



CEDARS



**Early Childhood
Development Centers
Parent Handbook**



Early Childhood Development Centers

Parent Handbook

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Think. Play. Learn. Grow.

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Welcome

Welcome to CEDARS Early Childhood Development Centers! Thank you for choosing us as your early care and education provider.

Please know that our centers are your centers, and we look forward to building a positive and long lasting partnership with you. At CEDARS, children are valued as individuals and are provided with many opportunities that nurture growth and development. We work hard to ensure that all children have high quality early care and education.

We know that the first years of life are the most critical. During this time, the brain develops more rapidly than at any other stage in life. Children discover who they are, how others respond to them and how to respond to others. We are committed to helping you provide your child with positive experiences, plenty of learning opportunities, school readiness activities, and most importantly, loving care while your child is with us.

Your child's day will be filled with fun and exciting activities designed to promote the cognitive, cultural, social, emotional, and physical development of your child while in our care. Each classroom posts and follows a daily schedule and lesson plan which includes indoor play, outdoor play, nap and/or rest periods and other quiet times, opportunities for individual and group play times, opportunities for children to read and explore books, daily reading with children of developmentally appropriate literature, and fostering language and social development by talking and interacting with children and modeling appropriate language and behavior.

We believe that the teaching and management staff will become an extension of your own family. Our teachers are educated professionals who will work with you to help your child think, play, learn, and grow.

The information in this handbook outlines the quality early care and education provided within the CEDARS Early Childhood Development Centers, and how we are apart from typical "daycares." We take great pride in our centers and appreciate your feedback to ensure high quality programming. Please do not hesitate to let your child's teacher, your program's manager, or our service area administrator know if you have any questions or concerns.

Goals

For Our Children

- **To learn about themselves and express their independence**
- **To learn about their feelings and express them appropriately**
- **To learn about others and develop relationships**
- **To learn about communicating**
- **To learn about moving and doing**
- **To acquire thinking skills and an understanding of concepts and problem solving**

For Our Families

- **To build partnership with families**
- **To support families in their parenting role**
- **To support families in their role as primary educators of their child**
- **To ensure that the home culture of the children's families are reflected in the program**

For Our Teachers

- **To build responsive relationships with children and their families**
- **To plan and manage a developmentally appropriate program**
- **To promote children's development and learning**
- **To continue learning about children, families and the field of early childhood education**
- **To maintain professional standards**
- **To be an advocate in support of children and families**

About Our Centers

We base our programs on the children, ages 6 weeks to 6 years, that come to our Centers. The beliefs, interests and wishes of the children are taken into consideration in program planning. We value parent's requests, cultures and ideas and implement them in our classrooms every day. One way that we seek this information is upon enrollment. Please take the time to complete our Parent Observation Form so we can learn about your child. Throughout the year you will be asked to complete a Parent Satisfaction Survey as well as participate in Parent/Teacher Conferences. These two formal opportunities are ways to provide feedback. We are also available to talk to you in person, via phone, email, or postal mail. These contacts are listed on the front page of this handbook. Also, as a full service agency, please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher or program's manager if your family has additional needs. We have access to donations and can make referrals to other CEDARS programs as necessary.

Additional Resources

CEDARS provides the community with a wide array of services for children and families. In addition to early care and education, CEDARS offers elementary school aged programming at Clinton and Hartley Elementary Schools. There is also school aged care offered at Carol Yoakum Early Childhood Development Center for Arnold Elementary School. In addition, CEDARS offers the following services:

Nebraska 24 Hour Crisis Line 800-448-3000

Foster Care & Transitional Living Services

Out-of-Home Residential Services

Family Support and Prevention Services

To learn more information about these CEDARS programs, contact: CEDARS Administrative Offices

6601 Pioneers Boulevard,
Ste. 1 (402) 434-KIDS (5437)

www.cedarskids.org

email: info@cedars-kids.org



Confidentiality

Confidentiality is very important to us. Please know that information you share will be kept in confidence. We lock our child and education files and follow HIPAA regulations. A signed release is needed for us to communicate with other professionals.

Enrollment Checklist

- o Tour the Center
- o Observe in classroom
- o Meet classroom teachers
- o Pay enrollment fee
- o Complete enrollment forms and turn in to Center
- o Obtain copy of current immunizations and give to Center
- o Gather all of the items your child will need for care
- o Parent Licensing Brochure (provided by the Dept.)

Please bring the following for your child (as applicable):

- o Diapers
- o Wipes
- o Formula and/or Breast Milk
- o Three bottles
- o Blanket & pillow
- o Seasonally appropriate change of clothing

Enrolling Your Child

Prior to enrolling your child, all families are encouraged to tour the center, observe the classrooms and ask questions. Parents are welcome to visit any time, although arranging ahead of time will assure that the Program Manager will be available to answer your questions.

We do require families to pay a non-refundable **enrollment fee** of \$30. Parents must provide complete **enrollment forms** for each child. These forms give us information about how to contact you, demographic information about your family for our records, information about who is allowed to pick up your child and ways to help your child feel more comfortable. It is important that you keep staff informed of any changes to your contact information. Should an emergency arise, we need to be able to contact you.

A current **immunization record**, **USDA Income Eligibility form** and personal items for your child are also required. If you have chosen not to immunize your child, we require a written statement from you describing the reasons for that decision. These items include a **seasonally appropriate change of clothing for all children**. Infants/toddlers will need **diapers, wipes, three bottles (infants), and formula or breast milk (if applicable)**. All personal items must be labeled and kept in your child's cubby or other designated space. You are welcome to bring an item which may help with the transition and/or a special naptime blanket. Bedding is provided and washed weekly or as soiled. With the exception of "show and share" days, please do not allow your child to bring other items or toys from home. Violent toys (guns, swords, aggressive figures) are not permitted at the centers. Items brought from home on non-designated days will be stored in the office until parents return.

The first day in a new environment can be stressful, not only for children but for the parents as well! Please give your child (and yourself) plenty of time to adjust to a new situation. It is normal for parents to feel anxious about leaving their child. Teachers and the program management are good sources of information on how to make this transition easier. Phone calls or drop in visits are always welcome.

Accreditation/Achievements

Best Practices identify our centers as providing the highest quality of services to young children and their families in the field of early childhood development. These practices include maintaining low staff-to-child ratios and using current research and best practices when caring for children. Program supervisors are well educated, experienced and have a strong belief in partnering with families to provide the best care possible.

CEDARS incorporates four well known quality standards to form a system of care that is nurturing, individualized and of the highest quality. Nebraska Licensing Regulations, Council on Accreditation (COA), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and Creative Curriculum© standards are the basis for practices at CEDARS Early Childhood Centers.



CEDARS believes...

CEDARS Early Childhood Development Programs are based on the premise that ALL children, regardless of their ability level, their ethnic background, their family dynamics, the language they speak, or their socio-economic status deserve the very best beginning. ALL children receive loving and nurturing care. ALL children have the opportunity to learn, grow, create, and belong. ALL children are treated with respect and taught to respect themselves and others. ALL children have the right to trust, make friends, build their self-esteem and become who they want to be.

Think. Play. Learn. Grow.

CEDARS Core Beliefs

- Children are our first priority
- Each team member will ensure the SAFETY of all clients and staff
- Each team member will have RESPECT for themselves and all others that they come into contact with
- There will be open and honest COMMUNICATION among all team members
- Each team member will work to create a FAMILY CENTERED environment
- Each team member will go out of their way to show each other and the families we serve how much we CARE ABOUT MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Meet the Staff of CEDARS

All full-time teachers are required to have a bachelor's degree, associate's degree or a Child Development Associate (CDA) certification and experience working with young children. Part-time and substitute staff have a high school diploma, previous experience and are typically college students working on their degree in a related field. All on-call staff (Relief Child Specialists) are trained in the same manner as regular staff.

Staff are chosen to work in our centers based not only on their education and experiences, but because they believe in children and families and have made a decision to make teaching young children their professional career. We treat our teachers as professionals and value professional boundaries; we ask that you not approach our teaching staff to care for your children after hours. However, if a teacher makes the decision to care for your child(ren) after work time, please understand that CEDARS cannot be held responsible for what teachers do outside of their working hours.

The Classroom

Each classroom at CEDARS incorporates the philosophy and teaching of Creative Curriculum™. This curriculum is a guide for our teachers. It is used to help them organize their rooms into interest areas and implement developmentally appropriate practices, while focusing on observing children in a purposeful way and using those observations for future planning. Through this we develop goals which are outlined for children, families and teachers.



Teacher to Child Ratios:

Infant 1:4

Toddler 1:6

Preschool 1:10

Curriculum and Assessment

All teachers are trained on the curriculum philosophy, paperwork and implementation of Creative Curriculum® which emphasizes the importance of individualized education.

Each child's interests and background is taken into account as teachers plan. Flexibility, routines, enrichment and nurturing are the keys to this curriculum. Teachers plan experiences (playing with toys, imitating and pretending, enjoying stories and books, connecting with music and movement, creating with art, preparing and tasting food, exploring sand and water and going outdoors) for each child in care. These experiences are built into daily routines to take advantage of teachable moments.

Each child has an education file, including the Creative Curriculum Gold™ assessment tool called The Child Assessment Portfolio, which is completed quarterly. This assesses your child's development on a continuum. This assessment tracks your child's progress and provides valuable information to help your child grow and learn. Both formal and informal assessments of a child's developmental growth are conducted throughout the time a child is receiving care. Teachers gather anecdotal information through observation, as well as examples of the child's work, which are compared with Creative Curriculum's Gold™ Child Assessment Portfolio objectives. The teacher reviews this information quarterly to assess the child's developmental progress, which is then communicated to the parents.

Each family will have the opportunity to participate in four parent/teacher conferences per year (February, May, August, and November) and the chance to work with the teacher to establish individualized goals. Conferences are a valuable way for parents to discuss with their child's teacher the assessment, and establish future goals for their child. Your participation in these conferences is crucial to your child's success. If you are unable to attend, your child's teacher will provide you with a written summary and request your feedback on goal setting.

More information on Creative Curriculum™ is available at www.teachingstrategies.com.

Our classrooms are fully inclusive. We ask that you include us on your IFSP or IEP team, so we may support your child's development by incorporating these goals into our plans.

Parent Involvement

All parents are strongly encouraged to become involved at the center. There are many opportunities for involvement, such as participating in the Parent e-Circle (an online network of parents), assisting with activities or on field trips, reading to children, sharing ideas with teachers, participating in parent-teacher conferences or enjoying a meal/snack with your child.

Parents are welcome any time, and we value involvement throughout the year. Open communication is essential for us to provide your child with the best care possible. Sharing information about your child will help teachers plan activities around your child's interests. Teachers will share with you personally and in writing about your child's day and upcoming events. In addition to parent-teacher conferences, please feel free to request more frequent meetings with your child's teacher.

Upon enrolling, you will be asked to provide parental/guardian contact information. If you have court orders or other documentation that dictate limitations of any parent/custodial issues, we recommend providing us a copy of those documents.

Continuity of Care

CEDARS recognize the importance of attachment and bonding in the first five years of life. This bond is encouraged through “continuity of care,” which allows children to form deep rooted friendships, developing complete trust in their caregiver and fostering positive communication for teachers and parents.

Continuity of care begins as children enroll in the program. Children transition into a new classrooms with the same group of children, and when possible the same teacher, for the first three years of life. At three years of age children are slowly transitioned into a preschool classroom with an individualized plan implemented for each child.

Preschool classrooms consist of children ages three-five years. Children stay with the same preschool teacher until beginning school-age care or Kindergarten.

*Please note- there may be situations where your child does not move with the same teacher or group of children due to the varied ages of children in each classroom. Every attempt is made to follow the preferred continuity of care as much as possible. Please contact your center’s program manager for additional questions.

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Language Resources

Should you need communication in a preferred language other than English, please notify your child’s teacher or management staff, and we will use internal or external resources to meet your needs. For families that speak a language other than English, parents are encouraged to share their spoken and written language with their child’s classroom. Parents may be asked to help provide written labels for the classroom in their home language, teach songs in a language other than English, or teach children how to say or write words or letters in their native language.

Parent Communication/Grievance

In the event you would like to make a formal grievance or complaint, you may request a client grievance form from your child’s teacher or your program’s manager. Within five working days, the manager will review your grievance and provide a written response. All grievances are taken seriously and kept confidential. At enrollment, you will receive a Parent Information Brochure produced by the State of NE Child Care Licensure Unit outlining how regulations can be accessed, how to contact licensing staff, and how complaints can be filed if you don’t feel they have been appropriately addressed at your site.

Arrival and Departure

Arrival and departure times are an opportunity to share with you about your child's day, and we hope you will take time each morning to share about your child's home experiences as well. Due to work schedules, your child's primary teacher may not be available at drop-off or pick-up times. Please feel free to request a different mode of communication. We can send written notes home, connect by email or phone, use a two-way journal...whatever works for you.

It is very important that your child is accompanied by an adult at all times and is signed in and out each day by you or an authorized adult. Children will not be released to an unauthorized person. Should you have someone else pick up your child, that person's name must be listed on your child's enrollment form, and we will check their photo ID. We also request that you notify your child's teacher ahead of time. Please be certain that your child's teacher is aware of when you are arriving or departing.

For the safety of your children, we cannot allow them to be dropped off or picked up over the playground fence. For security purposes, do not give out the door code to your child or anyone not authorized to pick up your child.

Late pick-ups

It is very important that your child be picked up before the center closes. Pickup times past closing will be charged \$5.00 per child for the first 15 minutes and \$1.00 per minute thereafter. Repeated late arrivals may result in termination from the program. **If after 30 minutes, we are not able to contact the parent or emergency contact, we will then contact the police.

Attendance & Payment

Attendance at the center is based on full-time care. Part-time care is only accommodated when two or more children share one spot at the discretion of the program manager. It is important to communicate to the center when your child will be absent.

Tuition is based on a monthly rate per your child(ren)'s age. Payment is due in advance of care. The preferred form of payment is through automatic withdrawal. If you are unable to, please talk with your center's program manager for other options, such as weekly/bi-monthly payments via check, cash, money order, credit card. Failure to follow your Payment Agreement will result in termination of services. A monthly statement of your account will be generated. Please call CEDARS Finance Department at (402)437-8827 if you have account questions.

All fees for services are based on enrollment only. We are not able to offer a reduction for holidays or absences. State-subsidized care (Title XX) is accepted. An absent fee of \$5 per child/per day will be charged for absent days regardless of the reason (for Title XX families only).

A two week notice is required when leaving our program. Failure to do so will result in two weeks of payments due. Please see the payment agreement for more information on payment policies.



Holidays and Closings

The centers will be closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day (for staff training), Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. On days surrounding holidays, centers may choose to be closed or close early, however, these closings will be communicated at least 30 days in advance.

Inclement Weather

When Lincoln Public Schools close, our centers will also close. In the event that Lincoln Public School is not in session, a closure decision is at the discretion of CEDARS President/CEO or designee. You can expect that closures will be announced on local news stations, and also on the center's voicemail.

We will make the decision about the centers being closed as soon as possible, but no later than 6:00 a.m. on each business day.



Celebrations

Birthdays and family celebrations are special days for children to be recognized. If you plan to celebrate at the center please notify your child's teacher. Food that comes from home for sharing must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. In addition, food allergy restrictions must be strictly adhered to. If the food to be shared is during meal/snack time the program will provide the scheduled meal/snack in addition to the shared food. To encourage children's healthy eating, consider bringing your child's favorite fruit or vegetable with dip to share with the class!

Meals

All meals served in our centers are USDA recommended meals that include a wide variety of healthy and diverse foods. Breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack are served daily and the class schedule will note service times. With notification, we are happy to reserve a serving for late arrivals as we cannot allow outside food to be brought into the center. All meals are pre-approved by a registered dietician and prepared by trained and experienced food service staff. For children with food allergies or special health care/ nutritional needs, we will need written instructions from your health care provider and your consent to post this information for all teachers caring for your child.



We strongly support breastfeeding by accepting breast milk that has been expressed in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's name and date. We will store it in the refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours (or 24 hours for breast milk that was previously frozen) or in the freezer for no longer than three months.

Staff will warm the breast milk in warm water and mix it gently to preserve special infection-fighting and nutritional components. We will also gladly provide you with a comfortable place for breastfeeding and coordinate feedings with you.

For infants, formula (Simply Right- Enfamil equivalent), cereals, and first, second and third baby foods are provided. Teachers will need to know when to begin your child on solid foods, including what kinds and amounts. We cannot provide infants under six months old with solids or juice without a written recommendation by a health care provider. Once your child is 12 months old, we can serve whole milk and table foods. Teachers will record what and the amount children eat daily to share with parents. Menus are posted in each classroom and copies are available for you to take home. Every attempt will be made to accommodate children with special dietary requests. All meals are served family style, and teachers sit at the table with the children. Mealtimes are seen as social and learning opportunities.

BackPack Program

The BackPack Program provides meals for children and families in need of food over the weekend. The goal of the BackPack program is to supply a student and his or her family with four to five meals per menu cycle. There are 6 different menus that are rotated weekly. The families get a variety of non-perishable items, and in addition, fresh fruits and vegetables are available during the appropriate growing season. Eligible participants are based on the USDA income eligibility guidelines. The program suggests students who qualify for their school's Free Lunch Program will also qualify for the BackPack program. Please ask your program's manager if you would like more information on this program.



Napping

As developmentally appropriate, each classroom's daily schedule has a designated time for napping. While each child may not nap, it is important for all children to have quiet down time. If you have a special naptime request please talk with your child's teacher. Each child will be provided with a bassinet or crib until it is appropriate to transition him or her to a cot or mat.

Infants are allowed to nap on their own schedule and are placed on their backs to sleep on a firm surface manufactured as infant sleeping equipment. Any deviation from this must be ordered by a physician in writing. This means infants may not sleep in bouncy seats, car seats, or swings. Pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys and other soft items are not allowed in cribs/bassinets for infants younger than eight months old. If a blanket is used the infant is placed at the foot of the crib with a thin blanket tucked around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as the infant's chest. The infant's head must

remain uncovered during sleep. After being placed down for sleep, infants may then assume any comfortable sleep position where they can easily turn themselves from the back position.

Infant and toddler teachers consistently position themselves so that supervision of children is always possible. For example, while infants are napping, teachers place themselves in the classroom, so they are able to have visual contact on all children at all times.

A crib, cot, or mat (as age appropriate) is provided for each child. Please feel free to bring your own pillow or blanket from home for your child, along with a comfort item for sleeping. These items are also available through the program. You may choose to take the blanket

home with you daily or weekly for cleaning, otherwise laundry is done on a weekly rotation throughout the Center.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is a team effort and communication is very important between parents and teachers. As much as possible center staff will use techniques used by the parent at home. Toilet training will include only positive direction and encouragement. No form of punishment is tolerated for "accidents." Children respond positively to praise and discovering independence at their own rate. It is our recommendation that the introduction of the concept and actual training be started between the ages of 18 months and two-and-a-half years. When the child enters preschool, the teacher-to-child ratio increases, leaving teachers with less availability to toilet train so while it is preferred that children are toilet-trained prior to transitioning/enrolling in preschool, it is not required. We also ask that if you would like for teachers to begin toilet training with your child that you are also doing so at home. Consistency throughout the day and evening is crucial to successful toilet training.

Is your child ready to toilet train?

Does your toddler have the required verbal understanding? This includes being able to understand and carry out simple instructions.

Does your toddler show signs of wanting to do more things for themselves such as pulling up their own pants?

Is your child's bladder and bowel control adequately developed? For instance, can he or she go for two or three hours before wetting their diaper.



The use of pull-ups or training pants is encouraged. Parents are asked to bring several (four-five) extra sets of pants daily. Due to health regulations, cloth diapers and clothing soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day. All soiled clothing must be taken home by parents daily; otherwise it will be thrown away.

Health and Hygiene



Center teachers are trained on proper hand washing techniques to avoid the spread of communicable illnesses and teach children about general hygiene practices. Children and adults wash their hands: upon arrival; after diapering or using the toilet; after handling body fluids; before preparing, serving, or eating meals/snacks; after sand or water play; after handling pets and when moving from one group to another group involving infants/toddlers. Teachers also wash their hands before and after feeding a child, before and after administering medication, after assisting a child with toileting and after cleaning or handling garbage. Teachers wear gloves when changing diapers, cleaning up and handling bodily fluids and also wash hands after glove removal.

Please help us contain contamination by washing your hands and helping your child wash theirs (following the posted procedure) upon arrival in the classroom. Proper hand washing means washing and scrubbing the hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm running water, rinsing well under running water, and drying with a paper towel.

All children brush their teeth daily. Babies' teeth are brushed using infant toothbrushes as soon as they have a tooth and with gauze pads before teeth emerge. All children are assisted by a teacher until they can effectively brush on their own. Each child receives their own toothbrush. Toothpaste is used after age three.

Illness

Children must be well enough to fully participate in indoor and outdoor activities to be at the center. Unfortunately, we do not have extra staff to keep your child inside while the class is outdoors.

When your child becomes ill at the center, a teacher or program supervisor will notify you immediately, and an adult will need to pick up your child within 30 minutes. The purpose of our exclusion policy is to contain the spread of infection.

Please keep children home or they will be sent home with:

- **Vomiting and/or diarrhea:** Children may return to the center 24 hours after all symptoms are gone.
- **Runny nose with yellow or green discharge, accompanied by a fever or consistent coughing:** Children may return after all symptoms are gone or 24 hours after antibiotics have been started and the child has no fever.
- **Fever of 101 degrees or above, as read directly from a digital thermometer under the arm:** Children may return to the center after being fever free, without the use of a fever reducing medication for 24 hours.
- **Conjunctivitis or pinkeye:** Children with red, draining or crusty eyes must have a doctor's note to be in care. If the condition is pinkeye or conjunctivitis, children may return 24 hours after antibiotics have been started.
- **Chicken Pox:** Children with chicken pox may return to the center after all sores are scabbed over and no fever has been present for 24 hours.
- **Head or Body Lice:** Children may return to the center after being treated with lice removing shampoo or medication and all nits are removed.
- **Rashes/Skin Conditions:** Rashes of an unknown cause should be examined by a health professional. Children may return to the center after all signs of rash have disappeared or with a doctor's clearance assuring that the rash/skin condition is not contagious.

Additional diseases include influenza, pin worm, ring worm, scabies, fifth disease, rotavirus, and RSV.

Please notify the center if your child has been diagnosed with any transmittable infections or diseases. Some communicable diseases may need to be reported to the local health authorities such as measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis, influenza B, diphtheria, meningitides, hepatitis A, shigatoxin-e.coli, shigella, TB, and suspected food or water borne clusters or outbreaks. Communicable diseases will be reported to the parents/guardians of all enrolled children on the same day that the disease is reported to the Center, regardless of your child's attendance that day. Notifications will be made through posted fliers, individual notes sent home, personal emails and/or phone calls.

Training is provided to all staff on the administration of medication, how to care for children with illnesses, first aid and CPR certification and proper techniques in dealing with body fluids and hygiene practices.

Medications

Medications will be administered at the center only after medication forms are completed by the parent and the child's physician (as needed). All medication must be stored in its original container.

Staff will only be able to follow the label's dosing instructions. Keep in mind that most over-the-counter medicines (cough syrup, fever reducers, etc.) do not recommend dosage for children under two years old, or under a certain weight. In this case, or if you request a dose other than what is on the medicine's label, a written physician's note must provide the dosing instructions.

It is important to know that **ALL MEDICATIONS MUST** be in locked storage at all times while at the center and must be given by teaching staff only when necessary. Please do not keep medications in your child's diaper bag or ask that we hold medications for a later time. We cannot have medications that are not signed in for use that day. For on-going or as-needed medications, you may request a long-term or PRN medication permission form from a teacher. These medications, such as an epi-pen or asthma inhaler, must be accompanied by physician's instructions on how and when to use.

Safety

Tornado and fire drills are conducted on a reoccurring basis. Fire drills are rehearsed monthly and tornado drills four times per year during the months of March-September. Each center has designated meeting places that are approved by licensing and the State Fire Marshall. Children are encouraged to fully participate, and teachers facilitate discussions with children about fire and tornado practices to address fears.

CEDARS Safety Committee meets quarterly and reviews all reports of incidents, accidents, concerns and illnesses. Quality improvement plans are implemented and followed through as requested. Quarterly program visits by the Safety Committee assure that all licensing and accreditation standards are being met.

In the case of an injury all teachers are certified in CPR and First Aid. In the case of minor injury, staff will provide proper First Aid and parents will be informed, in writing, when they pick up their child. If the injury is more severe, staff will call parents to inform them of the incident. If the injury requires medical attention but is not an emergency, parents will be contacted to pick up their child. In the case of a serious or life threatening injury staff will call 911 and immediately contact the parent. The State of Nebraska requires child care staff to watch for and report immediately any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services or law enforcement. Teachers or program supervisors can also make a confidential referral for services such as counseling, case management and individual or family therapy. Please know that we are here to support you and your family.

It is important for you to know that if our staff suspects anyone who is picking up or dropping off a child of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, it will be reported. We also must report any violations related to Child Passenger Restraint laws. Currently, Nebraska law states that children up to age six must ride correctly secured in a federally approved child safety seat, and children 6-18 must ride secured in a safety belt or child safety seat.

In addition, remember, it is NEVER safe to leave children unattended in your vehicle-even for a moment. This seemingly innocent action could result in a child neglect ticket.

Transportation

Teaching staff incorporate outings into their lesson plans and/or daily schedules, such as a daily walk to the neighborhood park or a planned trip to a community venue. Our ECDC staff never travel alone with

the children and are prepared with emergency first aid kits and phones. When travel by vehicle is required, we use an agency 12-passenger van, and strictly follow Child Passenger Restraint laws. Whether at the program or away, teachers follow CEDARS Accountability System to assure constant supervision of children. You will be required to give permission for your child to be transported to activities off of the premises.

Responding to Challenging Behaviors

Challenging behaviors such as biting, hitting and kicking can be a frustrating, although normal part of a young child's development. Parents with children in group settings are very likely to experience their child being aggressive or receiving aggression from other children. Other challenging behaviors such as inappropriate sexual play, conversation or touching are also a concern to those caring for children. It happens most often in the developmental stages of toddlers and preschoolers as they are navigating their own child development journey. Children in this age range are mastering communication skills, developing their own sense of self and exploring the difference between right and wrong.

Behavior Management

Because CEDARS is a mission-based, nonprofit agency with a goal of providing quality early care and educational experiences, we are committed to serving all children. We work closely with families to develop an action plan to address any challenging behaviors. As long as families are willing to work with us, we are committed to work with families to teach children the skills they need to be successful in life.

Teachers use current research and recommendations from mental health professionals and behavioral consultants to guide the children in their care. CEDARS ECDC's have a full-time behavior consultant, also a therapist, on staff. The behavior consultant works with teachers to structure the environment, daily schedules and interactions with children to decrease challenging behaviors in the classroom and foster good social and emotional skills, such as: developing friendships, emotional and literacy skills, as well as, anger management and impulse control. Teachers will not use negative forms of discipline. Redirection and limited use of "time out" are the recommended strategies for inappropriate behavior. If "time out" is utilized, it will not exceed a time of 1 minute for each year of the child's age.

If you have questions regarding forms of discipline please speak with the program manager. The professional staff at CEDARS ECDCs hold each child's social and emotional development as priority. We are committed to meeting the individual needs of each child and family. We believe daily interactions with teachers help children shape their sense of self and how they relate to other people. When their behavior is guided in respectful, positive ways, children learn self-discipline and how to express their feelings in acceptable ways.

CEDARS use an approach called Positive Behavioral and Interventions Support through the Center for Social Emotional Foundation for Early Learning (CSEFEL). Our Behavior Consultant works with every teacher in every classroom and may use a behavioral screening tool to help direct the plan for each child. Please keep in mind that aggressive behavior is normal in this stage of development. You are encouraged to use our consultant as a resource. Your child's teacher or program supervisor will be able to provide you with contact information.

In the event that teachers, parents or program supervisors determine the incidence of aggressive behavior has become excessive (for example, the child displays three incidents in one week, or behaviors continue for more than three weeks) or the behavior is severe enough to cause a safety concern, a meeting with the teacher and family will be required to develop a strategy to address the behavioral issues. This written strategy will require teamwork, support and communication between home and school.

Parents Responsibility

1. When a child has demonstrated aggressive behaviors three or more times in one week or has had three consecutive weeks where an aggressive behavior incident has occurred, it is required that the parent(s) meet with the child's teacher and the center manager or assistant manager to discuss prevention techniques that can be used both at the Center and at home. Teachers will share all documentation and behavioral charts and will be asked to assist classroom staff in determining the best way to prevent their child from repeating aggressive behaviors. These meetings will continue weekly until the behavior has decreased or stopped completely.
2. If behavior continues to be excessive or increases, a note from a medical doctor may be required assuring that the child has been seen and that there are no physical concerns or possibly diagnoses that need to be addressed.
3. Parents may be asked to change their child's schedule or to pick their child up from care if behavior is maintained or increases.
4. Parents will have the option to hire an additional staff to provide one-on-one supervision of their child on a temporary basis. The cost and number of hours will be jointly determined by the parent and program manager. A rate exception may be requested from DHHS if the family is receiving State Assisted Child Care Subsidy.
5. In the case that the behavior lasts more than 6 consecutive weeks or results in other children being injured seriously (bruising, broken skin) a referral to Lincoln Public School or Early Intervention will be made jointly by the parent and the center.
6. In the event that the aggressive behavior continues past a six week period and parent input and cooperation are not present or another child is severely injured (requiring professional medical attention), CEDARS reserves the right to terminate care immediately.

CEDARS Responsibility

1. When a child has had aggressive behaviors three or more times in one week or for three or more consecutive weeks the teacher will contact the program manager or assistant and the child's parent(s) to set up a meeting to discuss the behavior and share Behavior Observation Forms.
2. The program manager, assistant and/or behavioral consultant will observe the classroom behavior and will make suggestions to the teachers to aid in the prevention of the behavior.
3. Teachers will meet with management staff and/or Behavioral Consultant to discuss classroom routines and make any necessary changes to try to prevent the behavior.
4. Teachers will make non-aggressive behavior teachings part of their curriculum and will work specifically with the child on redirection and alternative choices.
5. When meeting with parents a plan (using the Team Meeting Action Plan form) will be put into place regarding staff reaction to the behavior (i.e. redirection, parents picking up the child, loss of privilege) behavior increases a temporary absence from the center may be requested behavior increases a temporary absence from the center may be requested. This will only be approached after all other options are attempted.
6. If there are no improvements in the behavior or the behavior increases a temporary absence from the center may be requested. This will only be approached after all other options are attempted.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

THANK YOU

Thank you for the opportunity to share in the teaching and care of your child. The strong partnership that you will share with your child's teacher will be one that will benefit you and your child for a life time. If at any time you have questions, concerns or comments do not hesitate to communicate with your child's teacher or program's manager. We believe that you are your child's first teacher and strongest advocate, and we take great pride in supporting your efforts.