

# Parent Handbook

Countryside Child Care Center, Inc.  
Rochester Memorial School  
16 Pine Street  
Rochester, MA. 02770  
508-763-2049

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## **Philosophy**

Countryside Child Care Center School Age Program is a program that accepts children ages 5 (already enrolled/finished kindergarten)-14 years of age. Countryside Child Care is a wonderful place for children to grow and learn. Children are provided with a quality setting in a warm and nurturing environment. Staff members plan and implement age appropriate learning activities that encourage children to learn, play and explore. Strong relationships are built with children and families to form a bridge for children between home and child care.

The staff at Countryside Child Care shall not discriminate against in providing services to all children and their families on a basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

## Countryside Child Care School Age Payments...RMS

Before School: \$17

After School: \$18

Before and After School on the same day: \$30...BS is 17 and AS is 13

Half day: \$35

Full day: \$45

### HALF DAYS...

Child does not attend on that day...\$35

Child attends before school only...\$35

Child attends after school only...35-18=\$17

Child attends before and after school...35-13=\$22

### FULL DAYS...

Child does not attend on that day...\$45

Child attends before school only...45-17=\$28

Child attends after school only...45-18=\$27

Child attends before and after school...45-30=\$15

I will have a sheet for parents to sign up on for every half day, full day and vacation days. If you sign up for any of these days, payment is expected, even if you make alternate arrangements.

Parents are responsible for payment for the days they signed up for, regardless if your child is absent from school or gets dismissed early, holidays, and school vacations...I do allow each family to choose one of the vacation weeks free of payment, whether it be the week in December, February or April. Just be sure to let me know ahead of time for billing purposes.

I am closed on holidays that RMS is closed. Also, if there is a snow day, payments are still expected even though Countryside at RMS will be closed. Also, delayed starts, Countryside will not open for morning care, but payments are still required.

Closures due to severe weather conditions: If the program has to be closed because of uncontrollable circumstances, such as loss of power, heat, etc... and it is not safe for the program to remain open, the director/group leader will immediately call the parent first and then the contacts on the child's enrollment packet. There is no tuition reduction for holidays or for program closures.

Late fees are as follows: 6:01-6:05...\$10

6:06-6:10...\$15

6:11-6:15...\$20

6:16-6:20...\$25, etc... For the late fee payment...it is given directly to

the closing teacher at the time of pick up. If that late fee is not given that night, your child may not return to Countryside until that late fee is paid in full.

## **Child Guidance**

Educators will provide guidance to all children in a positive and consistent way based on the understanding of the individual needs and development of children by encouraging self-control and using positive child guidance techniques such as recognizing and reinforcing children's appropriate behaviors, having reasonable and positive expectations, setting clear and consistent limits, and redirecting.

Staff will help children learn and use social, communication, and emotional regulation skills in place of challenging behaviors.

Staff will use environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to encourage appropriate behavior and prevent challenging behaviors from happening.

Staff will intervene quickly when children are physically aggressive with one another to help them develop more positive strategies for resolving conflict.

Staff will explain the rules and procedures and the reasons for them to children, and where appropriate and feasible, allowing children to participate in the establishment of program rules, policies and procedures.

Staff will discuss behavior management techniques among staff to promote consistency.

## **Transportation Plan**

To and from the center: Countryside Child Care Center does not provide transportation to and from the center.

In case of an emergency: a staff member at the center will always call 911.

Field trips: Countryside Child Care Center does not go on field trips.

## **Parent Communication**

There will be friendly greetings and departures when children arrive and leave for the day. Teachers will create an atmosphere that involves communication with one another about their child's day either before or after school. There is a binder labeled Tri-town happenings and so much more as you walk in. Inside the binder you will find lots of informational resources and upcoming family and community events. Workshops will take place for parents and staff to attend for information about child development, nutrition, behaviors and much more. Monthly newsletters will be written and given to every family. Progress reports are written once a year. Parent visits/phone conversations may be made. Parents are encouraged to talk to one another about the overall childrearing experience.

## **Behavior Management Policy**

The techniques for behavior management in this program are designed to set reasonable goals and positive expectations that offer choices that provide children an opportunity to verbalize their feelings, which encourage children to develop self-control through understanding. The teaching staff will aid in any situation that they foresee may lead to problems. Teachers will redirect any uncooperative children to another activity in a more positive direction. If a child is still having a hard time, a "take a break" method will come into play. The child will have to sit out away from the group for about five minutes. After their time is up, the teacher in the classroom will go over and talk to the child about why he was asked to "take a break". Children will be encouraged to work out their own solutions to problems that arise, if applicable. This encourages shy children to speak for themselves and aggressive children to verbalize. Children are always encouraged to use their words. Where appropriate and feasible, children shall participate in the establishment of rules, policies, and procedures in their classrooms. By doing this, they are more apt to follow rules that they have put into prospective, allowing for more tolerable behavior.

## **Family Involvement Information**

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Department of Early Education and Care the legal responsibility of promulgating and enforcing rules and regulations governing the operation of family child care, small group and school age and large group and school age child care.

These regulations, 606 CMR 7.00, establish standards for operation of family child care, small group and school age and large group and school age child care programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations require certain things of licensees (program owner) in regard to their work with families. A summary of the required parent information, rights, and responsibilities are identified below.

**Parent Communication**-on-going communication is very important. Teachers speak to the parents at drop off in the morning to find out about the night before and at pick up. Daily sheets are sent home in each classroom for each individual child stating their homework status and their time either before or after school.

**Enrollment Meeting**-parents must meet with the program director before admitting their child to the center. The parents and their children will have an orientation to the program. This includes meeting the teachers and having a tour of the program. The parents and the director will discuss the families interest and needs, the child's developmental history which will be updated annually and maintained in the child's file, and information is shared about any therapeutic, educational, social and support services received by the child in the past.

**Parent Input**-there is a suggestion/request box on the director's desk for any individual that has a comment about the program. It is up to the program to decide whether or not the suggestion/request will be implemented. It will be discussed with the individual who wrote the comment regardless of what decision is made.

**Parent Visits**-You have the right to visit the center and your child's room at any time while your child is present.

**Parent Conferences**-conferences are available at any time throughout the year from the request of a parent or a classroom teacher.

**Progress Reports**-School age children will receive a written progress report every six months. It is filled out by his/her classroom teachers. There may be a request to have a meeting to discuss your child's activities and participation in the program. Teachers will provide a copy to you, and will maintain a copy of the report in your child's file.

**Children's Records**-Information contained in a child's record is confidential. Program staff may not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without your written consent. You must be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

**Transfer of Records**-When your child is no longer in care, the licensee can give your child's record to you, or any other person you identify, upon your written request.

**Amending Your Child's Records**-You have the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant materials to the child's record. You also have the right request deletion or amendment of any information contained in your child's record. If you believe that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in your child's record, you have the right to a conference with the director to make your objections known. If you have a conference with the director, she must inform you in writing within one week of his decision regarding your objections. If the director decides in your favor, she must immediately take the steps necessary to put the decision into effect.

**Access to Your Child's Record**-You are entitled to have access to your child's record at reasonable times on request. You have access to your child's record within two business days of your request unless you consent to a longer time period. You are allowed to view your child's entire record, even if it is maintained in more than one location. The center has procedures governing access to, duplication of, and dissemination of children's record, and maintains a permanent, written log in each child's record which identifies anyone who has had access to the record or who has received any information from the record. This log is available only to you and the people responsible for maintaining the center's records.

## **Program Responsibilities**

**Providing Information to the Parents:** parents must be notified immediately of any injury which requires any medical care beyond minor first aid or of any emergency administration of non-prescription medication; immediately of any allegation of abused or neglect involving their children while in the care and custody of the director; prior to or as soon as possible following any change in educators; at the end of the day regarding any minor first aid administered; in writing within 48 hours of an incident; whenever special problems and significant developments arise; whenever a communicable disease or condition has been identified in the program; in writing seven days prior to the implementation of any change in program policy or procedures; prior to the introduction of any pets into the program; of the use of any herbicides or pesticides, prior to their use whenever possible; and whenever the program deviates from the planned menu.

**Availability of DEEC Regulations-**The program maintains a copy of the regulations, 102 CMR 7.00: *Standards for Licensure or Approval of Large Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs*, on the premises of the center and must make them available to any person upon request. If you have a question about any of the regulations, ask the center to show them to you.

## **Procedure for Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect to the Department of Social Services and to the Office**

All staff members are mandated reporters according to Massachusetts General Law C119, Section 51A. This means that if a staff member has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child, he/she must file a report with the Department of Children and Families.

**Department of Children and Families Telephone # is: 1-800-232-0991**

**Department of Early Education and Care Telephone # is: 1-508-828-5025**

### **The Following Procedures Must be Followed:**

1. A staff member who suspects abuse or neglect must document her observations including the child's name, date, time, child's injuries, child's behavior, and any other pertinent information. The staff member will discuss this information with the director.
2. The director or the staff member with the assistance of the director will make a verbal report to DCF, to be followed by a required written report 51A within 48 hours.
3. If a staff member feels that an incident should be reported to DCF, and the director disagrees, the staff member may report to DCF directly.
4. All concerns of suspected abuse and neglect that are reported to DCF will be communicated to the parents by the director unless such a report is contra-indicated.

**Procedures for Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect While in the Care of the Center**-it is the center's commitment to protect all children in care from abuse and neglect. The following procedures for reporting suspected child abuse/neglect while the child is in the center's care.

The director will ensure that any educator accused of abuse or neglect of a child in a report to the Department of Children and Families does not work directly with the children until the Department of Children and Families investigation is completed and for such further time as the Department of Early Education and Care requires.

A meeting will be held with the staff member in question to inform him/her of the filed report. The staff member will be immediately suspended from the program without pay pending the outcome of the DCF and DEEC investigations. If the allegations of abuse and neglect are substantiated, it will be the decision of the director whether or not the staff member will be reinstated. The director and staff will cooperate fully with all investigations.

If a parent reports an incident to a staff member, the parent should be directed to the program administrator.

## **Referral Services and Termination**

The teachers at Countryside Child Care Center shall use the following procedures for referring parents to appropriate social, mental health, educational and medical services for their child should the center staff feel that an assessment for such additional services would benefit the child.

**Referral Process**-whenever any staff member is concerned about a child's development or behavior and feel that further evaluation should be done, they should report it to the child's classroom teacher, who will review concerns with the director.

If the administrator agrees, the teacher is requested to complete an observation report and review the child's record prior to making a referral.

The director will maintain a list of current referral resources in the community for children in need of social, mental health, educational or medical services. This list shall include the contact person for Chapter 766 and Early Intervention Program referrals.

**Referral Meeting With Parents**-The director schedules a meeting with parents to notify them of the centers concern and prepares a current list of possible referral resources.

At the meeting, the director will provide to the parent a written statement including the reason for recommending a referral for additional services, a brief summary of the centers observations related to the referral and any efforts the center may have made to accommodate the child's needs.

The director will offer assistance to the child's parents in making the referral. Parents will be encouraged to call or request in writing an evaluation. If parents need extra support, the center may, with written parental consent, contact the referral agency for them.

**Follow-up to the Referral**-the director will, with parental permission, contact the agency or service provider who evaluated the child for consultation and assistance in meeting the child's needs at the center. If it is determined that the child is not in need of services from this agency, or is ineligible to receive services, the center shall review the child's progress at the center every three months to determine if another referral is necessary.

**Record of Referrals**-The director will maintain a written record of any referrals, including the parent conference and the results. A referral checklist will be kept in the child's record.

## **Plan to Avoid Termination/Suspension of Families and Children**

The teachers at Countryside Child Care Center shall use the following procedures for terminating a child or family from the center:

1. The health and safety of the child at the center cannot be assured.
2. The child's developmental needs are not being met at the center.

Parents will be notified in writing and at a one on one meeting when possible, about the circumstances including the reasons for termination. A copy of this letter will be kept in the child's record.

3. Immediate termination may happen depending on the extremity of the situation and that is determined by the director.

The director will inform parents of the availability of information and referral for other services through a child care resource agency.

When any child or family is terminated from the center whether initiated by the center or the parent(s), the teacher will prepare the child for termination from the center in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand. For preschoolers, the teacher should simply talk with the child and other children about the departing child and simple reasons for the departure, such as:

1. He will be going to a new school which can help him more.
2. She needs a different school to help her learn.
3. He is not leaving because he is bad; he needs a different kind of school and we will help his parent's find such a school.

Other suggested activities that might be appropriate include:

The children can give the departing child drawings and/or stories about the center. The class can make a book about the center with drawings and photos and stories of the center. The departing child can write (dictate) a story about the center. A photo of the child can be taken while involved in his or her favorite activity. The class may participate in a "good bye party".

Occasionally, a child's departure is sudden and the child and the center are not given an opportunity to say good-bye. The teacher will write a simple note of good-bye addressed to the child; photos and/or drawings may be included.

## **Suspension of Families and Children**

Families that have children enrolled may be suspended from Countryside Child Care Center if the following situations arise:

1. Your child's physical and immunizations are not updated yearly
2. As stated in the payments section, if you are two weeks behind in payments, then your child may not attend the center until the full amount is paid.
3. Not complying with all the rules and regulations written in the handbook.
4. Disciplining issues becoming a problem, such as your child is acting out repetitively; biting, scratching or physical fighting; having obsessive behavioral problems that are effecting other children or teachers at the center; or constantly acting up and antagonizing children at the center, then steps will be taken to begin the suspension/termination process.

The steps to be taken are as follows to avoid any type of suspension/termination:

1. Provide referrals for specific issues the child is having.
2. Set up trainings for the teachers and invite the parents.
3. Develop a behavioral intervention plan with the parents and implement it not only in the program, but at home as well.

If the issue is not with the child, but the parents, such as being late consistently on picking up your child, being late on payments, not updating your child's file when notices are given out, or not respecting/understanding what the staff/director at Countryside is explaining to you about your child about issues that have arisen and not agreeing with the policies Countryside has put forth in order to obtain a safe and healthy environment for all the families and children, then the termination process will begin. If these regulations are not being followed, then the director will give written notices to identify the problem(s), and if the parent(s) still do not respond, then a conference will be scheduled to try to resolve any issues that families are having as to why they are not complying with the rules. The action of suspension is the next step and the parents will be forewarned of this action before it takes place. There will be a letter sent out if the family does become suspended or terminated with conditions to return once the regulations are obeyed by the parents, depending on the final outcome and what the situation is at hand. Ultimately, the director has the final decision in what is best for the family, child, and center.