No food containing, or processed in a facility with peanuts, are allowed in the center. Food must be Staff members may store a small amount of food in the refrigerator. All food should be clearly labeled with the staff member's name and date. Food should be removed or discarded after one week or when spoiled. Meals should be eaten and prepared only during nap/rest time or during an approved break.

### Hand Washing

Staff members must wash their hands at the following times:

- Upon arriving at the center
- After each diaper change
- After helping a child use the toilet
- After wiping a nose, meeting saliva or any other bodily fluid.
- Before preparing meals
- Before and after mealtimes
- Before and after using the sensory table
- After removing gloves
- After using the restroom
- After returning to the center from a break
- After coming indoors from the playground

\*\*Frequent hand washing with soap and warm running water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses like diarrhea, the flu, and conjunctivitis (pink eye).

## Specific Job Descriptions

### Kitchen Team

Essential Duties and Responsibilities • Responsible for purchasing necessary supplies and food, and for preparing meals in accordance with the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). • Complete all paperwork according to the food service manual and the CACFP guidelines. • Monitor food allergies/dietary conditions of children and prepare food accordingly. • Preparation of all meals and snacks following all CACFP guidelines and regulations • Maintain a safe and sanitary environment according to all guidelines. • Perform additional center duties as directed by supervisor. Maintain Professional and Ethical Standards • Maintain confidentiality in accordance with Agency policy and legal requirements. • Be honest, reliable and dependable. • Respect and maintain rights and privacy of all staff, parents, and children. • Attend mandated trainings and meetings and seek out staff development opportunities. • Work as a team member with all staff and maintain a positive work ethic. • Act conscientiously in performing routine duties • Adhere to NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.

### Lead Teachers

A lead teacher at SELC has the responsibility of teaching a group of young children. She often has assistants who help her provide one-on-one instruction to the youngsters. The lead teacher has special training in early childhood education that helps her individualize her lessons to meet the developmental needs of students academically and their social emotional growth, develop partnerships with the child's caregivers and to encourage engagement and parent participation.

Each lead teacher maintains records of the progress made by her class and reports this information periodically to parents. While working with children, the lead teacher maintains confidentiality. She must report any suspected child abuse to her supervisor and must keep adequate records of any accidents incurred by a child under her care. The lead teacher may be responsible for planning field trips and special outings for her class or for the entire group of children enrolled in the daycare center. She is responsible for keeping her lead teacher credentials current, and for attending any professional development activities required by her supervisor.

The **Team Lead Teacher** provides work direction for team members in the classroom(s) and oversees and ensures success of program delivery. The incumbent works cooperatively with team members in the classroom and administrators to carry out the childcare mission and vision. The incumbent provides quality childcare services to children and families that focus on the SELC core values: honesty, respect, responsibility, and caring.

### **Essential Functions**

- Make a difference every day!
- Be accountable for the operation of the school, ensuring that the school is operating in accordance with company and state licensing standards.
- Be responsible for ensuring an educational, caring, and safe environment for the children and parents.

- Spark imagination build self-esteem and help children discover new things each day.
- Promote the positive image of the company and play a major role in making the company a provider of choice in educational programs for the communities that we service.
- Work with supervisor to implement curriculum within the established guidelines.
- Design and implement daily lesson/activity plans.
- Engage, develop, and ensure the safety of the children.
- Oversee all activities in the classroom.
- Conduct family conferences and maintain communication with families.
- Maintain program site and equipment.
- Onboard, train, develop, and provide work direction to team members.
- Provide work direction to team members while on duty and assist in training.
- Assist with annual performance reviews and applicant interviews within the childcare program.
- May support the Asst. Director/Program Director in providing daily leadership and communication to team members and families.
- Maintain required program records and children's files.
- Maintain licensing/Head start standards and STARS standards.
- Maintain CACFP guidelines for meals and snacks, if applicable.
- Attend monthly team member meetings

### **Competencies**

#### Values

- Inclusion
- Relationships
- Quality Results
- Communication
- Functional

### **Teacher Aides**

A teacher's aide, at SELC, works under the direction of the lead teacher to provide instruction and supervision to the students, and to provide support for the lead teacher in planning and preparation. They work to support teachers and students by assisting in the care, supervision and education of children..

A teacher's aide performs many of the duties of the lead teacher. However, the lead teacher has ultimate say in the running of the classroom. A teacher's aide may assist in planning and presenting lessons under the direction of the lead teacher. the lead teacher will direct the main activity of the classroom while the teacher's aide sets up equipment or performs other preparations. A teacher's aide may present lessons to students, work with students in groups or individually on subject matter, discuss topics with students. With younger children, the teacher's aide may also help with basic care needs, such as washing hands and tying shoes.

### **Essential Functions**

Daycare Assistant Teachers work with or under the supervision of licensed teachers to perform the following general duties:



- Make a difference every day!
- Be accountable for the operation of the school, ensuring that the school is operating in accordance with company and state licensing standards.
- Be responsible for ensuring an educational, caring, and safe environment for the children and parents.
- Spark imagination build self-esteem and help children discover new things each day.
- Promote the positive image of the company and play a major role in making the company a provider of choice in educational programs for the communities that we service.
- Review learning material with students, either individually or in small groups, to help reinforce lessons presented by lead teachers
- Supervise students in class, during lunch hour, playtime, or recess, and at special events, like field trips
- Aid in teaching appropriate behavior and social skills to students
- Assist in enforcing school and classroom rules
- Assist with record keeping, such as attendance records, student progress notes and grades
- Help teachers prepare for lessons by assembling materials and equipment
- Provide personal aid and care as necessary to students, such as help with hygiene, eating or toileting, for example

### Floating Aides

A floating aid, at SELC, will provide various forms of assistance to all other teachers. This assistance may include, fetching supplies, restocking classrooms, or covering during bathroom breaks. Floating aides will also be covering in various classrooms during scheduled and unscheduled teacher absences. While covering during these absences the floating aid will assume the role and responsibilities of a teacher's aide.

The floating aid may also be responsible for assisting in transporting and supervising children during field trips and extracurricular activities. The extra responsibilities during this role will include

- Performing and logging head counts upon departure from and return to SELC.
- Performing frequent head counts during the entire transportation and extracurricular activities.
- Ensuring all laws concerning the transportation of children are strictly followed.
- Presenting themselves in a professional manner as they will be a representative of SELC to the community.

### Assistant Director

Reports to Center Director of preschool. Responsible for the general supervision and management of entire preschool, children, and staff; planning and executing the educational and health and safety programs in accordance with Montana State Licensing, Early Head Start and STARS standards, rules, and regulations.

### Essential Functions

- Make a difference every day!
- Be accountable for the operation of the school, ensuring that the school is operating in accordance with company and state licensing standards.
- Be responsible for ensuring an educational, caring, and safe environment for the children and parents.



- Spark imagination build self-esteem and help children discover new things each day.
  - Promote the positive image of the company and play a major role in making the company a provider of choice in educational programs for the communities that we service.
  - Recruit, select and retain quality staff.
  - Help achieve profitability for the company.
  - ensures lesson plans and all curriculum materials are available to teachers, oversees the effective implementation in the school and supports teaching staff in all educational activities.
  - This position helps the Center Director to effectively operate and manage all aspects of the school, including customer relations, special activities, education, and facility management.
  - Ensure the safety and well-being of each child by responding to their emotional, social, and physical needs as well as their educational needs
- 
- Professionally prepared as a teacher of young children, especially in the field of early childhood education and/or child development. Possess a strong work ethic, be punctual, and have minimal absences
  - Have an awareness of the unique needs of young children and have appropriate expectations of their abilities
  - Able to work effectively with multiple staff members, balance and prioritize multiple requests
  - Utilize developmentally appropriate practice and best practice methods always based on early childhood theory and practice
  - Be warm and nurturing with children
  - Be a positive role model for all care giving staff and children
  - Be customer service orientated and professional
  - Provide excellent customer service according to the standards of Sapphire Early Learning Center.
  - Strong leadership qualities and skills
  - Effective organizational and planning skills
  - Effective interpersonal skills
  - Ability to exercise tact, discretion, and confidentiality
  - Plans academy activities and actively participates, including staff meetings, training sessions, open houses, center fundraisers, etc
  - Support teaching staff in their duties and assist in classrooms as needed
  - Develops and maintains professional working relationships with staff
  - Helps supervise staff, keeps Center Director apprised of staff concerns and situations needing attention, and provides performance appraisal input to Center Director
  - Helps with enrollment inquiries, follow-up, and school tours in order to increase enrollment
  - Develops and actively maintains positive communication with parents, recognizing parental concerns, helping to evaluate a course of action, and responding professionally to parents' needs
  - Helps train staff to plan and implement developmentally appropriate classroom activities
  - Develops, plans, and prepares instructional aids/materials for classroom activities
  - Directs activities of other staff in the classroom to ensure that the classroom functions in an orderly manner

## Salary Scale

Sapphire Early Learning Center salary scale is based on professional qualification, length of employment, roles, and performance evaluation.

	Entry level	+ 2 yrs. experience	+ 5 yrs. experience	With CDA	With EC college credits	With AA	With BA w/ some EC	With BA in EC	With BA in EC	With MA in EC	With Doctorate in EC	Kitchen
	*Pre-prof	*Level 1	*Level 2	*Level 3	*Level 4	*Level 5	*Level 6	*Level 7	*Level 8	*Level 9	*Level 10	
	Teachers Aid	Lead Teacher	Lead Teacher	Lead Teacher	Lead Teacher	Lead Teacher	Admin	Admin	Admin	Admin	Admin	
Years at BELC	9.5	10	12	12.5	13	13.5	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	10
1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
8	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
9	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
10	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5

## Professional Development

### Required Training

Research indicates that formal education or training that increases the knowledge of providers has been shown to be the greatest determinant of safe and quality programming for children. Therefore, the state of Montana has set the following requirements for staff training and development:

Required training within the first month of employment, for ALL staff members:

- Two hours of Montana training Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Safe sleep in childcare.

***Staff members must have completed within the first 90 days of employment.***

- Certification in American Red Cross or American Heart Association infant, child, and adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). A valid certification indicating the date of the training and expiration date must be turned into the Director and/or Assistant Director. (Valid for two years)
- Certification in infant, child, and adult first aid from American Red Cross, American Heart Association, the National Safety Council, or Emergency Medical Planning. A valid certificate indicating the date of training and expiration date must be turned into the Director. (Valid for two years.)
- Yikes Disaster planning, Child Abuse and Neglect, Medication Administration in childcare, Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases and Immunizations, Protecting Children from harm.

Sapphire Early Learning Center is proud and honored to be a part of the Stars to Quality program. This is a program that assesses our program for continuous growth on achieving high quality childcare and education for our clients. STARS require staff members to obtain additional training above what is required by childcare licensing. These training requirements differ by role type so every staff member will have an individualized STARS training plan that they will be required to follow.

In addition to being responsible for the trainings specified above, each staff member is required to obtain 16 hours of approved training annually to remain current on the Montana Early Childhood Practitioner Registry. “Annually”, when referring to training courses is defined as your calendar year with MTECP. As these 16 annual hours are required, SELC will compensate with an hourly wage for the completion of any trainings that are working towards this requirement. If all trainings on an individual’s training plan are complete there are many other free and low-cost trainings available; we encourage all employees to take advantage of these training opportunities to help with centers overhead. Failure to meet training requirements will be considered insubordinate and will constitute grounds for termination.

All fees for required training courses are paid by the center. In addition, when staff members turn in a certificate for a required training, they will receive their typical hourly wage for the number of training hours printed on the certificate.

## Staff Meetings

Employee staff's meetings are typically held the first Tuesday of each month at 5:30 PM. These meetings are an important part of our job as childcare providers. They support staff collaboration about any issues that may arise during the workday that we don't have time to talk about since our job is to focus on the children. It is mandatory for all SELC staff members to attend these monthly staff meetings. As important information, procedures, and policies are introduced and reviewed at these meetings; it is important to have 100% attendance. If unable to attend a staff meeting team members should notify the Director or Assistant Director as soon as possible. Staff who are absent may be required to use their personal time to review policies or topics that were covered during the meeting. Staff meeting attendance is subject to SELC's attendance policy and will contribute to the individual's attendance point record. Staff will be compensated with hourly wages for time spent in attendance of staff meetings.

## New Staff Orientation

All new staff members will be asked to read the Bitterroot Early Learning staff and parent handbooks. Prior to working in the classroom, the Director and/or Assistant Director will schedule an orientation meeting to complete required paperwork, and review center operation and policies.

## Probationary Period

The probationary period is intended to give new employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether the new position meets their expectations. Sapphire Early Learning Center uses this period to evaluate employee capabilities, work habits, and overall performance. Either the employee or Sapphire Early Learning Center may end the employment relationship at will at any time during the probationary period, with or without cause or notice.

All new and rehired employees work on a probationary basis for the first 90 calendar days after their date of hire. Any significant absence will automatically extend a probationary period by the length of the absence. If Sapphire Early Learning Center determines that the designated probationary period does not allow enough time to thoroughly evaluate the employee's performance, the probationary period may be extended for a specified period.

Upon satisfactory completion of the probationary period, employees enter the "regular" employment classification.

## Employee Benefits

Employees that have children attending SELC Inc. will receive 50% off tuition. If your child attends the facility for less than 5 hours, you will be charged 50% of the hourly rate.

## Vacation Benefits

Sapphire Early Learning Center does not have Vacation Benefits

## Holidays

Sapphire Early Learning Center gives Holiday pay after you have been with us for a year.

## Workers' Compensation Insurance

Sapphire Early Learning Center provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program covers any injury or illness sustained during employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. Subject to applicable legal requirements, workers' compensation insurance provides benefits after a short waiting period or, if the employee is hospitalized, immediately.

Employees who sustain work-related injuries or illnesses should inform their supervisor immediately. No matter how minor an on-the-job injury may appear, it is important that it be reported immediately. This will enable an eligible employee to qualify for coverage as quickly as possible.

Neither Sapphire Early Learning Center nor the insurance carrier will be liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for injuries that occur during an employee's voluntary participation in any off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity sponsored by Sapphire Early Learning Center.

## Safety

Sapphire Early Learning Center provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through regular internal communication channels such as supervisor-employee meetings, bulletin board postings, memos, or other written communications.

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Employees must immediately report any unsafe condition to the appropriate supervisor. Employees who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report or, where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, Employees should immediately notify the Owner or the appropriate supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance and workers' compensation benefits procedures.

## Evaluations

Evaluations of a staff member's performance will be conducted by the Director and/or Assistant Director. Evaluations will be performed annually. Informal evaluations will be performed throughout the year during scheduled and unscheduled classroom observations. Supervisors and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, day-to-day basis. A formal written performance evaluation will be conducted at the end of an employee's initial period of hire, known as the probationary period. Additional performance evaluations are conducted to provide both supervisors and employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage, and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals.

Staff members will be required to complete a self-evaluation prior to meeting with the Director and/or Assistant Director.

## Personnel Policies

The following policies are intended to protect the rights of staff members and to ensure maximum understanding and cooperation. Sapphire Early Learning Center staff members are expected to be:

- On-time and alert when scheduled to be at work.
- Careful and conscientious in performance of duties, including the use of positive words and actions.
- Respectful, thoughtful, and considerate of other people.
- Courteous and helpful when dealing with children, parents, visitors, and other staff members

## Confidentiality

It is important that all staff members be discreet in sharing information regarding the children and their parents in public areas. Names and identifying characteristics of children and families should not be shared with anyone other than staff members working in the classroom and the Director and/or Assistant Director. Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise; staff members who discuss issues with individuals not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

Staff should also be careful in discussing details of the center operation, particularly problem areas, with others in public. Staff members may not distribute or post children's last names, address, phone numbers, etc. except for distribution to Sapphire Early Learning Center employees. Personal information should never be used for personal purposes. Montana law specifically prohibits the sharing of information about children or staff members within a childcare setting without written consent from the parent, guardian, or individual. This applies to outside professionals as well. You must seek written parental consent before consulting with an outside agency about a child.

## Child Abuse and Neglect

All Sapphire Early Learning Center staff members are mandatory child abuse reporters. Suspected cases of child abuse or neglect must be reported to the Department of Human Services to:

### **Centralized Intake**

**1-866-820-5437**

Staff members may directly report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to Centralized Intake and will complete all necessary paperwork. The staff member should inform the Director and/or Assistant Director of the report and together decide whether to inform the parents of the report.

If a Sapphire Early Learning Center staff member is accused of abuse and/or neglect by a parent or co-worker, such an accusation will be reported to the Director and a determination will be made as to whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse and/or neglect. If there is reasonable cause, a report must be made to Central Intake. Sapphire Early Learning Center will cooperate with any investigation. In addition, the accused staff member will be informed of the allegations and be given an opportunity to respond to those allegations. Termination of employment after a child abuse allegation is at the discretion of the Director.

## Grievance Procedure

As childcare professionals, all staff members are expected to make reasonable attempts to resolve conflicts directly with the individual(s) concerned. If a solution cannot be reached, staff members should then seek assistance from the Director and/or Assistant Director in resolving the conflict. This includes how you; your co-workers, visitors, or customers are treated. To correct any potential problems, we ask for the help of all our employees to bring these issues to our attention. Any comments you bring forward will be given serious consideration and will remain confidential within the boundaries of the fact-finding process. In the event you do not feel comfortable in having a discussion with the Owner, we have outlined a formal grievance procedure as stated below.

To file a formal grievance, we ask that you address your concerns in writing and be as specific as possible. Then present your written grievance to the Owner within 20 calendar days of the date of the situation you are addressing or grieving. The Owners will have 20 additional calendar days to respond to your formal grievance.

Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise. Staff members who discuss issues with other staff members not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure. This policy applies both during paid hours as well as on a staff member's personal time.

## Co-Worker Communication

Open communication between staff members, parents, and children is crucial to a successful program. Before leaving a classroom for any reason (bathroom, making a copy, calling a parent) an employee should inform his/her cooperating teachers of the reason he/she is leaving. For all involved, it is important that all issues be addressed and resolved as they arise. All employees are expected to function as a team member always.

## Conflict Resolution

To maintain and promote a fair and productive work environment for all SELC staff, the center encourages the active resolution of workplace conflicts. Staff members and supervisors are encouraged to maintain and utilize open communications to promote and maintain a civil and humane workplace.

Whenever two or more people work closely together, conflicts can arise. SELC staff members may find it helpful to use conflict resolution strategies to define and resolve problems, as well as prevent conflicts. Conflicts are less frequent when staff work in collaboration with each other, communicate effectively, share responsibilities, and contribute to decision making. It is recommended that staff use a strategy to prevent conflicts, revise it as needed, and evaluate its effectiveness on a regular basis

Following are some effective strategies for preventing conflicts:

- Maintain a sense of humor. If you can learn to laugh at your own mistakes, other people are likely to laugh at theirs.
- Be an effective communicator. Choose your words carefully and monitor the quality of your voice. Avoid words such as "always" and "never," sarcasm, jargon, and talking down to people. Use an appropriate pitch, tone, and level when communicating with others.

- Assume that all people have positive, or good, intentions. When confused by another person's actions or words, ask yourself how you might feel or respond in the same situation.
- Use positive techniques to handle your own stress. Eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, spend time with family and friends, and have some fun. Avoid "treating" yourself to snacks filled with fat, salt, and sugar; watching excessive amounts of television; or abusing alcohol or other drugs. Negative ways of handling stress can lead to health problems.
- Avoid jumping to conclusions. Seek information about a situation or a colleague's action before making assumptions. There may be an explanation or legitimate reason why something did or did not take place.
- Create an environment that supports staff, as well as children and parents. Make sure staff have private places where they can store their belongings, comfortable places where they can take a break from their duties, and a schedule which allows them opportunities for meeting personal needs.

The time will come when a problem with someone will need to be addressed. Do not wait too long to acknowledge that a problem exists—the earlier a problem is confronted, the easier it is to solve. Choose a time and a place to meet with the other person, and keep the following ideas in mind when meeting:

1. Keep your focus on what can be done in the future. REMEMBER: What's done is done.
2. Each person should take turns speaking. Listen carefully to the facts, and to the other person's feelings.
3. Resist the urge to bring more issues into the discussion, REMEMBER: You can take up another issue later.
4. Personal attacks and blame will only distract from solving the problem, REMEMBER: The problem is your enemy—not each other.
5. Be prepared to describe your feelings only and your impression of the facts of the situation. Do not speak for or about others.

## Supplies

Lead Teachers are responsible for reporting to the Director and/or Assistant Director when supplies are running low, so they can be replenished before supplies are completely depleted.

## Parking

Staff members should park along the north and south edges of the parking lot first. Parking in the center of the lot should be reserved for families picking up and dropping off. If the staff designated section of the parking lot is full, staff may park in the middle of the parking lot in twos (cars behind each other) so there is room for cars to travel through the parking lot.

## Suggestions

Sapphire Early Learning Center is always seeking suggestions that will: improve methods, procedures, and working conditions; reduce costs or errors; and benefit the children, staff, and center. Staff members who have suggestions or innovative ideas are encouraged to discuss them with the Lead Teacher or Director and/or Assistant Director.



## Personnel Files

Sapphire Early Learning Center maintains a permanent personnel file for each staff member. These files are confidential, and staff must arrange a time with the Director and/or Assistant Director to review their file. Staff members are prohibited from accessing the personnel file of another staff member for any reason. Staff members should report to the Director and/or Assistant Director if there is a change in address, phone number, emergency contact, e-mail address, marital status, or number of dependents.

## Substance Abuse

It is Sapphire Early Learning Center's desire to provide a drug-free, healthful, and safe workplace. To promote this goal, employees are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner.

While on Sapphire Early Learning Center premises and while conducting business-related activities off Sapphire Early Learning Center premises, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace.

SELC takes very seriously the care and responsibility of the children and will not be taking any chances on the care of the children or the reputation of SELC. For this reason, unannounced random drug testing will be conducted amongst all employees. If a team member refuses drug testing, this will lead to immediate termination of employment with SELC.

Any staff members reporting for work under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances will be asked to leave immediately. If the Director and/or Assistant Director or another staff member has probable cause to believe a staff member's faculties are impaired while on the job, the staff member may be suspended or terminated immediately. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

Employees with questions on this policy or issues related to drug or alcohol use in the workplace should raise their concerns with their supervisor or the Owner without fear of reprisal.

## Tobacco Use

Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited on Sapphire Early Learning Center premises, including parking lots and outdoor play areas. Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco products is also prohibited in Sapphire Early Learning Center vehicles or in personal vehicles being used for the transportation of Sapphire Early Learning Center children, and while on field trips. Staff members who smoke are strongly suggested against doing so immediately before or during their shift, as smoke can stay on clothing and hair for an extended time. Staff members must wash hands immediately after smoking, before returning to work.

## Reimbursement

The Director must first approve all purchases made by a staff member using personal funds. Any unapproved purchases made by a staff member using personal funds. Any unapproved purchases may not be eligible for reimbursement. Original sales receipts should be submitted to the Director and/or Assistant Director within one week of purchase to receive reimbursement.

## Non-Discrimination Statement

To provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at Sapphire Early Learning Center will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities.

Sapphire Early Learning Center does not discriminate based on race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. Sapphire Early Learning Center is an equal opportunity employer. Sapphire Early Learning Center prohibits harassment of and by its staff members based on gender, race, age, color, national origin, religion, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, citizenship, disability, and other characteristics. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, making derogatory remarks about any of these characteristics, making jokes or stereotypical comments about ethnic or other groups, and engaging in verbal, physical, and visually offensive behavior. Any employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the Owner. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

A staff member who feels harassed has the right to file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity.

## Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment

Sapphire Early Learning Center is committed to providing a work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and conduct that can be considered harassing, coercive, or disruptive, including sexual harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, color, marital status, national origin, age, religion, disability, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition includes many forms of offensive behavior and includes gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex as the harasser. The following is a partial list of sexual

harassment examples:

- Unwanted sexual advances.
- Offering employment benefits in exchange for sexual favors.
- Making or threatening reprisals after a negative response to sexual advances.
- Visual conduct that includes leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons or posters.
- Verbal conduct that includes making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs, or jokes.
- Verbal sexual advances or propositions.
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, or suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations.
- Physical conduct that includes touching, assaulting, or impeding or blocking movements.

Unwelcome sexual advances (either verbal or physical), requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; (2) submission or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for making employment decisions; or, (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

If you experience or witness sexual or other unlawful harassment in the workplace, report it immediately to the Owner. You can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal or retaliation.

All allegations of sexual harassment will be quickly and discreetly investigated. To the extent possible, Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment: your confidentiality and that of any witnesses and the alleged harasser will be protected against unnecessary disclosure. When the investigation is completed, you will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Any employee who becomes aware of possible sexual or other unlawful harassment must immediately advise the Owner, so it can be investigated in a timely and confidential manner. Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## Attendance Policies

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, Sapphire Early Learning Center expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on Sapphire Early Learning Center. Consistency is crucial to creating a successful program. Therefore, all staff members are expected to be in regular attendance, to provide a consistent environment and routine for children and families.

SELG uses an attendance point system to track employee's attendance habits and encourage professional behaviors in this area. This system will track consistency in attendance, punctuality, and professional practices when requesting time off. This system will also apply to mandatory meetings and trainings. For a full explanation of point assignment please reference the Explanation of Attendance Point System document.

### Punctuality and Absence

In the rare instances when employees cannot avoid being more than ten minutes late to work or reporting back to work, they need to notify their supervisor as soon as possible. If an employee will be absent for any reason, they should notify their supervisor as soon as possible. Reasonable call offs include illness (a temperature of at least 101 degrees, vomiting or diarrhea), or a family emergency.

### Absence Due to Illness

If a staff member or staff member's children are ill and thus the staff member is unable to work, the Director and/or Assistant Director should be notified immediately, by phone. Electronic communications such as text message and email are not acceptable methods of contact when reporting sick. If absent more than two consecutive days, the Director and/or Assistant Director will

require a note from the staff member's physician indicating the type of illness and when said staff member or staff member's child may return to work or school.

### Requesting Time Off

If a staff member would like to request time off from scheduled work, they should complete the Time Off Request form and turn it into the Assistant Director at least two weeks before the date of requested time off. Time off will be granted on an individual basis and will take into consideration the needs of the program and the order in which requests were received.

### Schedules

Sapphire Early Learning Center is open Monday through Friday, 6:00am to 6:00pm. All scheduling requests should be submitted in writing to the Director and/or Assistant Director. Schedules will be created based upon the needs of Sapphire Early Learning Center and the children, as well as staff member availability. Occasionally, staff members may be required to dedicate time outside their regular work schedule to satisfactorily complete and carry out Sapphire Early Learning Center responsibilities (parent-teacher conferences, staff meetings, trainings, lesson planning, etc.).

### Voluntary Resignation

Lead Teachers and Full-Time Assistant Teachers should submit a letter of resignation to the Director and/or Assistant Director when resigning from a position. Sapphire Early Learning Center appreciates at least four weeks' notice if you choose to resign. This will ensure an appropriate replacement can be hired and adequately trained.

## Disciplinary Procedure

### Unacceptable Job Performance

Termination of employment is an inevitable part of personnel activity within any organization, and many of the reasons for termination are routine. Below are examples of some of the most common circumstances under which employment is terminated:

- Resignation - voluntary employment termination initiated by an employee.
- Discharge - involuntary employment termination initiated by the organization. All wages due and payable will be paid at the next regularly scheduled payday not to exceed 15 days.

We request a letter in writing that explains your reasons for termination. If an employee is discharged, we will provide a letter to the staff explain the reason for discharge.

Sapphire Early Learning Center uses progressive discipline as a positive way to correct unacceptable job performance. This is not a contractual obligation because all Sapphire Early Learning Center employees are "at will" which means an employee can be terminated at the will of Sapphire Early Learning Center for any reason or no reason. The following are the steps, which are taken using progressive discipline.

#### STEP 1 Verbal Warning

If a staff member's job performance is not meeting Sapphire Early Learning Centers standards, or if a staff member is in violation of any policy stated in this handbook, he/she will be informed of the problem and the possible penalties if performance does not improve. Suggestions on ways to

improve job performance are discussed. Verbal warnings may be given for violation of Bitterroot Early Learnings policies, failure to follow procedures, unsatisfactory performance, absenteeism or tardiness. Verbal warnings will be recorded, discussed, and signed by the staff member and Director and/or Assistant Director. After three (3) verbal warnings have been issued for any reason within a period of six (6) months, a written warning will be issued.

## **STEP 2 Written Warning**

A written warning is given if a problem/s identified by multiple verbal warnings has not been corrected. Written warnings will be recorded, discussed, and signed by the staff member and Director and/or Assistant Director. A staff member may receive only one (1) written warning during a six (6) month period. After one (1) written warning has been issued, any further issues or actions subject to the Disciplinary Procedure may result in suspension or termination. Written warnings will be issued immediately for refusal to follow lawful instructions or any other serious policy violation, which endangers the safety or integrity of a child or staff member.

## **STEP 3 Termination**

Termination may result when using progressive discipline if steps have not produced satisfactory and acceptable performance. Termination may be immediate without using progressive discipline. Reasons for immediate termination may include, but are not limited to:

- Commitment of child abuse under Montana law
- Abuse of a parent/guardian of a child or another staff member
- Harassment
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at work
- Theft
- Possession of a weapon
- If there is any negative behavior towards a child, this will result in automatic termination. Negative behavior is described as a practice that is emotionally damaging, physically harmful, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, or intimidating to children.

Violation of any policy which states that violation of such policy may result in termination the above violations are only examples and are not meant to be all-inclusive. Disciplinary action up to and including termination may be taken immediately at the discretion of the Director.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Illness**

Our priority at Sapphire Early Learning Center is providing a healthy, safe learning environment for all children and staff. Health Checks will be conducted upon child entering their classroom using the Hi MaMa app that allows teachers to document any signs of illness. Children/staff will be sent home as soon as possible if any of the following is experienced: an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the staff); an illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children in the classroom; or a child is experiencing any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 101 or greater, until 24 hours symptom free without fever reducing medication

- Signs/symptoms of severe illness, including lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing
- Diarrhea (not associated with diet changes or medications) (Two instances) until diarrhea stops for 24 hours or the continued diarrhea is deemed not be infectious by a licensed health care professional.
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
- Vomiting (One instance) the child can return after vomiting has been resolved for 24 hours or until a health care provider determines the cause for vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms of illness
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines the sores are not contagious
- Rash until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis) until after treatment has been initiated for 24 hours
- Head lice, from the end of the day until after first treatment
- Scabies, until after treatment has been completed
- Tuberculosis, until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend childcare
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Hand Foot and Mouth sores have dried and crusted and no fever
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- Chicken pox, until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- Pertussis, until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed
- Mumps, until 9 days after onset of symptoms
- Hepatitis A virus, until 1 week after onset of illness
- Measles, until 4 days after onset of rash
- Rubella, until 6 days after onset of rash
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness accompanied by another illness which requires exclusion
- Herpes simplex, with uncontrollable drooling
- Infected wound or cut, properly cover with clean bandage and if working in the kitchen use a single use glove.

A child who becomes ill while at Sapphire Early Learning Center must be removed from the classroom to limit exposure of other children to communicable disease. An ill child will be sent to the office to wait for his/her parent to arrive.

Sapphire Early Learning Center reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness. Any exceptions to our illness policy will require a written note from a licensed health care professional stating that the child is not contagious.

## Immunization requirements

Each child and staff member must have a current immunization record on file at Sapphire Early Learning Center. Immunization records must be updated whenever a new immunization is received. Updated immunization records may be faxed to Sapphire Early Learning Center directly from your health care provider. Sapphire Early Learning Centers fax number is 961-0123. We use a program that lets us know when an immunization is due. You will be notified if a vaccine is required and then an updated copy or a date for administration of immunization will be needed. We receive a yearly audit from the Public Health Dept. to make sure all children and staff are up to date. If a child is behind on immunization a conditional form must be signed by a physician with dates of scheduled immunizations to be caught up. If we do not receive this form children and staff cannot attend until it is received.

## Notice of Exposure and Reporting Disease

If a child or staff member is found to have a communicable disease, a notice will be posted on the door of all affected classrooms. Additionally, families who have provided an email address will receive email notification of the illness.

In the event a child is reported to have a communicable disease, the Director will notify the health department. Additional information regarding illness or disease may be obtained from:

Ravalli County Public Health Nurse

406-375-6675

## Medication Authorizations

Staff members may not administer medication to any child unless a parent has completed a Medication Authorization Form. Parents must indicate a start date and end date, a reason for the medication, and the dosage or medication cannot be administered. If a child becomes ill while at Sapphire Early Learning Center and a parent requests that medication be given, verbal authorization can only be given to the Director and/or Assistant Director. A Medication Authorization Form will be completed by the Director and/or Assistant Director and must be signed by a parent upon pick-up.

Medications must be stored in a locked box (refrigerated medications) or in a high cabinet (non-refrigerated medications) while in use at Sapphire Early Learning Center. The Medication Authorization Form must remain with the medication always. Unused medications must be immediately returned to the family and will not be stored at Bitterroot Early Learning Center.

Medications may be administered only by Lead Teachers, the Director, or Assistant Director. When a medication is given, the teacher will document the type of medication administered, the dosage, and the time it was given as well as any unusual reactions or circumstances. Expired Medication Authorization Forms must be turned in to the Assistant Director to be filed in the child's permanent enrollment file.

## Documentation of Accidents/Incidents

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at Sapphire Early Learning Center using an Accident/Incident Report. Please document all biting incidents as accidents. If a biter breaks the skin of another child, an accident/incident report needs to be completed for the



biter as well as the child who was bitten. Use detail when explaining events, but never include other children's names. If the injury is serious, a parent needs to be contacted before pick-up. The parent shall sign the report the same day as the incident. A copy may be given to the parent. All Accident/Incident Reports must be given to the Director and/or Assistant Director to be placed in the child's permanent file.

### Documentation of Health Incidents

Each time a parent is contacted regarding an ill child or symptoms of illness, staff members should complete a Health Incident Form. A copy of the form should be given to the parent and the original to the Director and/or Assistant Director to be placed in the child's permanent file. All parents will be notified of any communicable illnesses present in the center via a sign posted on the main entrance to the center explaining the illness. In addition, parents with children in the classroom of the infected child will receive an email regarding the illness.

### Documentation of Allergies

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location in the classroom. If the allergy is food related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the kitchen area. All staff working in the classroom of child with allergies must review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of emergency procedures should the child have an allergic reaction. All allergic reactions must be documented with a Health Incident Form.

### Documentation of Special Health Care Needs

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child or staff member with special health care needs (seizures, etc.). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the classroom emergency binder. All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's or staff member's specific health care needs.

### Access Policy

Any person in the center who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, or subcontracted staff or volunteer who has had a record check and approval to be involved with child care shall not have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian or custodian, nor be counted in the staff to child ratio. Unrestricted access means that a person has contact with a child alone or is directly responsible for childcare.

Person who do not have unrestricted access will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a paid staff member always and will not be allowed to assume any childcare responsibilities. The primary responsibility of the supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the Lead Teacher unless he/she delegates it to the Full Time Assistant Teacher due to a conflict of interest with the person.

Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is. If a staff member is unsure about the reason, the Director or Assistant Director to get approval for the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation, staff will follow the "Dangerous Adult" procedure. Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc., will be monitored by a paid staff member and will not be allowed to interact with children on the premises.



A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian or custodian) who is required to register with the Iowa sex offender registry:

- Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at the childcare center.
- Shall not be on the property of the childcare center without written permission from the Director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender's own minor child to and from the center. The Director is not obligated to provide permission and must consult with their DHS licensing agent first.

## State and National Criminal History Checks

If staff member, volunteer, resident of the facility, or any person who regularly or frequently stays in the facility, has lived outside of Montana for any portion of the previous 5 years, that person must submit a completed fingerprint card so that a fingerprint based criminal records check can be requested. The cost is the staff members' responsibility.

## Visitors

All individuals who are visiting the center (i.e., someone who is not a parent or authorized pick-up person; or staff member) is required to sign in at the office before entering the center. The visitor is then required to sign out before leaving the building. Staff members should notify the Director and/or Assistant.

# Curriculum Planning

## Curriculum

Curriculum at Sapphire Early Learning Center includes the child-initiated and teacher-directed activities and experiences offered to young children that support and enrich their development physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively.

Each classroom has weekly lesson plans, posted in the classroom. These plans contain many activities, designed to foster each child's development, and the development of the group. Lesson plans should be changed to accommodate the children's changing interests.

Each classroom is set-up in centers, which include blocks, dramatic play, books, gross motor, fine motor, and art. Outdoor play is important to a child's physical development and must be included in both the morning and afternoon schedule. Self-selection or "free-play" is a daily part of the curriculum and means a child can choose which center or activity he/she participates in. This promotes creative expression and development of important social skills

## Daily Schedule and Activities

The Lead Teacher and Assistant Teacher work cooperatively to create a daily schedule and plan activities that meet each child's developmental abilities and needs. Every staff member is responsible for the carrying out the schedule and activities. The daily schedule and activities create a balance between active and quiet times; large and small group, and individual activities; small and large muscle activities; indoor and outdoor play times; as well as times for self-selection and teacher-directed activities.

Consistency from day-to-day is particularly important to the overall well-being of the children and classroom environment. Children thrive on consistency! Routines should be maintained whenever possible for arrivals and departures; meals and snacks; resting or nap times; personal care routines like diapering/toileting and hand washing; and transitions.

**Lesson plans and the daily schedule must be posted in the classroom and visible always.**

## Themes

The use of themes is a practical and logical way to begin curriculum planning. The themes should be based upon what the children know and see every day, as well as the children's interests. The themes must be age-appropriate and may span the length of one week, or one month depending on the interest level.

Teachers are encouraged to discuss with each other their themes and coordinate the sharing of materials and activities.

## Physical Environment

The actual room arrangement of each program room is the responsibility of the program Lead Teacher and Assistant Teacher. Space should be organized according to the Environment Rating Scales (ERS). Centers should include blocks, dramatic play, art, large and small motor, and books. These areas should be clearly defined, with obvious boundaries. Quiet areas should be set-up as far away from noisy activities (blocks, cars, etc.) as possible. The room décor should consist mostly of child artwork and photographs of animals, people, food, and the children themselves at the child's eye level. Room arrangement should take into consideration that staff must be able to see every child always.

For a more detailed description of room arrangement and the physical environment, staff members may refer to copy of the appropriate ERS manual, available in the office. The Director and/or Assistant Director must approve changes to the physical environment, including the room arrangement.

## Free Play

"Free-play" (also called child-initiated activities, free choice, self-selection) must be incorporated into the morning and afternoon schedule. Teachers are expected to actively participate with the children

during free play activities by asking questions about what the children are doing, participating in their pretend play, reading books when prompted, encouraging children to try new activities or play with a new toy, etc.

## Outdoor Play

Outdoor play must be incorporated into the daily schedule for both the morning and afternoon, in almost all-weather conditions. In the event of rain, severe wind/cold, or extreme heat, children are permitted to remain indoors.

There is less structure in an outdoor learning environment; however, it is expected that staff members actively engage in activities when prompted by the children. Outdoor play is an opportunity for children to run, jump, climb and use their bodies in ways that would otherwise be

unsafe in an indoor classroom. In addition, a large amount of social interaction takes place when children play outdoors. Because they are engaged in fewer teacher-directed activities and more child directed play, children can choose their friends and who to interact with.

The outdoor learning environment is an extension of the indoor classroom. Concepts taught indoors can be expanded upon while outdoors. For example, building with blocks on an uneven surface outside, or playing with toy cars in the grass teaches children about different textures, sounds, and smells because the environment is naturally different from the indoors. Lesson plans must include an outdoor learning component.

### Water Activities

Water play is a good way to stay cool during summer. Although wading pools and swimming pools are not prohibited, it is recommended that sprinklers or other forms of water play that do not collect water are used. If wading pools are used, they may not exceed 24 inches of water depth. Wading pools must be filled only prior to use and once they are no longer being used, they should be emptied immediately and sanitized. Never allow a wading pool to sit with any amount of water in it. Be mindful of water that may be collected by rain and sprinklers. It takes only a small amount of water to become a danger to young children in care.

When using swimming pools, whether on-site or off-site of a day care facility, a certified lifeguard, who is not counted in the facility's child to staff ratio must always be present. Per ARM 37.95.127(8), *the child-staff ratio shall be maintained whenever children participate in swimming activities, including swimming instruction*. Having active and fully present caregivers are key factors in providing a safe environment. Regardless of the type of water activity, water play should ALWAYS be supervised.

### Additional Reminders:

Caregivers are responsible for ensuring that all children are adequately protected from exposure to sunlight to prevent sunburn. For caregivers to apply sunscreen or bug spray, parents must fill out the Over the Counter (OTC) Medication Form. Caregivers should also ensure children are provided with fresh water, so they are hydrated during play in the summer's heat.

### Nap/Rest Time

The DPHHS QAD-Licensure Bureau-Child Care Licensing requires that all children be provided a regularly scheduled nap or rest time. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period. The length of time a child should have to remain resting varies by child. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the maximum amount of time a child should have to remain resting. Children should be provided alternative quiet activities if unable to rest.

### Multimedia

The use of multimedia in our program is an extension of the teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms. Teachers may select movie, television, and computer game titles based upon weekly themes. Children are not required to view part or all of a video or television show, or to play computer games. Instead, the activity is offered as one of several centers. All multimedia must have a rating of "PG" or "E" and must possess an educational theme.

Children are limited to a specified amount of time per week they may use or view multimedia.

## Tooth Brushing

At least once a day, children over 1 year of age will practice brushing their teeth after a meal. Sapphire Early Learning Center will provide a toothbrush for each child. Toothbrushes must be labeled with the child's name, allowed to air-dry before being stored in a ventilated container, and should not meet other toothbrushes. Storage containers will be washed and sanitized weekly. Toothbrushes must be discarded if contaminated. Toothpaste will not be used with the children.

## Weapons/Violent Play

There is a strict policy of allowing no weapon play at Sapphire Early Learning Center. Children are not permitted to play with weapons of any type or size or to pretend that other items are weapons, including their fingers, hands, or blocks. Redirection should be used when a child is engaging in weapon or violent play. If a child brings a weapon to Sapphire Early Learning Center, the weapon should be placed out of sight and sent home the same day with a note explaining the policy about weapons.

Competitive behavior is minimized in our programs. In young children, competition often increases negative behavior and decreases acceptance of others. Bullying is not considered acceptable behavior; all efforts will be made to guide children in finding appropriate ways to interact with others.

## Pets and Visiting Animals

Staff may introduce a class pet to the classroom. Pets and visiting animals that are brought into the classroom must be carefully considered for their temperament, health risks, and appropriateness for young children. No animal may be brought into Sapphire Early Learning Center without first notifying and receiving permission from the Director and/or Assistant Director. Once approved by the Director and/or Assistant Director, pets and visiting animals must have documentation from a licensed veterinarian or animal shelter to show that the animal(s) is fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.

## Assessments

The ASQ Ages and Stages Questionnaires is the assessment tool used by the programs to evaluate and track each child's individual development during their time at Sapphire Early Learning Center. It is an on-going assessment system, meaning that teachers are continually watching, observing, and documenting each child's development. The same tool is used from birth through kindergarten, to allow a more complete picture of your child's development. By tracking a child's development, our teachers can plan activities that are appropriate for each child's developmental abilities.

## Parent Teacher Conferences

Lead Teachers are expected to conduct a minimum of two parent-teacher conferences per year and must make every effort to meet with each family. A copy of the parent-teacher conference form and child development summary must be placed in the child's permanent file after conferences. The Lead Teacher should discuss suitable times to hold conferences with the Director and/or Assistant Director.

## Assessment Portfolios

A permanent assessment portfolio will be kept for each child and passed to the next teacher when a child transitions. These portfolios will not be released to anyone outside Sapphire Early Learning Center without written permission from the parent/guardian. Assessment portfolios will contain a variety of items, including photographs, examples of artwork, assessment profiles, and parent-teacher conference forms. It is the responsibility of the Lead Teacher and Assistant Teacher to ensure portfolios are periodically and continuously updated. Portfolios may be periodically taken home by families but should be returned promptly. When a child leaves Sapphire Early Learning Center, the assessment portfolio should be given to the family.

## Field Trips

Sapphire Early Learning Center offers a variety of experiences both at and away from the center. Field trips are a creative way to enrich a theme and expand the learning environment. The Director and/or Assistant Director must approve all field trips. Field trips outside Parents must be notified at least one week before the planned field trip. Teachers may decide and are encouraged to conduct short, unannounced field trips including but not limited to walks as a class around the perimeter of the building and/or nearby neighborhoods; trips to local playgrounds; trips to local businesses. Teacher- child ratios must be maintained always. Parents complete a “Parent/Guardian Permissions” form at enrollment for this type of field trip and do not need to complete a separate form for the above-named instances.

## Rules Related to Transportation

Whether walking to the park or transporting children in a vehicle, it is important that additional precautions are made by the director and the caregivers to ensure that the regulations are being met. Prior to transporting children in a vehicle, written consent from the parent or guardian must be on file at the facility. Children must be secured in age appropriate safety restraints whenever the vehicle is in motion. Per ARM 37.95.132(8), all vehicles must be equipped with children’s car seats or booster seats that meet federal Department of Transportation recommendations for the age and weight of the child being transported. Children must use a car seat or booster seat until they are at least 6 years of age and 60 pounds. Additionally, there should never be more than one child to a seatbelt, often referred to as “double buckling”.

Children should never be left unattended in a vehicle, not even for a minute! When the director or caregiver exits the vehicle, the children should also be taken out of the vehicle EVERY TIME. It is important that all caregivers are aware of transportation policies and that extra precautions are taken while transporting children.

To avoid any incidents of leaving children behind while on a field trip, attendance should be taken prior to children leaving the facility, upon arrival at the destination, and prior to returning to the facility as well as throughout the duration of the activity. Maintaining accurate attendance records during an outing is a critical step in ensuring that children are accounted for always.

When away from the facility, caregivers must take an emergency contact form for each child and a fully stocked first aid kit.

- Children are not allowed to sit in the front seat under any circumstances.

- Children under the age of six riding in a car or passenger van must be properly buckled in a federally approved car seat or booster seat. Older children and adults must be properly buckled in a seat belt.
- Doors should remain locked when the vehicle is moving.
- Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco products is forbidden when transporting children.
- Children shall enter and leave the vehicle curbside unless the vehicle is in a protected area or driveway.
- Head counts shall be taken before leaving the center, after entering the vehicle, during a field trip, after taking children to the restroom, after returning to the vehicle, and upon returning to the center.
- When children leave the vehicle, the vehicle shall be inspected to ensure no children are left in the vehicle.

Sapphire Early Learning Center has one fifteen-passenger van available for transportation to and from field trips. Staff members who operate a Sapphire Early Learning Center van must have a valid driver's license. Parents who volunteer to provide transportation for a field trip must be at least 21 and provide: proof of a valid driver's license; proof of insurance; completed driver information form; and signed waiver of liability form.

## Daily Duties for Classroom Staff

Each classroom has a set of opening, nap time, closing and weekly cleaning tasks. Below are some general things that must be completed each day. Staff members are expected to familiarize themselves with the classroom specific duties.

### Morning Duties

Make sure all program room doors are unlocked; mix new bleach water; put away sanitized toys; straighten toys and shelves; re-stock supplies such as soap, paper towels, toilet paper, diapers, wipes, etc.; and complete room set-up for the day's lesson plan.

### Noon/Nap-Time Duties

Straightening of shelves; sanitizing toys; cleaning tables/chairs/floors; curriculum planning; wash dishes; complete daily activity sheets for children; and prepare for afternoon.

### Afternoon Duties

Wash or spray toys that have been mouthed by children with bleach solution and air dry; take trash to dumpster, sanitize trash can, and replace trash bag; put toys and equipment away; check outdoor play area for equipment that needs to be put away; sanitize tables, chairs, and shelves; wash dishes; empty bleach solution; vacuum carpets; lock all program room doors after the last parent leaves for the day.

## Arrival and Departure

### Arrival

Staff members are expected to greet each child and parent by name upon their arrival to the classroom. Arrival is the opportune time to discuss how the child's night was, what he/she ate for

breakfast, special instructions for the day, etc. Upon arrival, each child must have direct contact with a staff member. Staff should be looking for previous injuries, signs of illness, or unusual behavior.

## Departure

During the enrollment process, each family completes an “Emergency Contact and Parental Consent” form. This form provides authorization for select individuals to pick-up children from the center. If you are not familiar with the person attempting to pick-up a child, you must request photo identification and check the “Emergency Contact” form. At the end of the day, staff must check the attendance clipboard to verify all children have been signed out.

## Late Pick-Up

Sapphire Early Learning Center charges a late fee of \$5.00 for every fifteen minutes a child is present past 6:00pm. If a child is picked-up after 6:00pm, please make a note and inform the Director or Assistant Director the following day. If parents do not arrive by 6:00pm to pick-up their child, attempt to contact them at all available phone numbers. If the parents cannot be reached, attempt to contact the authorized pick-up persons. If you are unable to reach the authorized pick-up persons, contact the Director or Assistant Director.

## Guidance Strategies

Every adult who cares for children has a responsibility to guide, correct and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. These adult actions often are called child guidance and discipline. Positive guidance and discipline are crucial because they promote children's self-control, teach children responsibility and help children make thoughtful choices. The more effective caregivers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior, the less time and effort adults will spend correcting children's misbehavior. Effective guidance and discipline focus on the development of the child. They also preserve the child's self-esteem and dignity. Actions that insult or belittle are likely to cause children to view their caregivers negatively, which can inhibit learning and can teach the child to be unkind to others. However, actions that acknowledges the child's efforts and progress, no matter how slow or small, is likely to encourage healthy development. Teaching children self-discipline is a demanding task. It requires patience, thoughtful attention, cooperation, and a good understanding of the child. Bitterroot Early Learning staff will use only positive guidance techniques. When interacting with young children, staff should ask themselves the following questions:

“Am I...”

- Validating feelings?
- Asking open ended questions?
- Encouraging problem solving?
- Respecting children's choices?
- Using praise and positive reinforcement?

## Reasons for Misbehavior

If caregivers understand why children misbehave, they can be more successful at reducing behavior problems. Listed here are some of the possible reasons why children misbehave.



- Children want to test whether caregivers will enforce rules.
- They experience different sets of expectations between school and home.
- A child does not understand the rules or are held to expectations that are beyond their developmental levels.
- They want to assert themselves and their independence.
- They feel ill, bored, hungry, or sleepy.
- They lack accurate information and prior experience.
- They have been previously "rewarded" for their misbehavior with adult attention.

## Preventing Misbehavior

Child misbehavior is impossible to prevent completely. Children, usually curious and endlessly creative, are likely to do things parents and other caregivers have not expected. However, there are many positive steps caregivers can take to help prevent misbehavior.

- Set clear, consistent rules. (e.g., walking feet; gentle touches)
- Make certain the environment is safe and worry-free.
- Show interest in the child's activities. (e.g., participating in activities with the children so they stay interested in longer periods)
- Encourage self-control and independence by providing meaningful choices. (e.g., "You may pick up the blocks or art center.")
- Focus on the desired behavior, rather than the one to be avoided. (e.g., "Ashley, please use gentle touches with your friends.")
- Notice and pay attention to children when they do things right. (e.g., "Joey is playing so nicely. I like it when you keep the blocks on the table.")
- Encourage children often and generously.
- Set a good example. (e.g., using a quiet voice when children should be quiet)

## Responding to Misbehavior:

Below are strategies Bitterroot Early Learning staff will use to respond to child misbehavior.

Remember, however, that it's always a good idea if rules are explained fully and clearly understood before misbehavior occurs. Whenever possible, involve children in making the rules for the classroom.

- **Redirection**

This strategy should be used most frequently when working with young children. If a child is not following the rules or being uncooperative, quickly get the child's attention and introduce another activity. For example, "Kate, please help me water the flowers now. You've been riding the bike for a long time and it's now Logan's turn."

- **Logical consequences**

These are structured consequences that follow specific misbehaviors. The child should be able to see how the behavior and the consequence are directly related. For example, Andrew is standing on his chair at lunch. His teacher should remind him that if he stands on his chair, he could fall and get hurt; this will make him sad.

- **Participate in the solution**



If a child damages something, he/she needs to help in fixing it or in cleaning up. If a child causes someone distress, he/she should help in relieving that. For example, "It made Brandon very sad when you told him he wasn't your friend anymore. Please come apologize and help me make him feel better."

- **Natural consequences**

Allowing children to experience the consequences of their behavior is also called learning the hard way. For example, Laura does not put her books back in her school bag after she finishes reading. One day she loses a book, and therefore must find a way to replace it. Only use natural consequences when they will not endanger the child's health or safety.

- **"Take a break" or "Calm down chair"**

In some instances, a child may need to be removed from a situation in which he/she has become overwhelmed or violent. The child should be directed to "take a break" or sit in the "calm down chair." This strategy gives the child a chance to calm down, regain control, and reflect quietly on her or his behavior away from others. Once the child has calmed down, staff should talk with the child about the actions that led up to and resulted in needing a break or being sent to the calm down chair. For example, "Hannah, we have talked often about how hitting is not acceptable. But because you hit John, please leave the blocks center and go to the calm down chair. I will talk to you when you are ready."

If these actions do not help in reducing or changing behavior the following will take place:

1. Staff will report behavior and what strategies have been attempted to the Director and/or Assistant Director(s).
2. The Director and/or Assistant Director will observe the child and meet with the Lead Teacher to develop a behavior management plan.
3. The behavior management plan will be discussed with the parent and then put into practice.
4. The Director and/or Assistant Director, Lead Teacher and Assistant Teachers, and parents will evaluate the behavior management plan. If needed, adjustments will be made.

\*\* If a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the child will be removed from the classroom and possibly the program for a period.

## Useful Phrases

The following phrases are useful when problem-solving with children.

- Instead of "No" or "Don't"
  - Say "Please stop", "I don't like that", "That's not OK", or "That is not a choice"
  - Instead of "That's not nice" Say "That's not OK", "Please use gentle touches", or "That hurts Jordan"
- Instead of "No running"
  - Say "I need you to use your walking feet" or "You may run when we go outside"
  - Instead of "Stop crying"
  - Say "I need you to use your words to tell me what is wrong"
  - Instead of "Can you put away your toys?" (If it is not a choice, do not pose it as a question)

- Say “You may help me pick up the blocks, or help Alyssa pick up the puzzles” • Instead of “I said yes” (when a child tells you “no”)
- Say “No is not a choice, I need you to…”

## Biting Policy

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and three years. While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at Sapphire Early Learning Center to prevent and stop biting. This is the process followed when a child bites:

- The biting child is stopped and told, “Stop biting. Biting hurts” in a firm voice. Teachers should remain calm, being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
- The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child’s needs. As little attention as possible will be placed on the biting child, to avoid reinforcing the behavior.
- Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. Bite will be washed with soap and water; cold compress will be applied to reduce pain and swelling. A bandage will be applied if necessary

It is important to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Teachers need to work with parents to gather information about the child’s behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of triggers would be: communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills. Below are the steps the teacher will take to identify triggers and replace the behavior:

1. The teacher will examine the context in which the biting is occurring and look for patterns. The following questions should be asked:
  - a. Was the space too crowded?
  - b. Were there too few toys?
  - c. Was there too little to do or too much waiting? • Was the child who bit getting the attention and care he/she deserved at other times?
2. The teacher will change the environment, routines or activities if necessary.
3. The teacher will work with the child who is biting to resolve conflicts and frustrations in more appropriate ways.
4. The teacher will observe the child, to get an idea of why and when they are likely to bite.
5. The teacher will identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of being bitten.
6. The teacher, parent and Director and/or Assistant Director will meet regularly to regulate an action plan and measure outcomes.
7. If biting continues the teacher will observe the group more closely and work with the parents to seek out additional resources as necessary to shadow the child who is biting.

All information is confidential, and names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on an Incident/Accident Report which is completed and signed by a teacher and parent. A copy is provided to the parent and the original kept in the child's permanent enrollment file in the office.

### Removal of a Child from the Classroom

Children cannot be removed from the classroom as we do not have extra staff available to correct ratios. In rare instances, children may be brought to the main office and the Director and/or Assistant Director will assist the child in calming down and/or help staff manage the classroom. Teachers must call the office and speak to the Director and/or Assistant Director before removing a child from the classroom.

If at any time a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the Director and/or Assistant Director should be immediately notified.

## Meals and Nutrition

Sapphire Early Learning Center follows the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) nutrition and practice guidelines for meals and snacks.

- Prior to each meal, tables must be washed with soapy water. Each table must then be sanitized with bleach water and either air-dried or wiped clean with a dry paper towel.
- All staff and children must wash hands before and after each meal, for at least 20 seconds.
- Staff shall sit with children at the tables and supervise all mealtimes. Staff should encourage conversation by asking questions or talking about the food; good table manners should be modeled.
- First-serving child sized-portions will be provided for all staff. Each staff member is expected to eat the meal provided, to model good eating habits.
- Children will never be forced or bribed to eat. Children must have every food on their plate. However, if a child states that he/she does not like a food, they may place just a small amount (ex: one or two peas) on their plate.
- Following every meal, tables and chairs must be washed with soapy water and sanitized with bleach water.

### Food from Home

Children are welcome to bring in special treats to celebrate a birthday or holiday. Due to various food allergies and dietary restrictions in our classrooms, we recommend supplying store-bought snacks still in the original packaging. Please check with your child's teacher before bringing any homemade snacks.

### Infant, Toddler, and Two-Year-Old Program Information

The following information is specific to the infant, toddler, and two-year-old program rooms:

- Parents must supply bottles, formula if other than Kirkland is used, extra clothing, pacifiers and blankets for rest time. Please label all items with child's name.

- Children may use pacifiers during rest time. To reduce the likelihood of spreading illness, pacifiers must be kept in a child's cubby or diaper bag during all other times of the day.
- If a mother is breastfeeding, please be sure to discuss with the mother when she would like her child to be fed breast milk, and when she would like to come in to breastfeed.
- Breast milk must be brought in ready-to-use containers. For health reasons, we are not able to store bags of frozen milk for extended periods of time.
- We recommend that all new foods be tried at home first since a child could have an allergic reaction to foods they have not had before. Check with parents before introducing ANY new food.
- Children must be held when being fed – bottle propping is forbidden.

## SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexpected, sudden death of a child under age 1 for which a cause of death cannot be identified. It is not known what causes SIDS; however, several sleeping practices have been linked to an increased risk for SIDS. Therefore, Sapphire Early Learning Center has a strict policy for infant sleep placement

**All infants less than one year will be placed on their back to sleep.**

**Infants shall not be allowed to sleep in a car seat or swing for a period of longer than 15 minutes.**

Once a child has been placed in his or her crib for nap, if the infant rolls from back to front - and is also able to roll from front to back - it is acceptable to leave the infant sleeping on his or her stomach. *NO heavy blankets, stuffed toys or pillows should ever be placed in a crib.*

A request for alternative sleeping positions must be accompanied by a signed and dated physician's note stating the reason for the request. Staff members found to violate this policy will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure and possibly termination.

## Safe Sleep Policy for Infants

Providing infants with a safe place to grow and learn is very important. For this reason, Sapphire Early Learning Center has created a policy on safe sleep practices for infants up to 1-year-old. We follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission to provide a safe sleep environment and reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is "the sudden death of an infant under 1 year of age, which remains unexplained after a thorough investigation." The staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at Sapphire Early Learning Center follow the AAP safe sleep policy.

- **Sleep Position:**
  - Infants will be placed flat on their backs to sleep every time unless there is a physician, practitioner or clinician signed sleep position medical waiver up to date on file. In the case of a waiver, a waiver notice will be posted at the infant's crib without identifying medical information. The full waiver will be kept in the infant's file.
  - Infants will not be placed on their side for sleep.
  - Devices such as wedges or infant positioners will not be used since such devices are not proven to reduce the risk of SIDS.

- Infants who use pacifiers will be offered their pacifier when they are placed to sleep, and it will not be put back in should the pacifier fall out once they fall asleep.
- Pacifiers will be cleaned between each use, checked for tears, and will not be coated in any sweet or other solution.
- Parents are asked to provide replacement pacifiers on a regular basis.
- While infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep, when an infant can easily turn over from back to front and front to back, they can remain in whatever position they prefer to sleep.
- **Sleep Environment:**
  - Our program will use Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines for safety-approved cribs and firm mattresses.
  - Crib slats will be less than 2 3/8" apart
  - Infants will not be left in bed with drop side down
  - Playpen weave will be less than 1/4"
  - Consumer Product Safety Commission safety-approved cradles and bassinets may also be used for sleeping if the infant meets the weight and height requirements. □ Infants will not be placed to sleep on any standard bed, waterbeds, couches, air mattresses, or on other soft surfaces.
  - Only one infant will be placed to sleep in each crib. Siblings, including twins and triplets, will be placed in separate cribs.
  - The crib will have a firm tight-fitting mattress covered by a fitted sheet and will be free from loose bedding, toys, and other soft objects (i.e., pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, etc.)
  - To avoid overheating, the temperature of the rooms where infants sleep will be checked and will be kept at a level that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
  - If a blanket is used, the child's feet will be placed to the foot of the crib and a light blanket will be tightly tucked in along the sides and foot of the mattress. The blanket will not come up higher than the infant's chest. Sleep clothing, such as sleepers, sleep sacks, and wearable blankets, may be used as alternatives to blankets.
  - Bibs and pacifiers will not be tied around an infant's neck or clipped on to an infant's clothing during sleep.
  - Smoking will not be allowed in or near Sapphire Early Learning Center.
- **Supervision:**
  - When infants are in their cribs, they will be within sight and hearing of staff always.
  - A staff member will visibly check on the sleeping infants frequently. We will check to see if the infant's skin color is normal, watch the rise and fall of the chest to observe breathing and look to see if the infant is sleeping soundly. We will check the infant for signs of overheating including flushed skin color, body temperature by touch and restlessness. When an infant is awake, they will have supervised "tummy time." This will help babies strengthen their muscles and develop normally.
  - Infants will spend limited time in a bouncer/infant seats when they are awake. If an infant falls asleep anyplace other than a crib, the infant will be moved to a crib right away.
- **Training:**

- All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at Sapphire Early Learning Center will be trained on safe sleep policies and practices.
- Safe sleep practices will be reviewed with all staff, substitute staff, and volunteers each year. In addition, training specific to these policies will be given before any individual can care for infants.
- Documentation that staff, substitutes, and volunteers have read and understand these policies will be kept in everyone's file.
- All staff, substitutes, and volunteers at Sapphire Early Learning Center will be trained on first aid for unresponsive infants as well as what to do when they have a question or need assistance before, they are allowed to care for infants.

#### **When The Policy Applies:**

This policy applies to all staff, substitute staff, parents, and volunteers when they place an infant to sleep in Sapphire Early Learning Center.

## **Parent Relationships**

### **Parent Interactions**

Many of our employees will become well acquainted with the parents of the children. This is an important part of providing quality care, but there are a few guidelines to which staff members must adhere:

- Address parents by their first name.
- Talk with parents about an issue with their child only if you are not in the classroom with children.
- Never talk about concerns about a child in front of any other children.
- When stating a concern about their child, also state at least two positive things about their child. Don't focus only on the negative.
- Do not use other children's names when discussing behavior concerns and/or incident reports.
- Avoid the phrase "I don't know." Instead, say "I'm not certain of the answer for that; can I get back to you?" then find the answer and reply to the parent as soon as possible.
- Conversations at pick-up and drop-off should be brief; your chief responsibility remains the supervision of the children. If you feel a parent needs more time or attention, ask to schedule a time to meet outside the classroom.

### **Handling Parent Complaints**

- Listen carefully. Many times, a person just needs an opportunity to air his or her feelings and feel they've been heard.
- Repeat what you have heard the other person say, trying to summarize it in one sentence. ("You're upset that Gavin isn't able to stay awake for dinner and seems crabby at night.")
- State the changes that you think the parent would like to have made. ("You would like us to make sure Gavin lies down for at least an hour every afternoon.")
- State what you will do to solve the problem. ("I will speak with the other teachers and make a note on his chart to make sure the message reaches everyone.")

- Follow through. If you tell a parent you will do something, do it promptly and follow up with them immediately afterward. (“I spoke with the other teachers last week; how are things going with Gavin? Did you notice a change?”)
- If you are unsure how to solve the complaint, refer the parent to the Director and/or Assistant Director. (“I’m not sure how to answer that; the Director and/or Assistant Director will be able to better help you.”)

## Breastfeeding Policy

### Company Responsibilities

Breastfeeding employees who choose to continue providing their milk for their infants after returning to work shall receive.

### Milk Expression Breaks

For up to one year after child’s birth, breastfeeding employees are allowed three twenty-minute breaks to breastfeed or express milk during work hours. For time that may be needed beyond the usual break times or full first year, employees may use their lunch break or personal leave, or they may clock out or make up the time as negotiated with their supervisors.

### Maintain Ratios in Classroom

If another staff member is not able to switch classrooms to maintain ratio, one of the directors or if available an extra staff will be provided for the employee to step out of the classroom to breastfeed or express milk.

### A Place to Express and Store Milk

If the employee does not want to breastfeed in the classroom another closed-door room will be provided for staff to breastfeed or express milk in privacy. Employees wishing to use this room must reserve the room by informing one of the directors when they will need to use it.

Staff may store expressed breast milk in a Sapphire Early Learning Center refrigerator and must be labeled with the name of the employee and the date of expressing the breast milk. Any nonconforming products stored in the refrigerator may be disposed of. Employees storing milk in the refrigerator assume all responsibility for the safety of the milk and the risk of harm for any reason, including improper storage, refrigeration and tampering.

### Communication with Supervisors

Employees who wish to express milk during the work period shall keep supervisors informed of their schedule in the mornings so that appropriate accommodations can be made to satisfy the needs of both the employee and the company.

### Milk Storage

Employees should label all milk expressed with their name and date collected so it is not inadvertently confused with another employee’s milk. Each employee is responsible for proper storage of her milk.

## Emergency Procedures

### Emergency Medical/Dental Procedure

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows Sapphire Early Learning Center staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. It is the responsibility of the parent to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.

- If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the center, the Lead Teacher will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.
- Children who are ill or seriously injured will be sent to the office and remain under the supervision of the Director and/or Assistant Director until a parent arrives.

#### IF THE CHILD REQUIRES IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION:

- The staff member who witnessed the emergency will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911. If no one is available, first ensure the child is stable and if possible, bring the child with you to call 911.
- CALL 911
  - Provide the center's name and location Sapphire Early Learning Center, 1065 Tefft Street
  - Provide the child's name and a description of the incident. Follow instructions as provided by the operator.
  - A staff member who witnessed the emergency will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing the child's physical exam, immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.
  - **Staff may not transport an ill and/or injured child in a personal vehicle.**

### Emergency Fire Procedure

- If you detect a fire, pull the nearest fire alarm signal (small red box mounted on the wall near the exits)
- If it is a small fire, attempt to extinguish the fire using the nearest fire extinguisher. (IF YOU ARE

ON DUTY IN A CLASSROOM at the time of a fire, follow the instructions below and evacuate the children first.)

- Exit the building and proceed to the designated meeting place.
- Call 911 as soon as you have reached the meeting place.
  - Provide the center's name and location: Sapphire Early Learning Center, 1065 Tefft Street
  - Describe the location of the fire.

#### IF THE FIRE ALARM SOUNDS WHILE YOU ARE ON DUTY IN A CLASSROOM:



- Assist in the evacuation of the children from your classroom.
- Collect the classroom first aid kit, classroom binder, and attendance clipboard.
  - Staff member closest to the outdoor exit is responsible for leading children out that exit and to the designated meeting place: sidewalk northeast of the center, leading to Sand Cherry Lane. Every classroom must stay together as a group.
  - Staff member farthest from the outdoor exit is responsible for ensuring everyone has evacuated the classroom.
- The last staff member to exit the classroom must turn off all lights and close all doors.
- Once assembled at the designated meeting place, the Lead Teacher is responsible for using the classroom attendance clipboard to ensure all children are accounted for.
  - If the Lead Teacher is not present, the Full Time Assistant Teacher will assume this responsibility.
- The Director and/or Assistant Director will verify, as soon as possible, that all children are accounted for.
- If unable to return to the building in a timely manner:
  - the children will be walked to the Corvallis Firehall
- Lead Teachers will be responsible for contacting parents and informing them of the situation.

**\*\*FIRE DRILLS WILL BE PRACTICED MONTHLY\*\***

The Director or Assistant Director will initiate all drills and maintain records of all drills.

## Intruder or Dangerous Adult

A dangerous adult is considered someone who is displaying inappropriate or threatening behavior, carrying a weapon, or showing signs of intoxication from either drugs or alcohol. This also includes an individual that is prohibited by court order from picking up or having contact with a child. If there is an intruder or dangerous adult in the center:

- Staff members in the immediate area will position themselves between the children and intruder/dangerous adult.
- A staff member will attempt to have the parent/intruder move to the hallway and close the classroom door, while a second staff member calls the Director or Assistant Director to assist with the situation.

### IN THE EVENT OF AN INTRUDER OR DANGEROUS ADULT:

- Staff members will be notified by the Director and/or Assistant Director
- ALL staff and children must return to their classrooms; lock all classroom doors; and sit on the floor away from doors and windows. Wait for an "All Clear" from the Director or Assistant Director before continuing with activities.
- The Director and/or Assistant Director, or a staff member designated by the Director and/or Assistant Director will contact the Ravalli County Police Department 911 to notify them of the situation. The Director and/or Assistant Director will instruct the intruder or dangerous adult to leave the premises, maintaining visual contact with the individual until the police arrive, or until the individual leaves.

### IN THE EVENT OF AN INTOXICATED PARENT:

- The Director and/or Assistant Director and Lead Teacher will talk with the intoxicated parent about alternative arrangements for pick up, while another authorized pick up person is contacted.
- If another authorized pick up person cannot be reached, the child must be released to the intoxicated parent.
- The Director and/or Assistant Director, or Lead Teacher will inform the parent that the police will be notified.
- Call the Ravalli County Police Department 911 and inform them of the situation. Provide as much information as possible, including parent's name, make/model of the car, and license plate number

### Blizzard/Severe Winter Weather

The Director and/or Assistant Director will monitor the weather and local news stations throughout the day to determine when it is appropriate to close the center early or cancel care for the following day.

Lead Teachers are responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the situation. Routine classroom activities will continue until parents arrive.

### Lightning

All children must immediately return indoors when lightning is observed. Children playing under or around a tree must be immediately removed from the area.

### Missing or Abducted Children

- In the event of an abducted child, the Lead Teacher will search for the child in the immediate area, while another staff member calls the Director and/or Assistant Director to help with the search.
  - If the child cannot be located in a reasonable amount of time, the Director and/or Assistant Director will notify the Ravalli County Police Department 911 and the child's parents.
- In the event of an abducted child, the Lead Teacher must immediately contact the Director and/or Assistant Director, the Ravalli County Police Department, and the child's parents.

### Power Failure

Staff members and children should remain in the classroom and if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may go to the outdoor playground until power resumes.

If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the center will close, and parents contacted.

- Lead Teachers are responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the closing and of the need to immediately pick up their child.
- Activities will resume as possible until parents arrive.

### Chemical Spill

ENVIRONMENTAL OR OUTDOOR CHEMICAL SPILL:

If the center receives notification from the Ravalli County Police Department that there has been a chemical spill in the area, or if staff members observe an unusual odor while outdoors:

- Staff members and children must immediately return to their classrooms.
- All doors and windows must be immediately closed.
- The Director and/or Assistant Director will monitor the situation and provide information to staff members as it is available. Further action taken will depend on instructions received from the Ravalli County Police Department.

**INDOOR CHEMICAL SPILL:** (including the mixing of chemicals which creates hazardous fumes)

- Immediately notify the Director or Assistant Director of the situation then assist in the evacuation of the children from your classroom.
- Collect the classroom first aid kit, classroom binder, and attendance clipboard.
  - Staff member closest to the outdoor exit is responsible for leading children out that exit and to the designated meeting place. Every classroom must stay together as a group
  - Staff member farthest from the outdoor exit is responsible for ensuring everyone has evacuated the classroom.
- The last staff member to exit the classroom must turn off all lights and close all doors.
- Once assembled at the designated meeting place, the Lead Teacher is responsible for using the classroom attendance clipboard to ensure all children are accounted for.
  - If the Lead Teacher is not present, the Full Time Assistant Teacher will assume this responsibility.
- The Director and/or Assistant Director will verify, as soon as possible, with Lead Teachers that all children are accounted for.
- The Director or Assistant Director will contact the Ravalli County Police Department 911 to inform them of the situation. Further action taken will depend on instructions from the Ravalli County Police Department.
- If unable to return to the building in a timely manner:
  - Children will be transported to the Corvallis Fire
  - Lead Teachers will be responsible for contacting parents and informing them of the situation.

## Bomb Threats

**If a staff member receives a bomb threat or locates a suspicious package, the Director or Assistant Director must be immediately notified.** DO NOT ATTEMPT TO MOVE A SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE. The Director or Assistant Director will contact the Ravalli County Police Department 911.

**IF YOU ARE ON DUTY IN CLASSROOM:**

- Position yourself between the children and impending threat, as much as possible.
- Collect the classroom first aid kit, classroom binder, and attendance clipboard.
  - Staff member closest to the outdoor exit is responsible for leading children out that exit and to the designated meeting place: Every classroom must stay together as a group.

- Staff member farthest from the outdoor exit is responsible for ensuring everyone has evacuated the classroom.
- Once assembled at the designated meeting place, the Lead Teacher is responsible for using the classroom attendance clipboard to ensure all children are accounted for.
  - If the Lead Teacher is not present, the Full Time Assistant Teacher will assume this responsibility.
- The Director and/or Assistant Director will verify, as soon as possible, with Lead Teachers that all children are accounted for.
- If unable to return to the building in a timely manner:
  - Children will be transported to the Corvallis Fire Department
  - Lead Teachers will be responsible for contacting parents and informing them of the situation.

## Earthquake

In case of an earthquake, staff members will assist children in seeking shelter under tables or outdoors and away from buildings. The first aid kit, classroom emergency binder and classroom attendance clipboard should remain with the Lead Teacher always. When notified by the Director or Assistant Director that the situation is safe, the Lead Teacher must use the classroom attendance clipboard to verify all children are accounted for. Parents will be notified as soon as possible.

## General Emergency Procedure Guidelines

- A First Aid kit is located on the wall near the outdoor exit in each classroom. An additional First Aid kit is also available in the office. The Assistant Director will restock items monthly; however, staff members are responsible for reporting when additional items are needed before that time.
- All incidents or accidents (including biting) are reported to the parents, Lead Teacher, Director and/or Assistant Director using the Incident/Accident Report form. A completed form must be signed by a parent on the day of the incident. A copy must be given to the parent and the signed original given to the Assistant Director to be filed in the child's enrollment folder. In some cases, (i.e., there is a large cut, bruises or a bite mark visible on the child's body) staff members are required to call parents before picking up to inform them of the incident.
- Parents are discouraged from trying to pick up their child during an emergency. However, if a parent arrives during such a situation, the child must be released to the parent.
- In the event of an emergency, it is important to remain calm.
- As a staff member, your first responsibility is ensuring the safety of the children in your care.

## Hand Washing Procedure

All adults in Sapphire Early Learning Center classrooms need to follow ALL the steps identified below to prevent the spread of disease to children and staff members.

### HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS MOST EFFECTIVELY

- Use soap and warm (between 60 and 120 degrees F), running water
- Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds (sing the "ABC's").

- Wash all surfaces, including backs of hands, wrists, under fingernails with fingers pointed to the sink drain
- Rinse hands well with the water running
- Dry hands with a disposable towel
- Turn off water with the paper towel

## WHEN TO WASH YOUR HANDS

- Upon arrival in the classroom
- When changing from one group of children to another
- Before preparing or serving food
- After eating food
- After diapering/toileting a child
- After contact with bodily fluids (vomit, blood, mucus)
- Before and after administration of medication
- Before and after sensory play, including water play
- After coming indoors or returning from a break
- After handling pets
- After using the restroom

## WHEN TO WASH THE CHILDREN'S HANDS

- Upon arrival in the classroom
- Before eating, drinking or preparing snacks for others
- After eating
- After using the toilet or having their diapers changed
- After contact with bodily fluids (vomit, blood mucus)
- Before and after sensory play, including water play
- After returning indoors from the playground
- After handling pets

If they are too young to do it themselves, YOU wash the children's hands. Older children should get into the habit of hand washing to stop disease from spreading. Remember: they will learn by watching YOU.

## Diapering Procedure

### Preparing for Diapering

To minimize contamination outside of the diapering area, prepare for a diaper change before bringing the child to diapering area, for example, by having ready:

- Changing table paper (if used) to cover the table from the child's shoulders to heels (in case it becomes soiled and must be folded over to give a clean surface during the change)
- Enough wipes for the diaper change including wiping the bottom and hands after taking the soiled diaper away from the child's skin)
- A clean diaper, plastic bag for soiled clothes, and clean clothes of soiled clothing is anticipated

- Non-porous gloves if they will be used, and a dab of diaper cream on a disposable piece of paper or tissue if cream is being used.

### Diapering Procedure

1. Prepare for diapering as indicated above.
2. Place child on diapering table. Remove clothing to access diaper. If soiled, place clothes into plastic bag.
3. Remove soiled diaper and place into lined, hands-free trash container used only for diaper waste. (To limit odor, seal in a plastic bag before placing into trash container.)
4. Use wipes to clean child's bottom from front to back.
5. Use a wipe to remove soil from adult's hands.
6. Use another wipe to remove soil from child's hands.
7. Throw soiled wipes into lined, hands-free trash container.
8. Put on clean diaper and redress child.
9. Place child at sink and wash hands following the "handwashing procedure."
10. Spray diapering surface with bleach-water solution and wait more than 10 seconds before wiping with disposable towel or allow to air dry. It should be noted that the recommended practice is to wait for 2 minutes to allow the solution to kill the germs. However, if there is a delay of at least 10 seconds before the solution is wiped from the surface, this will be considered adequate. The surface cannot be sprayed and immediately wiped.
11. Adult washes hands using the "handwashing procedure," without contaminating any other surfaces

### Additional Precautions

- The diapering surface must be sanitized after each diaper change with a bleach-water or other approved sanitizing solution (all surfaces must be to be sanitized – e.g., no quilted pads or safety straps, no containers that are stored on the diapering surface). The bleach-water solution must be allowed to stay on the surface for more than 10 seconds, and ideally 2 minutes, to kill the germs. So, it is best for staff to spray the surface as the last step of the diapering procedure before washing their own hands. After the time lapse, the surface can be dried (no additional handwashing required at this time) or allowed to air dry (and wiped dry if still damp) before use with another child.
- Diapers are disposed of in a hands-free covered can (usually one that has a step pedal that lifts the lid) to prevent further contamination of surfaces.
- Toys that are played with or objects that are touched, while children's diapers are changed, must be put aside to be sanitized.

Note: Both child's and staff's hands must be washed after the diapering procedure is completed.

### Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting of Equipment

Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting are important steps to removing dirt and reducing the spread of germs in childcare settings. Routine cleaning with detergent soap and water removes dirt and grime from surfaces. Floors, carpets, walls, and windows are cleaned. Sanitizing removes dirt or filth and small amounts of germs. Bedding, bathrooms, kitchen counters, dishes and eating utensils are clean (to remove dirt) then sanitized. But some childcare items and surfaces require the added

step of disinfecting after cleaning to kill the germs on a surface. Diaper changing tables, hand washing sinks, tabletops, and some toys should be cleaned then disinfected.

Using regular household bleach and water solution is an inexpensive, effective and easy way to remove or kill germs found on surfaces in childcare. Bleach and water solution may be used in several ways:

- Dipping the object into a sink or pan filled with the bleach and water solution then letting the item air dry.
- Using paper towels soaked in bleach water solution to wash surfaces, then letting the surface air dry.
- Using spray bottles to thoroughly wet a surface, then allowing the surface to air dry.

All containers of bleach/water solution should be clearly labeled with the contents of the container and the date. Example: Bleach and Water Solution, March 3, 2010. Remember to keep all containers of cleaning and disinfecting products out of the reach of children.

A solution of bleach and water loses its strength and is weakened by heat and sunlight. A fresh bleach and water solution must be mixed every day. Unused bleach and water solution should be poured down a drain at the end of the day. Do not discard bleach water solution where other cleaners or chemicals are used. Do not mix household bleach with other household chemicals such as toilet bowl cleaner, rust removers, acids or products containing ammonia. Mixing these chemicals with bleach will produce toxic and hazardous gases.

## Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting for diarrheal and vomiting events.

All spillage of and areas contaminated with body fluid should be cordoned off and cleared up as soon as possible and the area well ventilated. Vomit-soiled areas should be cleaned and disinfected to a radius of 12 inches. As virus particles in the vomit can contaminate surfaces and put others at risk of infection.

The following instructions should be used by individuals who clean up vomit or feces to minimize the risk of cross-infection.

- Spillages of body fluids should be cleared up immediately
- Wear disposable gloves
- Use a spill kit if available (abracadabra)
- Use a paper towel to soak up gross spillage. Transfer these and any other solid matter into a plastic bag.
- Clean the area with hot soapy water using a disposable cloth
- Disinfect the area with detergent with bleach water
- Dispose of cloths and gloves into a plastic bag
- Wash hands thoroughly using soap and water and dry them. Hand sanitizer should not be a substitute for hand washing after clearing up vomit or feces
- Contaminated carpets should be cleaned with detergent and hot water and cleaned with Bleach and water if (if bleach-resistant) otherwise should steam cleaned.

- Manual soaking or handwashing **must not be carried out**. Flush any solid material into the toilet, avoiding splashing or dispose of in plastic bag.
- Contaminated clothing should be placed in a plastic bag and taken home by the owner
- Any soiled linens should be washed separately on the prewash cycle at the highest temperature the item can with stand.

### Sanitizing

When using bleach and water for sanitizing eating utensils or toys that are mouthed, a weaker bleach and water solution may be used.

- 1 teaspoon bleach to 1 quart of cool tap water
- Dishes, eating utensils and toys should be submerged in the bleach and water solution for at least 1 minute then allowed to air dry. Food preparation and food service items should not be towel dried.

### Disinfecting

Use a stronger bleach and water solution on diaper changing tables, hand washing sinks, toilets, and other surfaces that need disinfecting. Use the following recipe to mix bleach and water for disinfecting.

- 1/4 cup household bleach in 1 gallon of cool water OR
- 1 tablespoon bleach to 1 quart of cool water
- Allow the surface to remain wet for **2 minutes**.



## EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

The employee handbook describes important information about Sapphire Early Learning Center, and I understand that I should consult the Owner regarding any questions not answered in the handbook.

I have entered my employment relationship with Sapphire Early Learning Center voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment. Accordingly, either I or Sapphire Early Learning Center can terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, during the probationary period, so long as there is no violation of applicable federal or state law.

Since the information, policies, and benefits described here are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur, except to Sapphire Early Learning Center's policy of employment-at-will. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies. Only the owner of Sapphire Early Learning Center can adopt any revisions to the policies in this handbook.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document. I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

EMPLOYEE'S NAME (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_