



ASPIRE EARLY EDUCATION CENTER

Family Handbook

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mmartin@aspiredevelopmental.org

Open 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM
Monday thru Friday

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LINES OF SUPERVISION

Section 1

Department of Early Education and Care

Aspire Board of Directors

Agency Chief Executive Officer
Lori Russell

Early Education Director
Meri Martin

Early Education Assistant Director
Kamie Fessenden

Lead Preschool Teacher

Lead Toddler Teacher

Teacher

Teacher

Assistant Teacher

ASPIRE EARLY EDUCATION CENTER

Aspire Early Education Center is an early childhood educational program serving children infants – 7 years of age. Aspire Developmental Services, Inc., is a multi-service agency serving the needs of children and families on the North Shore. Our goal is to recognize each child as an individual, and enhance that child's development based on the child's interests and abilities. Our curriculum and daily activities will address the social, cognitive, language, and motor development needs of each child, and will be adapted to meet the needs of the individual. We believe that children learn through play, and that children are active learners. The discoveries children make through play and daily activities are most meaningful to them, and so we strive to provide stimulating opportunities for children to make their own discoveries in a supportive and nurturing environment.

Program Goals:

Our primary goal at Aspire Early Education is to encourage a child to perform to the best of his/her ability. Through daily activities, curriculum units, storybook studies, and special events, the program upholds the following goals throughout the year:

- ❖ To improve overall development to meet age-appropriate expectations.
- ❖ To create strong home/school/community relationships through special events, as well as daily written and/or verbal communication.
- ❖ To develop self-identity and promote positive self-esteem.
- ❖ To encourage creativity, imaginative play, and respect for others.
- ❖ To be positive role models in interactions with others and in conflict resolutions.
- ❖ To provide a positive and stimulating learning environment where children are constantly encouraged and challenged.
- ❖ To have fun!

Enrolling:

Prior to admitting a child to the program, the director or a designee will meet with the child's parent/guardian. Parent/guardian (s) will be given a tour of the facility including the program's classrooms and an introduction to program policies will be provided. Additional meetings can be scheduled to review paperwork, plan for transitioning a child to the program and for the child to visit and meet with classroom staff. A plan can be developed during the initial meeting between the parent and the program director or designee.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Aspire does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families, or in hiring staff on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. Toilet training is not a prerequisite for enrollment in the program. We are excited to serve a diverse community, and provide a classroom environment that is respectful of children and people of all backgrounds. The children in our program can begin attending the toddler group at 15 months and the preschool program at age 2.9, and can stay until they are eligible for Kindergarten.

Parental/Guardian Rights

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Mass. Dept. of Early Education and Care has the legal responsibility of promulgating rules and regulations governing the operation of child care centers including preschools.

These regulations, 102 CMR 7.00, establish minimum standards for the operation of group child care and school-age child care programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations require the licensee to inform all parents, when admitting their child to a center, of specific information including their rights and responsibilities.

Parental Input-The licensee must appropriately involve parents of children in care, in visiting the program, meeting with the staff and receiving reports on their child's progress. The program must have a procedure for allowing your suggestions and input, but it is up to the program to decide whether the suggestions and input will be implemented.

Meeting with parents-In group child care programs, the licensee shall ensure that the administrator or his designee meets with the parent(s) prior to admitting a child to the program. The parents shall have an opportunity to visit the program's classrooms at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of the child.

Parent Conferences-The licensee must make staff available for individual conferences with parents at your request.

Parent Information-The licensee must provide to the parents upon admission of their child the program's written statement of purpose, including the program's philosophy, goals and objectives, and the characteristics of children served; information on the administrative organization of the program, including lines of authority and supervision; the program's behavior management policy, the program's plan for referring parents to appropriate social, mental health, education and medical services for children; the termination and suspension policy; a list of nutritious foods to be sent for snacks or meals; the program's policy and procedures for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse or neglect; the procedures for emergency health care and illness exclusion policy; the program's transportation plan; the procedure for administration of medication, and upon request, a copy of the complete health care policy; a copy of the fee schedule, and the procedures for on-going parent communication. All of this information may be contained in a "Parent Handbook".

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

Progress Reports-At least every six (6) months the licensee should meet with you to discuss your child's activities and participation in the program. The licensee will prepare a written progress report for your child, will provide a copy to you and will maintain a copy of the report in your child's file. If your child is an infant or a child with disabilities, you should receive a written progress report at least every three (3) months. Program staff must bring special problems or significant developments, particularly if they regard infants, to your attention as soon as they arise.

Children's Records-Information contained in a child's record is privileged and 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.

Access to your child's record-You are entitled to have access to your child's record at reasonable times on request. You must have access to the record within two (2) business days of your request unless you consent to a longer time period. You must be allowed to view your child's entire record, even if it is maintained in more than one location. The center must have procedures governing access to, duplication of, and dissemination of children's records and must maintain 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.

Amending your child's record-You have the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant materials to the child's record. You also have the right to 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 licensee to make your objections known. If you have a conference with the licensee, the licensee must inform you in writing

within one week of his decision regarding your objections. If the licensee decides in your favor, he must immediately take the steps necessary to put the decision into effect.

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.

Charge for Copies-The licensee shall not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of any information contained in your child's record.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Providing Information to the Department-The program must make available any information requested by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to determine compliance with any Department regulations governing the program, by providing access to its facilities, records, staff and references.

Reporting abuse or neglect- All center staff are mandated reporters. They are required by law to report all suspected abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families or the licensee's program administrator. The licensee must have written policies and procedures for reporting and must provide the written policy to you upon enrollment.

Notification of Injury-The licensee must notify you immediately of any injury which requires emergency care. The licensee must also notify you, in writing, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to your child.

Availability of EEC Regulations-The program must maintain a copy of the regulations, 102 CMR 7.00: Standards for the Licensure or Approval of 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. You may contact EEC for information regarding Aspire Early Education Center, Formerly Little Explorer's Preschool's regulatory compliance history.

Contact EEC in writing at:

Department of Early Education and Care
360 Merrimack Street Building 9, 3rd Floor
Lawrence, MA 01843
Or Phoned: 978-681-9684

SECTION 2: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Parent/Teacher Conferences and Communication

Children who have consistent support from home and school are most successful in their learning opportunities. Aspire Early Education Center provides a multi-tiered approach to the developmental assessment of enrolled children. Our approach to assessment emphasizes collaboration between teachers and parents. Teachers and parents will work in conjunction to support developmental progress by establishing goals and through the sharing of information. In the classroom, developmental assessment is an ongoing process.

The center uses screening and formative assessment tools to capture information on children's developmental progress. "Ages and Stages" (ASQ) is used as both a screening tool and to show progress over time. The "Ages & Stages" assessment tool is approved by The Department of Early Education and Care and was chosen for its accuracy as a parent-completed child monitoring system. Parents will be asked to perform an intake screening

using the “Ages & Stages” tool. This first assessment should be completed within forty-five days of enrollment and every September while the child is enrolled.

All children will receive two written assessments annually. Infants and children diagnosed with disability will be assessed 4 times annually. Parent/teacher conferences will be offered twice a year and parents will be provided with a written report. This is an opportunity to review your child’s progress and discuss any concerns or questions you may have.

All Educators, specialists and consultants working with the child in the program will be offered an opportunity to contribute to the progress report of the child. Educators shall use progress reports to adapt the program to the children’s individual strengths, interests, and needs; to maintain ongoing communication with the child’s family, and; with parental permission, to facilitate the child’s transition to other educational programs.

Communication

We are always available to meet with parents throughout the year whenever they request it. Also, we communicate daily with each family regarding their child’s day. It is important that teachers understand how your child’s morning has progressed so they can help your child successfully integrate into the classroom. Verbal communication typically occurs between teachers and families at drop-off and pick-up times. At pick up teachers will share with you some information regarding your child’s day. Please keep in mind that teachers are still responsible for the other children in their care. At drop off or pick up time a conversation with your child’s teacher may be limited to only a few minutes due to the needs of others. A parent/teacher meeting should be scheduled to discuss a topic in depth.

The best way to communicate with staff is on Procure. If you call the school and receive the voicemail service please leave a message including a contact number. The director and teachers are working with your children and cannot always immediately respond to a phone call. We check the voicemail periodically during the day and will reply to your call as soon as possible. (In most cases within 24 hours.)

The center and each individual class will maintain a bulletin board with pertinent information for the classroom and center. Teachers will provide the parents of toddlers with a brief description of the routine care provided to the toddler on Procure.

Other forms of communication are also used to keep families informed and engaged in the programs offered by Aspire. These include but are not limited to our website, Facebook page, Procure and newsletters. Materials and communication will be given to the families in their primary language.

We value parents as part of our classroom community, and encourage you to visit at any time without notice. We call this an “open-door” policy, and it is important for parents to feel comfortable dropping in to visit the center. We want you to feel comfortable with where your child is spending his/her days.

We do ask that you use the following guidelines when visiting:

1. Always say goodbye to your child.
2. Remember that information heard in the classroom is confidential. We will ask that you not discuss any other child’s behavior besides that of your own child. We ask that all parents respect each child and family’s privacy.
3. Your child might want to be close to you, but encourage your child to join the group and participate in classroom activities

4. For the safety of all children, including your own. Only staff will be permitted to help children in the classroom bathrooms. Private staff bathrooms are available if you need to help your child.

Meals

The center participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This program is funded by the federal government and overseen by the Massachusetts Department of Education. CACFP enrollment paperwork is included in the forms section of this informational packet. Through the CACFP the center provides healthy snacks to children in care. CACFP participant programs follow the meal patterns established by the USDA. The center will provide a morning and afternoon snack daily to all children. Snacks include two different servings of the five components: milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, meat or meat alternate. Morning snack will be served between 8:30-9 AM. Meal menus will be posted weekly on the classroom information board. **YOU MUST REPORT ANY FOOD, MEDICAL, OR OTHER ALLERGIES AT THE TIME OF ENROLLMENT.** Any allergies will be clearly posted in the classroom and alternative food choices will be available for any child with allergies. YOU WILL NEED TO PROVIDE A NUTRITIOUS LUNCH FOR YOUR CHILD EVERY DAY. Infants should bring in enough formula or breastmilk and all food for the day. Lunches should be sent in an insulated lunch bag with an ice pack if needed. Refrigeration space is not available. We will not be able to heat lunches. Some suggestions for lunches include: Yogurt, Cottage Cheese, Cheese Sticks, Sandwiches with deli meats, Cheese or Vegetables and dip, Crackers, Fresh Fruits: such as cantaloupe, bananas, apples, oranges, grapes. {Any food that could be a choking hazard, such as grapes must be cut into small pieces.} soda and candy will not be allowed.

Rest/Quiet Time

Rest/Quiet time is part of the daily schedule. During this part of the day we encourage each child either to rest, sleep, read stories or engage in other quiet activities on their mats. Mats and blankets are provided. Blankets will be washed weekly. Mats will be disinfected daily.

Transportation

Aspire DOES NOT PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION. Parent(s) or Guardian(s) are solely responsible for their child's safety and transportation to and from the program. EEC regulation 606 CMR 7.13 requires the childcare program to maintain a written plan addressing each child's safety and transportation accommodations. The Transportation Form that meets the regulation requirements has been provided in the enrollment packet. The following transportation related guidelines are mentioned for your child's safety at drop-off and pick-up times. All agency staff in regards to the safety and well-being of children are mandated reporters. Please hold your child's hand while in or crossing the parking lot. Massachusetts law requires children to ride in a car seat until 8 years of age or 57 inches tall. Unattended children should not be left in the car even if just running in the building to drop off or pick up.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE POLICY

You must accompany your child into the classroom and make sure a staff member knows that your child has arrived for the day. Staff will document the arrival and departure times in the classroom attendance log. Transition can be difficult for children and we want you and your child to be comfortable and happy. You are welcome to stay until your child is settled. It is sometimes better to say "good-bye" and make a quick exit.

A child will only be released to his/her parents or guardians. If there are other family members or friends you would like them to be released to, you MUST INDICATE SO ON THE TRANSPORTATION FORMS and on Procure. Children will not be released to anyone not on this form or on Procure. Prior notice must be provided if you need someone not listed to pick up your child and staff will ask for a picture ID. We will not release any child to a sibling or babysitter younger than 16. This is to ensure your child's safety. The hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. – 5 p.m. Children will be offered an attendance schedule within the program's hours of operation based on family need and classroom availability. Families will work with program administration to establish their

child's approved schedule. The time before and after children's scheduled attendance is reserved for staff planning, classroom set-up, cleaning, and closing procedures. Any child picked up after 4:30 p.m. will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute for every minute they are late. Unpaid late fees will be added to your amount due and if left unpaid could result in termination from the program and notification to child care circuit in the case of voucher recipients. If a problem persists with late pick-ups, it may result in an adjusted pick-up time or termination from the program. Children not picked up by **5:00 pm** and a parent/guardian or emergency contact cannot be reached, will be considered abandoned and the Department of Children and Families will be called. Children should arrive at school between 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Occasionally situations or appointments arise and result in the need for a later drop-off. If your child needs to arrive after 9AM, please make prior arrangements or call to inform to ensure a smooth transition into the program.

YOUR CHILD'S RECORDS

Your child's records are completely private and will not be released to anyone without the signed consent of the parent/guardian. Parents have a right to view their child's record at any time. All signed consent forms are included with the child's record. Parents also have the right to delete, add or change any information in the child's file relevant to the child's record. All children's records will be updated annually.

WHAT TO BRING:

DAILY:

1. You must provide diapers/pull-ups for your child. Please send in a package of diapers and the teachers will let you know when more are needed. Please send in several pairs of undergarments if your child is potty training. You do not have to send wipes unless your child requires a specific brand.
2. Send at least one change of clothes (including socks) that is appropriate for the season to remain at school. Spills and messes can occur so regardless of your child's bathroom abilities, at least one complete change of clothes should be available.
3. Appropriate clothes for outdoor play. During the winter this includes a warm jacket, gloves, hat, and boots.
4. **A nutritious lunch: please include a drink and utensils needed for their lunch. Infants should bring all formula or breast milk and all food daily.**
5. Please do not bring any toys from home.

Items sent to school should be labeled with your child's name.

Dressing for School

When choosing clothing or dressing your child for preschool, please make sure your child can put the article of clothing on by themselves. Please send your child in comfortable clothes. Please do not send your child in anything expensive or anything you don't wish to get dirty. Learning can get messy sometimes! We discourage sending your child to school with jewelry. During play some jewelry can be a safety hazard and we cannot ensure that jewelry won't be lost or broken. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather. Regulations require one hour (minimum) of daily outdoor activity. If your child does not have weather-appropriate clothing we reserve the right to require you to bring your child home to get the articles of clothing necessary for your child to participate in outdoor school activities.

PHOTOGRAPH POLICY

From time to time, photographs will be taken of your child for classroom use only. When completing the enrollment packet we will ask for your consent. Pictures are used in the center for special events. Occasionally the agency will seek photographs for publicity. You have the right to refuse your child's picture being used for publicity. If you object to the use of your child's photo, please indicate so on your enrollment forms.

VIDEO CAMERA POLICY

Aspire Early Education Center has video cameras inside and outside of the building for the safety and protection of the children and staff in the program. Aspire Early Education will utilize the cameras and the footage for internal use.

Transitions

Aspire Early Education Center will make every effort to work with the parent/guardian when transitioning a child to or from the center and between classrooms. A plan for assisting the child with the transition in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand will be developed in conjunction with the parent. Opportunities to visit the center prior to enrollment will be offered. Collaboration and the sharing of information between the Early Intervention program and Early Education will occur upon parent/guardian approval. Children transitioning from the toddler classroom to a preschool classroom will be given several opportunities to visit their new classroom prior to officially moving. In all circumstances, the center encourages parental/guardian input and involvement to ensure a smooth transitional process.

GUIDANCE POLICY

Guidance and discipline should always be developmentally appropriate and encourage self-control through the understanding of the individual needs of each child.

Our primary concern is to keep all children safe. Children in early childhood are still learning to control their bodies and take responsibility for their actions. Our goal is to provide preventative measures to reduce the amount of opportunities for their behavior problems to occur. These include:

- ❖ Using our knowledge of child development to anticipate difficult situations for children.
- ❖ Planning activities that promote sharing and cooperation.
- ❖ Using proper planning and reminders of expectations during transitions.
- ❖ Positive reinforcement: giving children praise for positive behavior.
- ❖ Modeling positive social skills and interactions.
- ❖ Setting clear expectations and limits and being consistent about applying them.
- ❖ Whenever possible, children will participate in the development of the rules and be encouraged to resolve conflicts and find solutions themselves.

In situations where there is a conflict between children they will be encouraged to:

- ❖ Brainstorm with the staff member about solving problems and consequences. This assists children in developing conflict resolution skills and promotes positive self-esteem.
- ❖ Learn about natural consequences, i.e. "When I do this, this is what happens".

If a child becomes so upset that he or she is a danger to themselves or others, staff will work with the child using these objectives:

- ❖ Staff will move closer to the child, removing anything possibly damaging, and calmly talk to the child to calm him or her down.
- ❖ If necessary, a staff member will remove a child from the immediate situation to a quiet place in the classroom to cool down, regain self-control, and eventually re-join the group.

If all of the previously mentioned guidance approaches have been attempted and consistent behavior problems persists, parents will be contacted and a specific behavior management plan will be created for that individual child for the classroom and at home. If necessary or recommended, staff can provide information about additional resources available to families for addressing behavior problems.

NO CHILD WILL EVER BE SUBJECT TO PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE, NEGLECT, HUMILIATION, OR DEPRIVING OF MEALS. NOR WILL CHILDREN BE FORCED TO EAT. IN ADDITION, NO CHILD SHALL EVER BE DISCIPLINED FOR SOILING,

WETTING OR ANY TOILETING ACCIDENTS. CHILDREN WILL NOT BE CONFINED TO ANY PIECE OF EQUIPMENT FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME IN LIEU OF SUPERVISION.

TERMINATION POLICY

We reserve the right to terminate a child from the program under certain conditions. If a situation arises that is a condition for termination, we will make every reasonable effort to alleviate the situation. If conditions do not improve. We will proceed with termination.

1. Late or non-payment of tuition (more than two weeks).
2. Non-compliance by parents to the policies agreed to in the parent handbook.
3. Extreme lack of attendance
4. Inability to ensure the child's safety, or the safety of others

While Aspire reserves the right to suspend or terminate a child from the program, every reasonable effort will be made to avoid such an outcome. Our goal is to work with families to satisfactorily resolve any problems that may arise during a child's time in the program. However, if termination is deemed necessary, for reasons other than late or non-payment of tuition, a meeting will be held between the preschool director or lead teacher and the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). During the meeting a ten-day written notice of termination will be provided documenting the reason for termination. A copy of the documentation will be provided to the family. In the event of a termination from the program, the child will be prepared in a manner that is consistent with the child's level of understanding and the parental/guardian wishes. Aspire Early Education Center termination policy in accordance with 7.04(17)(j) must describe our procedure for avoiding suspension and termination of a child including but not limited to:

1. Providing an opportunity to meet with the family to discuss options other than suspension or termination.
2. Offering referrals to parents as needed.
3. Pursuing options for supportive services to the program.
4. Developing a plan for supportive services at home and at school.

Aspire Early Education Center chooses not to use the suspension policy.

A family, at any time, may also choose to terminate their child from the program. In the event that this happens, the parent/guardian is required to submit to the director two weeks prior, the reason(s) they are taking their child out of the center's program. Even if this is not possible, parents are to pay the remaining two weeks' worth of tuition fees, plus any additional monies owed to the center. Tuition for services and any outstanding balance are to be paid regardless of the reasons given for the termination.

Staff Supervision

Supervision of educators is provided by the Director on an ongoing basis. In addition, educators will be observed at least monthly while working with children by a staff member with at least lead teacher credentials. Consultation with the classroom educators regarding children's needs, observations and communication with families will be reviewed at staff meetings or in a private meeting between the educator and the observing staff member. Documentation of the observation and consultations will be maintained by the center.

Plan for Volunteers

Anyone offering their volunteer service at Aspire will adhere to EEC Background Record check regulations. All volunteers will be under the direct supervision of an EEC-qualified educator at all times and will never be left alone with children enrolled in the early education center. Volunteers will not be considered a part of the regular teaching staff and will not be used to comply with EEC staffing ratios. All volunteers will attend an orientation

meeting with the director or lead teacher prior to spending time in the classroom. The orientation will include a review of the early education policies, procedures, and volunteer responsibilities. Volunteers will not be allowed to provide children help with diapering or toileting. Service dates and hours of any volunteers will be scheduled with the Director and if documentation of hours served is required the volunteer will document their hours of service on an agency-provided volunteer time sheet.

SECTION 3: SCHEDULES, CURRICULUM, AND CALENDAR

Children are more successful when they follow a consistent routine. We may adapt the schedule to accommodate a special event, such as a guest, field trip or other unforeseen event. In addition, the needs of individuals can be accommodated within reason and with minimum interruption to the remaining group members. Please see individual classroom schedules posted on the classroom boards.

PRESCHOOL

7:30	Arrival
7:35	Morning choices
8:25	Bathroom/Hand washing
8:30	AM Snack
9:00	Circle / Story Time
9:30	Center Time
10:45	Bathroom/Hand washing
11:00	Outdoor/Gross Motor & Movement Time
12:00	Bathroom/Hand washing
12:15	Lunch Time
12:55	Bathroom/Transition to Rest Time
1:00	Rest Time/Quiet Activity Time
2:45	Clean Up Nap Things/Bathroom
3:00	Snack Time
3:15	Afternoon Activity Time/Outdoor
4:30	Dismissal

TODDLER

7:30	Arrival
7:35	Morning Choices
8:25	Diapering/Bathroom/Hand washing
8:30	AM Snack
9:00	Story Time
9:15	Gross motor/ outdoor
10:15	Circle Time
10:30	Diapers/Bathroom/Hand washing
10:45	Activity/Center time
12:00	Bathroom/Hand washing
12:00	Lunch Time
12:30	Bathroom/Transition to Rest Time
1:00	Rest Time/Quiet Activity Time
2:45	Clean Up Nap Things/Bathroom
3:00	Snack Time
3:15	Afternoon Activity Time / Outdoor
4:30	Dismissal

INFANTS

Infants follow their own individual schedules for eating, sleeping, and daily routines. Infants are always placed on their backs to sleep in accordance with Massachusetts EEC Safe Sleep Regulations. Staff follow all EEC infant safe sleep requirements to ensure a safe sleeping environment for every infant. The teachers observe each child's natural patterns and respond to their needs throughout the day. Upon arrival, please let staff know your

infant's last feeding time so we can support their feeding schedule appropriately. Families are encouraged to share any changes to their child's routine to help us provide consistent care.

CURRICULUM

Curriculum adheres to the Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Learning and Toddler Experiences. Lesson are developed by the respective classroom teachers. Taking into account the developmental needs of the whole child, planned activities will encompass a variety of developmental areas including social-emotional, language, communication, problem-solving, pre-academic, fine and gross motor development and self-help skills. Planned activities and explorations are theme-based.

Curriculum plans address all areas of development and will be created using information gathered from teacher observations, samples of work and formative assessments. When developing the curriculum, the classroom teachers consider the children's interests, abilities and developmental goals. Learning activities are set up around the classroom and the children are free to choose from a variety of materials. Each child is encouraged to try new activities and experiment freely in a risk-free environment.

This approach to the development of curriculum meets Massachusetts curriculum guidelines.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Aspire Early Education is committed to being an inclusive learning environment for all children. Each month, we will be discussing the upcoming month and any special celebrations or events happening with your child. This could include birthdays, holidays, special events, or even a unique "just because" day that's meaningful to your family. Our goal is to acknowledge, learn about and celebrate each child's special moments to make them feel valued and connected. We're calling this tradition **Aspire Celebrates!**

BIRTHDAYS

All children will have the choice to receive a Birthday sticker on their birthday. Please do not send in any celebration items (pizza, cake, goodie bags, and other items).

SNOW DAYS/CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

Aspire Early Education Center will not close unless the safety of the children, staff, or parents is at risk. We do not follow the public school calendar. If inclement weather is predicted and we close, a message will be sent on the Procure app to all families by 6:30 a.m. It is the caregiver's responsibility to check Procure. Tuition is due as scheduled.

HOLIDAYS/SCHOOL CLOSURES

Aspire Early Education Center is a year-round program. There are several holidays that we observe and the center will be closed. In addition to being closed for certain holidays, the center will close for staff professional development days. You will be given a school calendar and reminded of these holiday closings in the weeks prior. **Holidays and staff development days are not tuition-free days. Tuition is due weekly for all days scheduled by contract.**

SECTION 4: HEALTH/SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Referral Services

If after considerable observation and documentation by the classroom teacher it is determined that a child/parent needs to be referred to the appropriate social, mental health, educational, or medical services, the child's teacher will speak to the director. The classroom teacher and the director will review the child's record

prior to the referral. The director will arrange a conference with the parent(s) and make available a written reason for the referral, a summary of observations and a list of appropriate services. Every effort will be made to accommodate the child's needs. The director will maintain a written record of any referrals including the parent conference and results. A referral checklist will be kept in the child's record. The director will, with written prior 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.

Aspire Developmental Service Early Intervention referrals: birth-3yrs (781) 593-2727
Lynn Public School Parent Information Center: 2.9 and older (781) 592-8796

A complete list of referral services will be provided upon request.

Toileting and Diapering

No child will EVER be disciplined for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet. Toileting is a different experience for each child and takes some children longer than others to get the hang of it. Potty training is encouraged BUT NOT REQUIRED for entrance to the preschool. Our experience has been that once children begin the program and observe that other children are not wearing diapers, they are more interested in using the potty themselves. When your child is potty training please send extra changes of undergarments and clothes. Each child's diaper is changed every 2-3 hours, or more frequently due to a bowel movement. You will provide your child's diapers. Each child is cleaned and hands are washed with running water and soap following each diaper change or toileting. Disposable gloves are worn by staff for ALL diaper changes and toileting. If a changing table is used it will be disinfected following EACH diaper change. Staff will wash their hands with running water and soap after each diaper change or toileting.

Health Care Policy

Aspire Early Education Center will follow all recommendations from the Division of Communicable Disease Control (CDC) and state and local board of health departments.

In order to prevent children coming to the program ill the following guidelines have been established for keeping children home. Upon returning to the classroom every child who saw a physician should have a brief note stating the following: the nature of the illness, the treatment indicated and when the child is no longer contagious and can return to school.

If a child becomes ill while at school (running a temperature above 100 degrees, diarrhea, vomiting) they may be sent home. The staff will notify the parent or guardian immediately to ensure timely evaluation and treatment to decrease inter-classroom spread of illness. If the child cannot participate in the daily classroom activities, the child will be offered a quiet place to rest within view of the educators until a parent/guardian arrives to pick up the child. Sick days are not tuition-free days. Payment must be made for these scheduled days.

ANTIBIOTICS: A child with a contagious condition for which antibiotics have been prescribed may not attend the program until he/she has had at least 24 to 48 hours of medication, feels and acts well, and no longer has a fever.

CHICKEN POX: Children who have chicken pox must stay at home until the fever has passed and all pox have scabbed over - usually 5-7 days after the rash begins.

CONJUNCTIVITIS: A pink or red eye with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep, and eye pain or redness of the eyelids or skin surrounding the eye. The child should not be in class until 24 hours after treatment has begun.

COUGH: Any cough accompanied by a fever or lasting more than a week must be evaluated by a physician before the child can return to school.

DIARRHEA: More than the child's normal number of loose bowel movements. The child should not be in class until 24 hours after the last episode of diarrhea unless it is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition.

FEVER: When a child has a fever over 100 degrees they must stay home until the child has been without a fever for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine.

HEAD LICE: Must remain home for 24 hours after treatment has begun.

HEPATITIS A: A viral infection, for one week after onset of illness and jaundice (if any) has disappeared or until immune serum globulin has been administered to the appropriate child and staff in the program within two weeks of exposure, as directed by the health department.

IMPETIGO: Child must stay at home for 24 hours after treatment has begun.

MEASLES: Child must stay home for 4 days after the rash appears.

MOUTH SORES: A child who cannot control his/her own saliva must remain at home, unless the child's physician or local health department states that the child is non-infectious.

MUMPS: Child may not return to class for 9 days after the onset of gland swelling.

PERTUSSIS: Child may not return to class until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic therapy has been completed.

PINWORM: Child must not return to school for 24 hours after treatment has begun. Symptoms are intense itching and scratching around the anus, especially at night. You may see tiny, white worms in the stool.

RASH: If accompanied by fever or behavior changes, the child should remain at home until a physician has determined that the illness is not a communicable disease.

RINGWORM: Must remain at home until treatment is begun.

RUBELLA: Child must not return to class for 7 days after the rash appears.

RUNNY NOSES: Generally, a clear discharge is acceptable, but a thick or yellow-greenish discharge may be a sign of a more serious infection. In this case, the child should stay home until the condition is resolved or until a physician approves the return.

SCABIES: This is a contagious infection of the skin, characterized by very itchy red spots. It takes approximately 4 weeks from the time of contact for the symptoms to appear. A child with scabies may not attend the program until his/her doctor is notified and appropriate treatment is given.

STREP THROAT: The child must be checked if he/she has a sore throat accompanied by a fever, swollen glands, and/or rash. The child must remain at home for 24 hours after treatment has begun. The child must also have a normal temperature for 24 hours and be feeling well.

TUBERCULOSIS: A child must remain at home until the child's physician or local health department authority states the child is non-infectious.

VOMITTING: A child must remain at home if he/she vomits twice in the previous 24 hours, unless vomiting is determined to be due to a non-communicable condition.

COVID-19: Aspire will follow all recommendations from EEC, the CDC and local board of health.

In addition to the above list, the program reserves the right to ask parents or guardians to take the child back home if it is determined that the child is not well enough to remain in the program. This would include children who are too sick to participate comfortably in program activities; children who need more care than staffing allows; children who have unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or other signs of possible illness.

A physician's statement indicating the child's ability to return to the classroom may be required after an illness of more than five consecutive days, or in other circumstances, at the discretion of the program director or Health Consultant. Regardless of a doctor's note, the director reserves the right to determine if it is in the best interest of the school to allow a child who exhibits any of the previously listed ailments to participate.

Parents will be informed on Procure if children attending the program are exposed by another to a communicable or reportable disease or condition. The program director is responsible for all reporting requirements for exposure to a reportable condition including parents, EEC and health departments.

Administration of Medication

If your child will require medication during school hours a doctor's order is required for both over the counter and prescription medication. In addition to doctor's prescriptions, all children with ongoing medical conditions, but not limited to, asthma, allergies or special medical conditions will have an individual healthcare plan completed annually by a physician.

As per EEC regulation, no child will be administered medication without all of the appropriately completed EEC documentation. The child must take the first dose of a new medication at home where the family can observe the child. A parent/guardian must bring in the completed forms and the medication in the original medication bottle or container from the pharmacy. The container must have the child's name, name of the medication and the proper dose on it. This must be provided to program staff. If during school hours, your child requires the administration of a medication and documentation is incomplete, a parent/guardian or emergency contact will be called to come administer the medication or take the child home.

Authorized staff only may administer prescription or non-prescription medication to a child with written parental and physician authorization. Forms can be provided for this. For non-prescription medication, a yearly consent authorized by the parent and physician will be accepted. The center will keep written records of the administration of any over-the-counter and prescription medication to each child. The record will include the name of the child, name of the medication, route of medication, dosage, time given and staff who administered the medication. This record will be kept in the child's record. Medication will be stored in the director's office in the labeled cabinet, except for emergency medications that require direct access, for example epi-pens.

Any staff member who may be eligible for the administration of medication must be trained by the state's Medication Administering Training Program on a yearly basis. A certificate of completion must be obtained and kept on file for the duration of each staff member's employment.

If a child has an Individual Health Care Plan and there is a need for training on a particular kind of medication, the child's health care professional or the parent/guardian can provide the needed medication training to the staff responsible for administration of medication.

All expired medications will be given back to the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will be responsible for the proper disposal of the medication. If the child has left the center but the medication remains, it will be disposed of in a proper manner as determined by the appropriate healthcare officials.

Emergency/Illness Procedures

Aspire EEC has developed an emergency preparedness plan that provides guidelines for a wide range of unlikely emergency situations. Emergencies vary widely from loss of heat or water to naturally occurring severe weather, and threats to safety from outside intruders. Staff meetings regularly include a review of the agency's emergency procedures and parents can request a detailed copy of the agency's emergency plan. The following procedures are intended to provide parents with the center's basic guidelines in the event any emergency occurs. If any emergency arises, parents will be notified on Procure or a phone call as soon as it is safe to do so. Staff will follow the directions given by emergency authorities and the director will adhere to the notification policies established by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care in the event of any emergency. Complete copies of the health care and emergency plans are available in the program director's office.

Injury Procedures

All staff are trained and re-certified in First Aid and Child Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) according to EEC regulations.

1. The first aid-certified staff closest to the child will administer first aid as indicated.
2. Another staff member will contact parents (or emergency contact if parents cannot be reached) (Phone numbers are located on Procure and on the child's enrollment forms and on emergency cards in the classroom.)
3. If the child needs to go to the hospital as determined by the person administering first aid 911 is called.
4. A Staff member accompanies the child to the hospital and brings the child's emergency information.
5. For field trips and walks the staff will take the following:
 - ❖ First Aid Kit and Emergency Bag
 - ❖ Emergency contact cards.
 - ❖ Extra diapers, wipes, gloves, and plastic bags.
 - ❖ An extra change of clothes.
 - ❖ Cell phone
6. Injuries requiring first aid will be documented and a staff member will notify a parent/guardian. An injury report will be created. All injury reports will be reviewed by the director or designated staff member and an injury log will be maintained. It is the responsibility of the Director to review the injury log, assess injury circumstances and make changes as needed.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

1. Classroom teachers and staff lead the children out of the building. The teacher takes attendance and ensures all children are present. At the initial meeting destination in the parking lot in front of the playground against the fence attendance is taken again.
Staff will take the emergency bag, attendance and emergency cards when exiting the building.
2. The Program Director will make a visual inspection of the program's classroom(s) before exiting the building.
3. All classrooms, once evacuated, will meet in the south parking lot against the fence and wait for directions by the Program Director before reentering the building.

Fire Drills/Practice Evacuations shall be conducted monthly. Drills will be conducted every month at varying times of the program day. Children and staff will practice using different evacuation routes so everyone will be familiar with the options available in the event of an emergency.

Emergency Evacuation Plans will be posted at all exits.

The center will maintain a daily attendance list that is current. The staff are responsible for signing children in and out of the center at arrival and departure times. The attendance list will be readily accessible in case of an emergency evacuation.

If a child is found to be missing while class is outside, one teacher will gather all the children together while the other teacher uses the cell phone to call 911 and then the office to have staff help search the area. The child's parent/guardian will be called immediately.

Emergency/Disaster Contingency Plan

In the event of a disaster or other emergency, the program will follow the directives provided by the local emergency authorities. The program director will contact the Lynn Police or Fire @ 911 and determine if the children should shelter in place or evacuate. If instructed to evacuate, the teachers and staff will walk the children to the Lynn Public Library, 5 N. Common St. (Tel. 781-595-0567). Teachers will take the attendance and emergency bag. Teachers will take attendance before and after leaving the facility. Teachers will maintain contact

with emergency services through the use of a cell phone. Parents will be notified by Procure or cell phone immediately of the exact location. Staff will remain with children until parents are able to pick up their child.

If the emergency is so widespread that it requires evacuation of an entire neighborhood due to a gas leak or chemical spill, staff will be transported with the children to the nearest Red Cross Shelter by emergency or personal vehicles. Staff will remain with children until parents have been contacted and have come to pick up their child.

In the event of an emergency including a hazardous materials accident or any other airborne threat, public safety officials may recommend that the program take Shelter-In-Place. Public Safety officials and the Emergency Alert System will determine if this is necessary and how long it is necessary to remain there. Parents will be notified by phone or Procure.

In the event of these disasters, staff will be prepared with a disaster kit, to take with the children for transport. This will include emergency contact cards and an attendance list, a personal cell phone, a first aid kit, diapers, wipes and a change of clothes. In the case of Shelter-In-Place the staff will be prepared with these materials on-site.

LOSS OF HEAT, WATER OR ELECTRICITY: Aspire Early Education must meet minimum requirements regarding temperatures, hot water, flushing toilets, running water, etc. in order to operate. The program director or other authorized member of management will make a decision whether or not the center should close. If the minimum requirements cannot be met parents will be notified immediately on Procure or by phone to return to the program to pick up their children.

Child Abuse and Neglect Statement

All staff are mandated reporters and shall report suspected neglect or abuse to the Department of Children and Families. M.G.L. c. 119, 51A.

If any form of abuse is suspected it must be reported to the Program Director. The director will take steps necessary including notifying the Department Of Children and Families, (781) 477-1600. Staff is trained on how to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect. Observations are documented and kept on file at the program. Obvious signs of abuse/neglect are reported immediately to DCF by the director. Allegations of abuse/neglect by staff members are immediately investigated by the director and the teacher is removed from the classroom until the matter is resolved. Any abuse/neglect allegations or reports will be immediately reported to Department of Children and Families by the director.

SECTION 5: ENROLLMENT, TUITION AND HANDBOOK AGREEMENT

If you are interested in enrolling your child in the Early Education Center, please contact our Program Director at 781-593-2727 X2230. At that time you should set up an appointment to come and tour the facility. If there is immediate space available, you will be provided with an enrollment packet including medical forms to be completed by the child's pediatrician. Through this paperwork, we hope to gain a better sense of how we can best accommodate the needs of your child and family. If there is no immediate space available, your child can be placed on a waiting list that is found on the Aspire Developmental Services website. You will be contacted when an opening is available.

Tuition and Payments

Tuition for preschool is \$63 per day. Tuition for toddlers is \$87 per day. Tuition for infants is \$110 per day. Aspire offers a sibling discount of 10% off the older child enrolled. Aspire offers a 5-day per week schedule. We

accept vouchers from the Child Care Circuit, which can be reached at 800-660-2868. **TUITION PAYMENTS MUST BE MADE WEEKLY AND ARE DUE IN ADVANCE. PAYMENTS ARE DUE ON FRIDAY FOR THE UPCOMING WEEK.** This includes parent fees for children with Child Care Circuit vouchers. Any additional fees are the responsibility of the payee. This includes bank fees for a returned check and the convenience fee for payments made by credit card on Procure. You can make special arrangements to pay bi-weekly or monthly. Payments can be made on Procure or to the program director with cash, check, or money order.

1. Payment for the first week of tuition is required upon enrollment.
2. Tuition payments must be made in advance every Friday.
3. Payment is expected on time. If payment is not received within 1 business day of the due date, you will be charged a late fee equal to 10% of your weekly tuition and your child may not be allowed admittance until all fees are paid including late fees. The following will apply if payments are consistently late:
 - ❖ One week late: late fee charged and you may be required to authorize a credit card form for the payment of tuition.
 - ❖ Two weeks late and/or non-authorization of credit card processing = late fee charge and written warning – this will include information regarding termination from the program and your child will no longer be permitted to attend. There will be no additional warning.
 - ❖ Week three = your child may not attend the program and their space will not be held. You will receive a formal notice of termination from the program.
 - ❖ Late or non-payment of fees may result in the loss of your voucher.

If tuition payments are received late twice in any 6-month period, a credit card and autopay will be required for future tuition payments.

Should you encounter difficulty making payments weekly, speak to the center director immediately to see if an alternative payment schedule is possible.

4. Aspire Early Education Center requires two weeks' notice when your child leaves the program.
 - * Full tuition is due for the notification period
5. Tuition payments are not reimbursed if a student withdraws from the school.
6. Cash payments are accepted by the preschool director but it must be for the exact amount owed. We do not keep cash on hand to make change.
7. A receipt will be emailed for all payments. It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to retain your copy of the receipt in case of a payment discrepancy.
8. Any extra charges that accrue will be billed separately.
9. You must adhere to the schedule as stated in the tuition agreement. Further, two weeks' notice is required to alter the child's schedule on the tuition agreement and schedule changes are at the director's discretion, contingent upon availability.
10. We do not provide drop-in service.
11. Substitutions in schedules cannot be made for illness or holidays. Credit is never given for absences due to illness, holiday, vacation, inclement weather, or any unforeseen situation.

A two-week notification will be provided if changes are made to the tuition agreement. It will be assumed that the changes are accepted unless you submit a two-week notification of termination form. In addition, a new tuition agreement reflecting the changes will not need to be signed for the changes to take effect until the next enrollment year which is historically every September.

Voucher Recipients:

1. Childcare voucher recipients are expected to attend the program in accordance with the terms of the childcare authorizations. Excessive absences will result in a reassessment of the family's need for child care. If your child will be absent, the center must be notified in advance. Please send a message on Procure to report an absence prior to the start of the day. Absences are considered explained absences by child care circuit, only when notified in advance.
2. Parent-fee for services is required when we are open for children.
3. If a voucher contract terminates for any reason payment will be billed at the current daily rate of tuition to continue enrollment beyond the end date of the voucher. If the tuition payment is not received following the above tuition policy after the termination of a voucher contract, the child's enrollment may be terminated. The space may not be held.

PARENT HANDBOOK AGREEMENT

The contents of the parent handbook have been reviewed with me and I agree to comply with the policies and procedures in the handbook.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

TUITION AGREEMENT

Tuition is \$63.00 per day for preschool, \$87.00 per day for toddler and \$110 per day for infants. **THIS IS THE STANDARD RATE REGARDLESS OF ABSENCES, HOLIDAYS OR SNOW EMERGENCIES.** Tuition payments are due in advance and should be made on Friday for the upcoming week. Payments can be made in cash, check, or money order in the business office of Aspire Developmental Services, Inc. Bank fees will be addressed for any returned checks. Payments can be made online through the parent portal with a credit card (convenience fee added) or a bank account.

I UNDERSTAND THAT LATE PAYMENT AND/OR NON-PAYMENT OF TUITION WILL RESULT IN ADDITIONAL LATE FEE CHARGES AND MAY RESULT IN TERMINATION FROM THE PROGRAM.

I agree to pay \$_____ per day, for a (number) _____ day program (a total of \$_____ per week), for my child _____ to attend Aspire Early Education Center. I have read the tuition contract and agree to the terms.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____