

# JCPRD Pre-K Enrichment Program Handbook 2019-20



**JOHNSON COUNTY**  
**Park & Recreation**  
**District**

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# MISSION STATEMENT

**D**eveloping health and happiness in our community's children through safe, diverse, and character-building experiences.



JOHNSON COUNTY  
PARK & RECREATION  
DISTRICT

# Philosophy & Goals

- \* Creating an environment that assures all children feel safe, secure, and nurtured.
- \* Building an atmosphere that helps children feel confident, valued, and accepted as individuals.
- \* Challenging students to cooperate, accept responsibility, embrace diversity, and enhance character skills.
- \* Fostering relationships that promote open communication between children, parents, and service to the community.
- \* Introducing children to enriching activities that stimulate creativity, critical thinking, and exploration.
- \* Encouraging an appreciation of nature and responsible stewardship through outdoor exploration.
- \* Promoting healthy lifestyles through age appropriate recreational activities that support the social, emotional, and physical development of our children.

# Locations

**Briarwood Elementary:** 5300 W. 86<sup>th</sup> Street, Prairie Village, (913) 381-9620

Program Director: Mary Stewart

**Broken Arrow Elementary:** 5901 Alden, Shawnee, (913) 631-5289

Program Director: Carrie Daly

**Brookwood Elementary:** 3411 W. 103<sup>rd</sup> Street, Leawood, (913) TBD

Program Director: TBD

**Lenexa Hills Elementary:** 8650 Haven Street, Lenexa, (913) TBD

Program Director: TBD

**Merriam Park Elementary:** 6100 Mastin Street, Merriam, (913) TBD

Program Director: Mallory Hillis

**Rhein Benninghoven Elementary:** 6720 Caenen, (913) TBD

Program Director: Donna Baughman

**Rising Star Elementary:** 8600 Candlelight Lane, Lenexa, (913) 438-9650

Program Director: Amy Branson

**Shawano Elementary:** 11230 W. 75<sup>th</sup> Street, Shawnee, (913) 962-5023

Program Director: Denise Allen

**Trailwood Elementary:** 5101 W. 95<sup>th</sup> Street, Overland Park, (913) 642-6938

Program Director: Jennifer Barnes

# Hours of Operation

**Monday – Friday 7 am to 6 pm**

Snow Days: We offer Inclement Weather Care at consolidated locations (TBD) for pre-registered families for \$25 per day. You are charged for all Inclement Weather Days regardless of your child's attendance. (Follows Shawnee Mission School District inclement weather closures)

## **Program Description**

Johnson County Park and Recreation District is committed to providing families with quality Pre-K programs at an affordable cost. Our staff is dedicated to providing children with what they need: a safe, enriching, and fun place to be. Each program site values the unique nature of children by offering a variety of group and self-selected activities. Choices offered will include environmental literacy and healthy lifestyle development. The foundation affords endless SEL (social emotional learning) and HEPA (healthy eating and physical activity). Our caring and qualified staff provide a relaxed and supportive environment that optimizes child participation and makes learning fun!

Fully licensed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, our programs maintain a 1:12 staff to child ratio. Our site program directors possess bachelor degrees from accredited colleges and universities. Their advanced education allows directors and their staff to plan a wide variety of interesting and age appropriate activities including science experiments, cooking, health, fitness, environmental education and recreation.

# Fee Schedule

*Pre-K Enrichment Weekly Fee Payment Schedule  
2019-2020 School Year*

<b>2019-2020</b>	<b>Automatic Payment Pulled on the Following Days:</b>
August 2019	9, 16, 23, 30
September 2019	6, 13, 20, 27
October 2019	4, 11, 18, 25
November 2019	1, 8, 15, 29 (Week of Thanksgiving no charge)
December 2019	6, 13
January 2020	3, 10, 17, 24, 31
February 2020	7, 14, 21, 28
March 2020	6, 13, 20, 27
April 2020	3, 10, 17, 24
May 2020	1, 8, 15 (May 26 <sup>th</sup> optional day for \$30; subject to change)

Winter Break: December 23, 2019-January 3, 2020

Summer Enrollment Separate Enroll in February 2020

\*may be offered at consolidated locations

*Only recurring payments will be accepted; NO checks, money orders, or cash.*

*Payments will be deducted on the above dates.*

# Holidays

## Pre-K Enrichment 2019-2020 School Year

### HOLIDAY

### DATE

#### 2019

Labor Day	September 2 (Monday)
Day Before Thanksgiving	November 27 (Wednesday)
Thanksgiving Day	November 28 (Thursday)
Day After Thanksgiving	November 29 (Friday)
Winter Break	December 23-Jan. 3 (optional enrollment)
Winter Break	December 24 (Tuesday)
Winter Break	December 25 (Wednesday)
Winter Break	December 31 (Tuesday)

#### 2020

New Year's	January 1 (Wednesday)
Martin Luther King Day	January 20 (Monday)
President's Day	February 17 (Monday)
Memorial Day	May 25 (Monday)

**\*SPECIAL NOTE:** PROGRAMS WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE ON ANY OF THE ABOVE DATES, DUE TO DISTRICT AND CUSTODIAL HOLIDAYS.

**\*Holidays subject to change based on school district calendar\***

Children enrolled in Before School ONLY may attend all-day program days for an additional charge of \$25.00 per day. Children enrolled part time may attend in-service days outside of their normal schedule for an additional \$30 per day.



**JOHNSON COUNTY**  
**PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT**  
**PRE-K ENRICHMENT**  
**PARENT POLICY STATEMENT**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Developing health and happiness in our community's children through safe, diverse, and character-building experiences.

**1. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

Johnson County Park and Recreation District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, ancestry, or handicapped status in the provision of service or employment.

**2. CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

All contents of children's files including health history, medication form, emergency medical release, personal data sheet, correspondence from parents, IEP, incident reports, and staff generated correspondence are confidential documents. File contents cannot be duplicated, distributed, discussed, and/or viewed by anyone other than the custodial parent/guardian, program staff, law enforcement officers, KDHE designee, and emergency medical personnel. Custodial parent/guardian reserves the right to make their children's records available to designated parties through signed permission. Documents can be released only to custodial parent/guardian and DCF child protection agency representatives. Release under any circumstances must be mandated by court order. Children's records will remain on file at the program until enrollment is terminated and the file is returned to the custodial parent/guardian.

**3. REQUIRED FORMS**

Kansas State law requires all children to have a personal data sheet, health assessment, and authorization for emergency medical care on file at the center before attendance is permitted. Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE) is stringently enforcing this regulation. Centers can be fined and even closed for non-compliance. Therefore, all forms must be submitted to our office two-weeks prior to the first week of care. Children with incomplete records cannot attend the program. The health assessment must be fully completed on the attached KDHE form and signed by a doctor of medicine or other approved personnel.

**4. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

Children attending the program must be pre-registered in advance of attendance by submitting the above forms and paying the \$30.00 registration fee. The registration fee is not applied to the weekly tuition.

**5. TERMS OF CARE**

Attendance days must be pre-selected and consistent. Weekly fees must be paid in order to retain space. One week advance

notice is required if discontinuing care. All fees are nonrefundable. A charge of \$5.00 for each 5 minutes past the 6:00 p.m. closure will be assessed to parents for after hour care. We realize that under some circumstances lateness cannot be avoided and require parents to call us should such a situation occur. Regardless of the cause of after hour care, charges will be added to your account and you are responsible for calling in and paying within 3 business days.

## **6. FEE PAYMENT**

Weekly fees are due on Fridays, in advance of care, according to the Payment Schedule (see page 9). Fees must be paid in the form of automatic recurring payments or by DCF Vision Card (see [www.dcf.ks.gov](http://www.dcf.ks.gov) for more information). Credit/Debit cards of Mastercard, Discover, or Visa are accepted for both recurring payments and fees not covered by DCF Vision Card. A \$30.00 fee will be assessed for declined credit/debit card payments. All fees are nonrefundable and non-transferrable, with the exception of state and federal subsidies.

## **7. ABSENCES/DAILY SIGN IN/SIGN OUT**

Parents must notify center staff any time a child will be absent from the program by 9am. Parents must be present to sign their children into the program in the mornings and out of the program upon pick-up. A photo ID may be requested by staff at any time for the safety of our participants.

## **8. CHILD RELEASE**

All individuals authorized to pick up children must be at least 16 years old and listed in advance on the personal data sheet. Until all authorized parties are known to the staff, photo identification will be required at the time of pick up. State law prohibits the release of children to parents and other authorized adults who appear to be impaired by drugs or alcohol. Any existing court orders barring parent contact, visitation, and child release must be on file at the center to support law enforcement interventions.

## **9. EMERGENCY CLOSING**

Natural disasters and utility outages can result in emergency closure of the program. No alternate care location will be available in the event of emergency closures. Your director will notify you of the closure and again when care can be resumed. Utility outages or any other emergency evacuation of children during the day will result in the cancellation of the center until the facility is reopened for regularly scheduled programming. Snow day care will not be available. We follow the Shawnee Mission School District inclement weather closures.

## **10. DRESS FOR SCHOOL**

Prepare your child for an enjoyable day at the Center by dressing him/her in comfortable clothing and outerwear appropriate for indoor/outdoor play. Durable play clothes and sturdy shoes are appropriate. Keep a change of seasonal clothing at the center and label all clothing. Avoid sending children in their best clothing, since even while wearing paint shirts, children often get paint on clothing. Also, remember to dress your child for the weather, as a portion of the day (120 minutes daily) will be outside when possible. During the Spring and Fall months make sure you send a light jacket with your child daily or dress them in layers for the cool mornings and warm afternoons. Have your child wear their winter coat, hat, gloves/mittens, and scarf during the winter as we do go outside for daily playtime and fresh air unless there is a wind chill of 20 degrees or lower. On snowy days, please send your child to school with proper snow play clothing as we may go outside to build a snowman or sled (snow pants, boots, etc.)

## **11. PARENT COMMUNICATION**

Families receive information from the center through: newsletters, dry erase bulletins, notes home, e-mail, telephone, and informal and formal conferencing. Parents are encouraged to contact staff with any issue, concern and/or suggestion regarding their child or the program. Your views are valued and appreciated and guide our efforts toward continuous improvement. Any specialist working with your child is also strongly encouraged to become part of the center communication network.

## **12. PARENT CONDUCT**

Parents must demonstrate civility, self-control, and socially acceptable behavior when interacting with program employees, participants, and their families. Profanity, threats, insults, harassment, suggestive remarks, intimidation, physical crowding, and/or contact will not be tolerated. Kansas state law prohibits parents from disciplining and/or reprimanding program participants. Failure to observe appropriate conduct will result in immediate and permanent termination of childcare.

### **13. FOOD SERVICE**

We provide a nutritious AM/PM snack daily. Fresh/Frozen fruits and vegetables, whole grains and healthy proteins and dairy are offered. Families will pack a healthy sack lunch for their child daily or set up a lunch account through the school office to purchase hot school lunches. We encourage children to taste foods they do not like but do not like or are new to them. Be sure to make us aware of any special dietary needs and/or food allergies. We do gently encourage children to try fruits and vegetables each day.

### **14. PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Label all personal belongings such as backpacks, coats, hats and gloves. Toys, video games, cell phones, iPods/iPads, Nooks, and any other electronic devices are prohibited. The program is not responsible for loss, theft or breakage of personal belongings.

### **15. QUIET TIME**

A period of quiet time will be offered to the children in the morning and afternoon. Children will participate in quiet activities during this time in the classroom or can choose to sit and look at books.

### **16. DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Discipline procedures shall be of positive nature and shall not include any form of corporal punishment, verbal abuse, physical restraint, confinement, threats, humiliation, forcing or withholding of food, or fear tactics. Parents will be notified of any inappropriate behavior and will be advised of steps taken in eliminating the unacceptable behavior. Center based care does not meet the needs of every child. All children enrolled must observe the Participant Code of Conduct while attending the program.

### **17. PARTICIPANT CODE OF CONDUCT**

Participation in the program is a privilege, not a right. The ability of each participant to consistently practice positive life skills is essential to on-going enrollment. The following set of non-negotiable standards for participation is designed to allow participants to self-regulate behavior. Respect the right of others to courtesy and personal space. Manage anger in appropriate ways. Respect and respond to adult authority. Accept differences among the group. Accept responsibility for own actions. These are reasonable expectations for any child participating in a group care setting. The actions of each individual influence the quality of participation for the entire group. Our goal is to facilitate successful participation for each child through the joint understanding, support, and practice of these positive life skills.

### **18. DISCIPLINE PRACTICES**

Children at the Center are introduced to a set of simple, realistic, understandable, and positive rules that are consistently observed. These expectations serve as the foundation for helping children learn to self-manage behavior. Teachers assist children in self-management through reminders, redirection, and discussions about consequences. When children consciously make a choice to ignore expectations, consequences in line with the behavior will follow. Interventions and consequences focus on as little teacher intervention as possible. This allows children to be internally motivated in developing appropriate behaviors.

Typical behavior interventions are as follows:

- Often closer teacher proximity and eye contact are all children need to self-correct.

- On the other occasions a reminder of the rule is effective.

Continued on next page...

- Sometimes teachers and children discuss the inappropriate behavior and more acceptable alternatives.
- In some situations children are redirected to a solitary activity for a brief period of time.
- More serious behavior issues require a parent/teacher conference to develop an action plan for improvement.

Behaviors which jeopardize the safety and welfare of others can result in termination of care.

**19. NON-VIOLENCE POLICY**

The program will not allow any form of violent play, including the use of toys as weapons, gesturing in an aggressive manner, or depicting violence in drawings or any other expressive form. Possession of weapons fashioned or real is prohibited and grounds for immediate expulsion. Statements by anyone that threaten violent action will be regarded as real and result in immediate contact of law enforcement and parents.

**20. PARENT VISITATION AND INVOLVEMENT**

Our program has an “open door” policy on parent visitation. Parents are also encouraged to become actively involved in the center by: chaperoning field trips, donating to classroom celebrations, reading to the children, and/or sharing your personal hobbies, talents and professional skills. Contact the director to express your interest and offer suggestions on program activities. We invite you to drop in unannounced, at any time.

**21. COMMUNICABLE DISEASE/ILLNESS**

Participants shall not be in attendance when suffering from any communicable disease. Guidelines as determined by the Johnson County Health Department will be observed. The Program Director shall exercise his/her discretion in determining if a child seems well enough to resume normal participation. Families must report to the Program Director any exposure to communicable disease.

Exclude:	Readmit:
Fever of 100 or higher	After being fever free for 24 hours and unmedicated.
Eyes inflamed with purulent discharge	Drainage has stopped; or treated for 24 hours with antibiotic; or physician note
Drainage from ear	Drainage has stopped
Head Lice	After treatment & lice free; no live bugs found & Most Nits should be removed.
Diarrhea (2 or more loose or watery stools.)	Diarrhea-free for 24 hours or per disease protocol
Vomiting	Free of vomiting for 24 hours

Athlete's Foot	Must wear socks and shoes for all activities.
Hand, Foot, and Mouth	Fever free and no open lesions
Herpes	Not allowed to participate in activities where skin to skin contact occurs until 5 days after lesions have crusted or dried
Impetigo	After receiving medical Rx. Cover open Wounds. Food handlers excluded until purulent lesions have healed.
Molluscum Contagiosum A benign viral skin infection characterized by numerous small round dimpled pearly white nodules	Exclude from skin to skin sports after curettage
Rash	Consider exclusion pending physician evaluation
Ringworm	When receiving Rx exclude from physical activities until wounds are completely healed
Scabies	Until treatment has begun
Shingles A disease of adults by reactivation of chickenpox viruses in nerve ganglion and resulting in inflammation, pain, and, a rash of small skin blisters	Cover lesions. If can't cover, exclude until lesions are dried.
Varicella	When all lesions have formed scabs of crusts. (usually 5 days)
Influenza A/B	Excluded for 7 days from the diagnosis/onset of symptoms

## 22. SICK CHILD READMISSION POLICY

Any child taking a prescribed antibiotic may return to the school within 24 hours providing that fever is no longer present and the child feels rested enough to resume normal participation. Staff shall exercise their discretion in determining if a child seems rested enough to resume normal participation.

### **23. CHRONIC HEALTH/SPECIAL CARE NEEDS**

Written physician orders as well as a parent/staff pre-attendance meeting will be required to assure that chronic health conditions and any special care needs can be accommodated within the program.

### **24. PRESCRIPTION/NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS**

If your child is taking any prescription/non-prescription drugs while in attendance, these medications must be sent to the program director in their original containers and must have RX information affixed. All medications must be sent in daily dosages. Signed permission for administration of these medications must accompany them. Medication cannot be administered without signed parental consent.

### **25. MEDICAL INSURANCE**

During the course of normal participation, accidents can and do happen. Therefore, it is important that parents carry medical insurance for expenses that result from injury. **The District does not carry medical insurance for program participants.** Make sure your health insurance policy name and number are recorded on the Authorization for Emergency Medical Care form. In urgent care situations, staff will attempt to contact parents for child pick up and follow up medical treatment.

In emergency care situations, children will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital. Be sure all of your child's records are up to date to assist us in effectively responding to emergencies.

### **26. MANDATED REPORTERS**

JCPRD staff are required by KDHE to immediately report any evidence of suspected child abuse or neglect to DCF or to local law enforcement agencies.

### **27. FIELD TRIPS/TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation will be provided by a local bus company or a District van. Seat belts on leased busses will be provided when available. Signed permission slips are required. Weather conditions may necessitate cancellation of field trips. JCPRD covers field trip admission expenses, including bus service.

### **28. DONATIONS/FUND RAISERS**

New toys and equipment are purchased for the Center through parent fees. Parent participation throughout the year is encouraged to make these events successful and to continually improve the quality of the program. Additional support can be provided through consumable goods such as: books, toys, paper items and art supplies.

### **29. BIRTHDAYS/CELEBRATIONS**

Birthday treats are welcome at the Center with advance notice given to the Director. When we celebrate birthdays we ask that you send in your child's favorite book to share with his/her friends during preschool. A healthy treat from home is welcome (ie: fresh/dried fruit, rice cakes, string cheese, pretzels, mini wraps, cheese & crackers, or other healthy snack idea). **Bringing invitations to home parties is not allowed at the Center.** For classroom holiday celebrations, staff will post a list of healthy suggested donations to send in for these events.

### **30. SCREEN TIME**

We are a screen free center. TV and videos will not be shown in our program.

### **31. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PHOTO POLICY**

Unauthorized distribution or release of photos of children and/or staff engaged in Johnson County Park & Recreation District sponsored activities is expressly prohibited without written consent of all parties represented. The policy extends to traditional photo prints and negatives, CDs, digital memory cards, electronic transmittals via email or through the web, and images captured on camera phones. Photos of participants are strictly limited to program use or other JCPRD publications with a signed waiver. Failure to observe this policy may result in termination of childcare.

### **32. EMPLOYEE/PATRON RELATIONSHIPS**

District Policy 402-01(B)(24) and the JCPRD Code of Ethics prohibit JCPRD staff from entering into personal employment arrangements with program participants and their families.

### **33. FAMILY SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

The director is always available to help families access community resources designed to support and strengthen families. Your director can provide information on application for DCF child care subsidy and other community resources. The following websites also provide excellent and current information on a variety of family centered topics that can be accessed on the privacy of office or home. American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry <http://www.aacap.org/web/aacap/publications/factsfam/>. For locally based support services visit Johnson County FamilyNet at <http://www.jocofamily.net/> or the Family Conservancy at <http://www.thefamilyconservancy.org>.

# Tips for A Successful Early Childhood Learning Experience

## THE VALUE OF WORK TIME ACTIVITIES

### PLAY IS LEARNING

1. When the child works in the block area, he/she:

- Learns to use imagination to create something from his or her own thinking.
- Has the satisfaction of being able to make something.
- Learns about sizes and shapes, weights and balances, height and depth, smoothness, roundness, roughness, and volume.
- Is exercising his/her body.
- May be learning to play with others.
- Learns to communicate ideas through language when discussing similarities and differences.
- Learns to solve problems and make decisions.
- Creates patterns when building.
- Represents personal experiences through role play and pretending.

2. When the child works in the art area, he/she:

- Is more concerned with the process than with the finished product. This is as it should be for this state of development.
- Learns about colors and how to use them.
- Learns to use imagination and transfers ideas to paper.
- Gets emotional satisfaction from being able to express himself/herself.
- Learns how to use small muscle coordination to handle a brush.
- Learns to make choices and decisions.
- Increases language ability by talking about his/her creation.
- Learns how to use materials like scissors, paste, tape, and staples.
- Learns how to use imagination to make the kind of creation in mind. Once again the process, not the finished product is important to him/her.
- Learns about shapes, sizes, colors, and textures.

3. When the child plays in the housekeeping area, he/she:

- Learns what the roles of mothers, fathers, and children are.
- Understands what it feels like to play at being someone else.



- Learns how to use imagination.
- Learns to cooperate with other children.
- Increases his/her ability to communicate with others about personally meaningful experiences.
- Imitates and describes sounds from the environment.
- Pantomimes actions such as cooking and vacuuming.

4. When the child plays in the outdoor area he/she:

- Learns how to use his/her body effectively.
- Experiences joy in achieving a skill.
- Has fun and relaxation to be found in bodily movement.
- Learns the limitations of his/her body.
- Learns safety and caution.
- Learns to take turns and to share a piece of equipment.
- Develops vocabulary words such as “over” and “under”.
- Gains experience using large muscles.
- Represents experiences through dramatic play.
- Experiences the direction of movement of things and people.
- Observes and describes weather changes.
- Explores the natural environment.

5. When the child works in the sand and water area, he/she:

- Finds it soothing to bury his/her hands in sand or pour water in and out of cups.
- Is able to relax with this media and center attention on a task.
- Has an opportunity to play alone or with one other child and not have to compete with other children as with some activities.
- Has a great opportunity to learn about size and measurement by experimenting with measuring spoons, cups and different size containers.
- Learns which kinds of things float and sink in water.
- Is not concerned with a final product so he/she does not find it frustrating.
- Develops vocabulary words such as “empty” and “full”.
- Explores actively the attributes and functions of materials with all of the senses.
- Transforms and combines materials.
- Learns to compare quantities.

6. When the child works with manipulatives, he/she:

- Has an opportunity to work alone or together with other children.
- Gains satisfaction in completing a puzzle or game and builds self-confidence.
- Has an opportunity to improve eye-hand coordination.
- Distinguishes and describes shapes.
- Fits things together and takes them apart.
- Develops an awareness of symmetry in one’s own representations.
- Compares and sorts objects into groups.
- Uses and describes something in many different ways.
- Recognizes and creates patterns.

- Compares numbers and amounts.

7. When the child listens to stories or looks at books, he/she:

- Learns to listen.
- Has an opportunity to increase vocabulary by hearing new words read.
- Learns about different concepts, people, and places.
- Learns to enjoy books and reading.
- Visualizes the things he/she is hearing about.
- Begins telling stories from pictures and books, in an orderly sequence.
- Begins hearing likenesses and differences in words.
- Recalls information that is seen and heard.
- Sees adults reading and enjoying stories.
- Learns to recognize the name of common objects, places, and actions.
- Develops book awareness concepts such as following pictures and print from left to right and top to bottom.
- Learns to handle books carefully.

8. When the child cooks he/she:

- Learns to follow directions.
- Stimulates and uses all five senses.
- Learns to recognize colors, shapes, and different kinds of foods and kitchen utensils.
- Has an opportunity to use different kinds of tools and equipment to improve small muscle coordination.
- Develops vocabulary with such words as “half” and “whole”.
- Observes and describes transformations.
- Measures ingredients.
- Compares numbers and amounts.
- Predicts events.
- Recognizes objects by taste, touch, and smell.
- Describes relations among events and ideas
- Distinguishes between “some” and “all”.
- Observes the clocks used to denote the passage of time.
- Tastes new foods.

*Children will not remember you for the material things you provide, but for the feeling that you cherish them.*

*-Richard L. Evans*

## DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE

Johnson County Park and Recreation District program staff support a developmental approach to curriculum design. Developmentally appropriate practice is based on knowledge about how children develop and learn. Developmentally appropriate programs provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, intellectual, and language development of each child while being sensitive to the needs and preferences of families.

Developmentally appropriate practice requires that teachers integrate the many dimensions of their knowledge base. They must know about child development and the implications of this knowledge for how to teach the content of the curriculum – what to teach and when – how to assess what children have learned, and how to adapt curriculum and instruction to children’s individual strengths, needs, and interests. Further, they must know the particular children they teach and their families and be knowledgeable as well about the social and cultural context.

Nationally acclaimed early childhood educator Lillian Katz states, “In a developmental approach to curriculum design, decisions about what should be learned and how it would best be learned depend on what we know of the learner’s developmental status and our understanding of the relationships between early experience and subsequent development.” Learn more about developmentally appropriate practice, national accreditation and other advances in early childhood care and education, by visiting the National Association for the Education of Young Children web site at <http://www.naeyc.org>.

## CURRICULUM

Early childhood care and education has developed rapidly over the last decade. Quality early childhood centers have given up the pen and paper worksheets, product-based art projects and whole group classroom formats of the past.

Educators now understand that children’s play is purposeful and is at the core of their learning. Teachers maximize learning potential by serving as facilitators of the play environment. Your child’s day at our center will be focused on hands-on activity that allows children to experience their environment in their own unique way. Teachers observe, interact, and seize those teachable moments that enrich the play experience.

Through both structured and unstructured activities, children experience a positive, rich, and stimulating curriculum, that considers each child’s overall development. An individualized approach to instruction accommodates the various maturation levels and demonstrates respect for each child’s self-worth and competence.

We have found that a multiple learning center based approach best allows children to explore, discover, and learn according to their individual perspective. Through learning centers children feel comfortable and confident in exploring the classroom at their own pace. As children move through the learning centers they can practice skills, pursue topics of special interest, expand problem-solving abilities, and interact with other students within the centers.

***“Play is the work of childhood”. ~ Source Unknown***

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Family involvement and visitation at the Center is encouraged. Please share any ideas you have about curriculum; we welcome the opportunity to plan with you. You are invited to share with us any special interests, or just drop by to observe. The children love visitors and are especially pleased when the visitor is a member of their family.

You will be informed of Center happenings through the bulletin board, e-mails, newsletters, informal conversations with teachers, and items placed in your children's cubbies. **Read everything that comes home from the Center to have a clear picture of our many activities.** Parents are encouraged to share personal information that may be affecting your child. Please avoid talking to teachers while your child is present. Cue us to the need for a private conversation, and we will involve your child in an activity elsewhere in the room.

## THE FAMILY-STAFF RELATIONSHIP

All families experience mixed emotions when enrolling their child in a care setting outside the family home. Often parents are concerned that the bond between themselves and their child will be weakened or undermined through the involvement of a third party caregiver. Our staff understand that parents are the most important persons in a child's life. We believe our role is to support, strengthen, and nurture your family. Every step of the way we look to you for guidance on how to build on the foundation you have so lovingly provided your child. Same page thinking regarding your child can be achieved only through open and honest communication. Please share with us anything that even mildly concerns you. Your expectations, needs, and insights will allow us to be good stewards of your child's wholesome growth and development, during the part of the day they spend away from home.

## ADJUSTING TO THE NEW ROUTINE

The first day at the Center is a very exciting and anxious time for both children and parents. Prepare for this new experience in the following ways. Prior to attending, visit the Center together, spend some time exploring the surroundings, and interact with both children and teachers. When at home, discuss in a positive and happy way all the things your child will be doing during their time at the center (playing, eating, resting, etc.). Read to your child about the upcoming early childhood experience. There are many excellent books available on this topic through the library and local bookstores.

On the evening before your child first attends, organize their clothing and supplies. Include your child in this process. Budget some extra time for yourself, both in the morning and evening on the first day. Take your time in arriving at the Center and be prepared to stay a few minutes as your child checks in. When you leave your child, be cheerful, give them a quick kiss and a reassuring word. Lingering good byes usually cause anxiety for the child. Feel free to phone us to hear how your child is doing. At the close of the day, visit with Center staff, and if your child seems willing, invite them to show you around.

Some children adjust to the new situation right away, others need more time to feel comfortable at the Center. Express your insights on adjustment issues to center staff. Parents and teachers working together in a mutually supportive role, will make your child's transition to the center as smooth as possible.