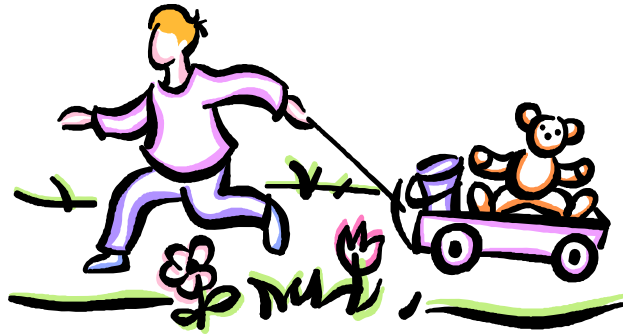


# CHILD CARE HANDBOOK



**Lower Bucks Family YMCA**

® We build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities

**Fairless Hills Branch  
601 S. Oxford Valley Road  
Fairless Hills, PA 19030  
215-949-3400**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Lower Bucks Family YMCA Child Care Program! As part of our service to the community, we are committed to providing families with child care that is fun, safe, and educational for children.

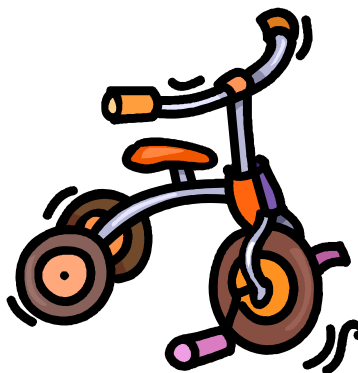
This information handbook has been designed to guide you through the child care services provided by the Fairless Hill Branch of the Lower Bucks Family YMCA. The material outlined in this handbook will answer questions concerning our program as well as ensure that you receive all the benefits of being part of our quality child care experience.

Again, thank you for choosing the Lower Bucks Family YMCA Child Care Program, and welcome aboard.

Sincerely,

Ruth S. Huth  
Fairless Hills Branch YMCA  
[rhuth@lowerbucksymca.org](mailto:rhuth@lowerbucksymca.org)

215-949-3400 ext. 76



## **CHILD CARE**

YMCA Child Care is about offering families the peace of mind that comes from knowing their children are nurtured in a safe and loving environment. YMCA Child Care is about making our neighborhoods and towns better places to live. But above all, YMCA Child Care is about children. It is about giving children the chance to succeed and reach their highest potential. It is about building healthy spirits, minds and bodies.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The YMCA is committed to serving the needs of all types of families through programming which develops the spirit, mind and body of each child. Our programs provide creative learning during the hours when there may be no adult supervision at home. Each program day, the YMCA staff provides creative learning experiences and supervised activities for each child's development and enjoyment.

The YMCA strives to support and strengthen the family unit and accommodate varied schedules, all while providing a quality, affordable alternative for parents. Most importantly, the YMCA's program enables families to have a feeling of confidence that their children are safe, comfortable and happy.

## **VISION**

We envision a Lower Bucks Community where *ALL* can enjoy safe and healthy opportunities to strengthen Spirit, Mind and Body.

## **MISSION**

Our mission is to create relationships and offer programs that provide a healthy start for children, growth for youth and teens, wellness for adults, and unity for families.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

The policy of the Lower Bucks Family YMCA and its branches is to serve all people regardless of age, sex, race, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), or financial circumstances.

**If your child has an IEP or IFSP, in order to accommodate their individual needs, we ask that you share this information with us. All information will remain confidential.**

## **YMCA CORE VALUES**

- CARING -** Our Christian spiritual roots empower us to be loving to everyone we encounter. We care deeply about the needs of our Members, Volunteers, and Staff. We strive for a sense of Community throughout the Association and among the diverse people we serve.
- HONESTY -** We live each day with Integrity. Our actions are consistent with our words. We look honestly at our present strengths and challenges, and we work diligently to improve and grow.
- RESPECT -** We demonstrate tolerance of differences and embrace diversity of thought, ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, and economic ability. We treat ALL people as we wish to be treated: with respect, dignity and acceptance.
- RESPONSIBILITY -** The Lower Bucks Community can depend on us to provide quality care and programming, to be open to all community members, and to collaborate effectively with other organizations. We are responsible for upholding our Mission and these Values in all the programs and services we provide. Staff and Volunteers will be responsible stewards of YMCA facilities and assets, and will provide resources for financial stability and growth.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

The Lower Bucks Family YMCA Child Care Program is open Monday - Friday from 6:30 am—6:00 pm. Child Care will be closed on the following days: Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, and Independence Day. On Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve, the YMCA closes at 2:00pm, before and after school care will not be provided.

**Fairless Hills will be closed September 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>; during the Y's normal "Shut Down" weeks. This will allow us to clean, paint and renovate prior to the start of the fall session. There will be no day care or School Age services provided those days.**

## **STAFF**

We have an excellent blend of elementary teachers, college students, and child care professionals who participate in orientation and on-going training sessions. Our staff cares about each student as an individual, and we strive to build self-esteem through positive values. Their experience, talent, and enthusiasm will provide your child with experiences to enhance their ability to grow in spirit, mind, and body. It is mandatory for our staff to have FBI clearances, criminal record checks, child abuse history clearance, health appraisals, and documentation for all the qualifications their position requires for DPW (Department of Public Welfare) licensing.

## **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

- Ensure a safe environment for children of working families that will encourage the development of friendships and respect for themselves and others.
- Provide creative programming that utilizes developmentally appropriate activities that children will enjoy.
- Encourage positive self-esteem and develop the child's self-discipline.
- Develop problem solving abilities as well as conflict resolution skills to enable children to have a solid foundation in appropriate responses to life challenges.
- Enhance each child's ability to communicate needs, wants, feelings, and ideas.
- Positive guidance provided by caring and well-trained staff.

## **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

Classroom activities are focused around many different themes throughout the school year. Themes include: families, community helpers, animals, dinosaurs, countries, holidays, and seasons, in addition to academic themes of colors, shapes, numbers, and letters. This thematic approach enables the teacher to address the various interests of young children, while including an interactive approach to overall growth across developmental areas. Each day's plan provides for a balance of individualized, small group, and large group activities. Appropriate numbers of active and quiet activities are also provided. Teachers move among the children, facilitating their involvement with materials and activities, and encouraging positive social behaviors.

The learning environment provides a wide variety of books, posters, and other printed materials. Children are read to frequently and are encouraged to use books on their own. Emergent literacy is fostered through many opportunities for telling and writing stories.

The physical settings of our classrooms are designed to offer a safe, secure, and stimulating atmosphere that invites creative learning, orderly exploration and positive socialization. Centers provide an informal atmosphere where children can make choices and learn to solve problems.

## **KEYSTONE STARS**

The YMCA is a participant in the quality child care program known in Pennsylvania as Keystone STARS. This program requires additional training and requirements that must be met by the center in order to qualify for each STARS level. When you choose a center that participates in Keystone STARS, you can be sure that the center and its employees are adhering to strict guidelines. Participation in this program also means that the center may qualify for some grants designed to further enhance the quality of our program.

The Fairless Hills branch is currently a STAR 2.

## **PROGRAMS**

The YMCA Child Care Program is open to any child age six weeks to twelve years old. The following child care programs are offered:

### **INFANT**

Our infant room is a warm and nurturing environment with extensive individualized attention. Parents provide a daily schedule for us to follow.

### **TODDLER I**

This room is for 12-24 month old children. Socialization skills, singing songs and circle time are regular activities. Each day a “daily-gram” is sent home. Small class sizes enable a lot of one-on-one time between your child and the caregiver. This program features an age-appropriate curriculum designed to enhance early learning.

### **TODDLER II**

This room is for 24-36 month old children. Socialization skills, independence, and self-help skills are developed. Songs, finger plays, circle time, gym, and outside time make for a fun and exciting day. This program features an age-appropriate curriculum.

### **DAY CARE PRE-SCHOOL**

These rooms are for three- to-five year old children. We work on age appropriate lessons, including letter and number recognition. Children have swimming at least once a week as well as gym time. Circle time, center time, show and tell time, music, tabletop and outside time offer a well-rounded day for each child. Children must be toilet-trained to be in the three-year old room. This program features an age-appropriate curriculum.

### **HALF DAY PRE-SCHOOL**

These rooms are for three- to-five year old children. We provide a stimulating learning environment including socialization, academics, and physical education. Some classes offer swim lessons as well. This program is available only at the Fairless Hills branch.

### **SCHOOL AGE CARE**

The YMCA Child Care Program is open to school age children through 6th grade. The following age-specific child care programs are available:

#### **BEFORE SCHOOL**

The before school program is designed to jump start school-age children. The children play games and socialize with their peers. They are transported to the school according to the starting time of each school when necessary. Parents may send breakfast with their child during this time.

#### **AFTER SCHOOL**

The after school program gives children a chance to unwind and spend time with their friends. This program includes homework help, snacks, quiet games, physical activities, and projects that stimulate each child’s creativity.

## **FULL-AND HALF-DAY CARE**

Full- and half-day care is available when schools are not in session if the YMCA is open and there are at least 12 children registered for care. Children who attend this program at the YMCA will experience a complete day of fun. **Parents must sign up their child ten days in advance of the day off from school or care cannot be guaranteed.** On full days off a low activity fee may apply.

Upon written request, children transitioning to other programs will have their records forwarded to their new program.

## **CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR**

We do our best to keep track of children's clothing. However, the sheer number of garments makes this job difficult. You are more likely to have missing clothing returned if it is labeled.

- Please leave a pair of rubber soled shoes (sneakers) in your child's cubby if he/she arrives at the center wearing boots or smooth soled dress shoes. **Flip flops, open backed footwear, sandals, and "jellies" are dangerous and are not allowed at the center. "Water shoes" are recommended for outdoor water play. Sneakers and socks remain the safest footwear for active children in a child care center. Children without appropriate footwear will not be allowed on playground equipment. It is dangerous to walk down steps with open shoes.**
- All children should have an extra set of seasonally appropriate (properly labeled) clothing stored at the center.
- If your child wears diapers, be sure to provide enough diapers and wipes for each day's needs. We suggest that you bring in a week's supply at a time.
- **Heelys are not permitted to be worn.**

## **TOYS FROM HOME**

Generally, we discourage children from bringing toys from home, except for specific program purposes such as "Show and Tell". Toys from home often cause conflict and we cannot be responsible for their safekeeping. However, you may bring a soft, cuddly toy for rest time. Hand-held electronic games **ARE NOT PERMITTED**. We will not be responsible for games and cartridges that are stolen or lost.

## **REST TIME**

Rest time in our full day programs is based on DPW regulations as well as age appropriateness. Labeled blankets, pillows, and cuddly toys may be sent in but must be taken home every Friday to be cleaned.

## **REGISTRATION**

- Registration will be accepted anytime during the school year. A child being enrolled in the YMCA Child Care Program must become a member of the YMCA.
- Every child must be re-registered EVERY September, with new paperwork in order to continue in our program.

- Maximum enrollment will be limited to licensed capacity and space.
- An application, fee agreement, annual child health appraisal, emergency contact form, and civil rights compliance form are mandated for each child enrolled in the program per DPW (Department of Public Welfare) guidelines for child care centers, and must be returned completed before a child may start.
- Children may start program two business days (Mon.-Fri.) after completed paperwork and deposit have been submitted.
- A \$49.00 deposit must accompany all completed paperwork for registration to be considered complete.
- The parent's manual acknowledgment form is also required. Health appraisals will be due annually thereafter for any child who continues with the program.
- Registration paperwork must be completed **prior** to the first day of the program.
- **Failure to return paperwork or to comply with DPW regulations will result in your child's disenrollment from the program.**
- **One weeks notice is required prior to leaving the program.**
- **Your child may be disenrolled at any time.**

#### **FEE POLICY**

- The Basic or Full Membership fee and one week's program payment must be made upon registration.
- The weekly fee is due Friday **prior** to the week of service.
- Children in full day child care will receive the 26<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> week free. This will accommodate for vacation and sick time throughout the year. Waiving fees for a serious illness will be considered on a case by case basis.
- Fees for School Age children are to be paid whether the child is in attendance, out sick or on vacation.
- School Age children holiday care may be purchased at an additional fee, and will be provided with advanced sign up only.
- **Payments made on or after Monday should include a \$5 late charge fee. If you fall more than two weeks behind, your child will be suspended from the program until payments are paid in full.**
- If you have any problems making payments, please contact Cathy Lambert at 215.949.3400 ext. 29.
- Checks or money orders should be made payable to the YMCA. Payments must be made in person at the YMCA desk or by mail.
- Children must be picked up promptly by 6 pm. A late fee of \$2.00 each minute after 6 pm will be assessed. Habitual lateness may result in disenrollment.

#### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The policy of the Lower Bucks Family YMCA is that no individual or family will be denied membership or program participation due to the inability to pay fees. **Individuals seeking financial assistance must apply for Title XX funding first.** For families who qualify for the Title XX funds, a contract will be established with Apple Childcare (local management agency for DPW subsidized tuition assistance program), the parent/guardian, and the YMCA.

Parents who have been placed on Apple Childcare's waiting list may be assisted by the YMCA's Scholarship Fund. Financial assistance may be obtained by applying and furnishing proof of need. Financial assistance may be limited by availability of funds. A sliding fee scale will be established for those in need of financial assistance based on gross monthly income and the number of people in the household. See detailed application.

- The YMCA's levels of financial assistance may depend on the success of fundraising, special events, and the current Strong Kids Campaign results.
- Applicants may apply directly to the YMCA.
- Applications will be reviewed by the CFO/Branch Director.
- Financial assistance will not be awarded in the full amount of the program. Applicant is expected to pay membership fee in total and designated percentage of original program fees not awarded as scholarship.
- The maximum award which may be granted is for the duration of the program, not to exceed one year.
- It is the recipient's responsibility to reapply for financial aid with each new registration.
- The YMCA reserves the right to review any scholarship on a monthly basis.
- The scholarship is jeopardized when payments are not made on time.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

- A first aid kit will be accessible for use by trained staff.
- Medical information will be reviewed and kept accessible for each child.
- An accident/incident report must be completed for every injury or reportable incident.

## **ILLNESS**

**A child may be sent home or may not be admitted into care at the center for the following situations:**

- Temperature of 101 degrees orally, 100 under the arm, or more (this excludes reactions children may be having from immunizations when accompanied with a doctor's note). Children need to be fever free and without fever reducing medication for 24 hours prior to returning.
- Conjunctivitis or "Pink Eye", an infection of the eye that causes a thick yellowish drainage and red itchy eyes. Children need to be on medication for 24 hours before returning to care.
- Diarrhea or very watery, greenish bowel movements that look different from normal and are much more frequent than usual (2-3 times daily).
- Bronchitis, which is an upper respiratory infection with severe coughing. May return with doctor's note after being treated with antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Severe cold with fever, coughing, sneezing, and nose drainage. May return when medicated or symptoms are gone.
- Vomiting. May return 24 hours after vomiting has stopped.
- Rashes you cannot identify or that have not been diagnosed. May return after proof of doctor's diagnosis or after rash has disappeared.

- Impetigo, a contagious skin infection that usually produces blisters or sores on the face, neck, hands, and diaper area. May not return until treated.
- Ringworm, red circular patches on skin and heads. Must be treated for 24 hours prior to return.
- Whooping Cough. May not return for 4 weeks from onset unless a doctor's note allowing the child to return to care is provided.
- Measles. May return upon recovery, but not for at least 6 days after appearance of rash.
- Mumps. May return after fever and swelling are gone.
- Chicken Pox. May return after the pox have started to heal and are scabbed.
- Head lice. May return when the child is louse and nit free. Trained staff will check the child before readmitting.
- If your child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the usual activities of the program, (i.e. sleeping during non nap times).

The staff cannot properly care for the sick child without interfering with the care of the other children. If a child exhibits any signs of contagious disease, you will be asked to provide a medical evaluation.

The Department of Public Welfare requires whenever there is an illness that is infectious or contagious or lice that we notify all the families. The American Academy of Pediatrics supplies child care centers with informative handouts for staff and families. Classroom staff will be responsible for distributing informational handouts to families with children enrolled.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

If at all possible families should administer medications while the child is in their care.

Medication can be given just before drop off, at the time of pick up, and just before bedtime if the medication is 3 times a day. When this is not possible, staff will administer medication under the following conditions:

- All medications, whether prescription or non-prescription must be followed according to the label. All medications must be logged into the Medical Log located in each room. If it is a non-prescription and has no directions for children under two and the parent wants a one year old or infant to receive the medication, **THE YMCA CANNOT ADMINISTER WITHOUT A NOTE FROM THE CHILD'S PHYSICIAN STATING NAME OF CHILD, DOSAGE, LENGTH OF TIME MEDICATION IS TO BE ADMISISTERED,** etc.
- All prescription medications must be in the original pharmacy container and have the child's name, instructions, and physician's name and must be current and instructions placed in the medication log by the parent or guardian.
- All non-prescription medications must be in the original container with the child's full name on it, have instructions for the age of the child, and must be logged in by the parent or guardian in the medication log.
- Medications will be kept in the child care office and medications that require refrigeration will be kept in the staff refrigerator.

- No medication will be administered for any length of time that exceeds the instructions on the medication.
- The YMCA retains the right to refuse to administer medication if the Director or Assistant Director feels that there is a conflict and will call the parent or guardian to inform them.
- Non-prescription medications will not be administered by YMCA personnel longer than five to seven days from the start of the administration or if the instructions state a shorter time. Families need to understand that if the child is still showing symptoms beyond 5-7 days, they need to consult their physician. We will only administer medications if accompanied by a note from the doctor if the instructions are contrary to the container instructions.
- Families need to pick up medication each day especially if they did not get the pharmacy to divide the medication between two bottles.
- Families will sometimes switch over the counter medications if one is not working, however, we will still maintain our rule that non-prescription medications will not be given more than five to seven days, depending upon label instructions.
- If a child is still showing symptoms it will be suggested that the family take the child to the physician.

## **EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

Parents maintaining sole custody of their child(ren) must submit a court order to prohibit the other parent access to the child(ren). Emergency phone numbers will be listed and available.

- Parents must update files when any emergency contact information changes.
- Parents must call the YMCA to designate another individual to pick up children if all the people listed on the emergency form are unable to pick up the child.

## **SNOW DAYS**

We make every effort to be available when most needed. We close only when a situation exists over which we have no control, i.e. extreme weather conditions or power failure within the YMCA facility.

- Call the Failess Hills YMCA for information regarding snow closings and delayed openings. 215-949-3400 ext. 9.
- If the children are at the YMCA and weather conditions worsen, families are expected to pick up their children at the earliest possible opportunity.
- If the YMCA is closed due to extreme weather conditions, we are not responsible for the extended care of your children.

**If the schools have early dismissal due to inclement weather, the YMCA van WILL NOT transport the children from school to the YMCA branch. PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING ALTERNATE ARRANGEMENTS.**

## DELAYS

Please watch the following television stations to check the status of the YMCA for school closings or delayed openings: ABC, NBC, and CBS or FOX.

**The YMCA will not provide care during the day if your child is sent home from school for any reason including disciplinary problems or illness. The YMCA will only provide care during regularly scheduled times such as before and after school and half and full days off from school, excluding YMCA holidays.**

- Families are responsible for transporting children to/from schools when field trips require the child to be there at times other than their normal schedule.
- If your child is involved in "Breakfast Club" he/she must go every day, we cannot change the van schedule on a daily basis as we have set numbers of children who ride each day at specific times.
- **If for some reason, your child's school schedule changes, please inform the YMCA as most of the schools do not inform us when there are calendar changes.**

## VAN RULES

All vans are equipped with seat belts, fire extinguisher, first aid kits, and emergency cellular phones.

- Attendance will be taken on the van/bus prior to departing from the YMCA and prior to departing from the school.
- **Please call if your child will not need van/bus service.**
- All children must sit correctly in their seats and wear seat belts at all times.
- Children must respect and obey the van/bus driver at all times.
- There will be no eating or drinking on the vans/buses.
- In case of an emergency, children must follow the directions of the van/bus driver.
- **If your child misses the van/bus, it will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to take their child to school.**
- **You will be charged a \$5 fee if you do not call your child out for van/bus service before 2:00 P.M. A \$10 fee is charged if we have to send the van/bus back to the school, if your child misses the van/bus.**
- Families: Please support the YMCA staff in helping your child adhere to the above procedures. Not following these rules may jeopardize the safety of all the children and your child's placement in the program.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

Parents/guardians must complete emergency information forms. Children will not be admitted without all forms turned into the YMCA. Rules and regulations will be developed and reviewed with the children routinely regarding behavioral expectations, safety, use of play equipment, communicating needs, etc.

## **CHILD RELEASE PROCEDURES**

- Parent/guardian must have on file all persons allowed to pick up their child.
- Children must be signed in and out daily.
- Parents/approved others must show ID to staff.
- Children will be released only to those persons listed on file with proper ID.
- Verbal permission to release a child will be accepted only in an emergency and individuals identified by the parent/guardian must have ID.

## **SIGN IN/SIGN OUT SHEETS AND CHILDREN'S DEPARTURE**

- Parent/guardian must sign their child "in" when arriving and "out" when leaving (in the log books which are provided by the entrance door of each classroom/program).
- This process must be repeated each time a child arrives and leaves each day.
- Be sure that a teacher has acknowledged your child's arrival/departure.
- If some other adult is to pick-up your child, please make sure that person is authorized on your emergency form. This person will need to present photo identification when picking up your child.
- If a change in pick up is made over the telephone, we will call you back to verify your identity and instructions as per the instructions on our "Oral Request Log."

## **PERCEIVED IMPAIRED ABILITY TO DRIVE**

If a parent/guardian appears to be unable to safely assume responsibility for a child, the YMCA will contact an alternate release person as indicated on your child's Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form to arrange for transportation. This is for the safety of you and your child.

## **SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

According to the Child Protective Service Law (CPSL), a person who, in the course of employment has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child under care, supervision, guidance or training by that person, is a victim of child abuse, then as a mandated reporter, *is required* by law to report the suspected child abuse immediately to Pennsylvania's Childline.

## **GUIDELINES FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLINE**

Our role as early educators is to help children develop to their fullest potential and to recognize the many facets of child development. It is important that our discipline policy focus on guidance, redirection and praise rather than punishment or negative reinforcement. We strive to help children learn self control, while at the same time developing positive self esteem.

Discipline must be age appropriate and stated in language that children understand. It is important to have support from families in order to build good character in children.

- We set realistic expectations for children's behavior.
- We provide an environment that will increase the probability children will succeed.

- We give children choices and alternatives to turn destructive situations into constructive situations.
- We validate what the children say and feel, if appropriate.
- We use natural and logical consequences and empower the children to be responsible for their own behavior.
- We teach preschool and older children to use problem solving skills and strategies to resolve conflicts.
- We work out behavior plans with the family when needed.

## **BITING POLICIES**

Biting is a typical behavior in infants and toddlers. Our staff works hard to help young children deal with this natural behavior that is used as a means of communication before a child has language. The teachers work in partnership with the families to develop a joint strategy to help the child get through this stage of development.

## **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

We have experienced behavioral problems with children who want to settle differences physically rather than verbally. All children have been instructed to speak with their teachers if they are having problems with other children.

- It is vital for the children to learn to use words rather than their hands or feet.
- While we do understand that children do taunt and tease each other, we also know how important it is for children to respect each other.
- There are times when teachers do not hear what the children say to each other. This is where we would like your help. When you are speaking with your child, reinforce respectful behavior and let your child know that if he or she has nothing nice to say to another individual, "Don't say it!"
- We all know how sensitive children can be and also how angry they can become. We will work to diffuse situations and help children deal with anger in appropriate manners.
- If your child hits or kicks another child deliberately, then your child will be suspended from our program for 1-3 days depending upon the severity of the infraction.
- Any further instances will result in immediate disenrollment from the program.
- Please understand that this policy has been developed to protect the children in our care.

## **COMMUNICATION**

- Families and staff need to keep the lines of communication open at all times. If you have any questions or need to speak with your child's teacher, please call. Each room is equipped with a phone. Messages will be taken if the class is outside or if the teacher is occupied and cannot come to the phone.
- Every parent/guardian in our Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Program will be asked to fill out a Daily Experience Sheet. At the end of the day the teacher will complete the sheet and you will have information about your child's day.

- Please check your School Aged child's book bag daily for important information that might be sent home.

### **TRANSITION INFORMATION**

- Information regarding transition from one room to another will be provided to you when your child is developmentally ready for the next room.
- Upon written request we will gladly provide copies of a child's record when transitioning to another educational setting.

Together, we can make a difference, and help children succeed!