



EDUCARE WEST DUPAGE



Family Handbook

Welcome to Educare West DuPage. This handbook will explain our basic mission, purpose, rules, and policies. Parents are responsible for reading and becoming familiar with all of the enclosed materials. Please read through this handbook, and if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, feel free to contact us. We hope your family enjoys their time with us. Thank you for entrusting your child to our care.

Feel free to talk with us and ask questions at any time.

Educare West DuPage

851 Pearl Road
West Chicago, Illinois 60185
(630)957-5500

Educare Glen Arbor

204 Church Street
West Chicago, Illinois 60105
(630) 601-2320

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STATEMENT OF SERVICE: THE EDUCARE MODEL

Educare is a national network of the highest-quality early learning environments for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Educare schools combine the best of Early Head Start/Head Start, Child Care, Preschool For All (PFA) and Prevention Initiative (PI) programming to support families. We help young children ages birth to five grow up eager to learn and ready for school. The Educare Model was designed using the best early childhood research that reflects the developmental needs of children from prenatal to age five. From the research lab to practice in the classroom, Educare strives to implement innovative ideas that will continuously improve early learning for children and families through the development of a network of excellence. More than just physical spaces where children receive exceptional early education and care, the National Network of Educare schools also serve as a catalyst for change in the local and national discussions about investing in young children and improving public policy.

The Educare model is built on over 40 years of research on how to effectively shift the odds in favor of success for very young children. Key features include:

- Highly qualified staff—a Bachelor's or Master's level teacher and one assistant and one aide in every classroom
- Small groups—8 infants, toddlers and twos, or 17 - 20 preschoolers per class
- Intentional instruction—focused on language and cognitive development
- Continuity of care—children stay with at least one teacher and some peers for up to three years to help children develop secure relationships
- Family Engagement Services—both expected and strongly supported, with a Bachelor's level Family Engagement Specialist for each family
- Staff engage in reflective supervision and practice
- Emphasis on Social-Emotional development from birth through preschool
- Enhanced focus on Language and Literacy to promote school readiness
- Implement an Interdisciplinary Approach —Effective team building for optimum planning and support
- Integrate the Arts to enhance social competence and increase skill sets
- Collect research to drive decisions for improved program and child outcomes

MISSION & PURPOSE

A Partnership between the private and public sectors to create a high quality, birth-to-five program that achieves higher levels of quality.

- A partnership between the school district, community-based agencies, and private philanthropists.
- A partnership bound by contract committing to joint governance, and long-term support.
- A partnership with a vision to better prepare disadvantaged children to succeed in school and in life.

A Place that nurtures early learning, is a beacon of hope for the community, and sends a firm message that we must invest in early childhood - because children are born ready to learn.

A Program to prepare young children for school by implementing the approaches and practices that science tells us are necessary to help young children grow up safe, healthy and eager to learn.

A Platform for change with each Educare school serving as a "showroom for quality" and a catalyst to drive broader policy and systems change at the state and national level. Educare schools are dramatically changing the life trajectories of thousands of children growing up in families facing the greatest obstacles to success - and changing the way America thinks about early education.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

CLASSROOM STAFFING AND COMPOSITION

Educare West DuPage operates 6 classrooms that serve children between the ages of 6 weeks and 3 years old. Specifically, there are 2 infant rooms, 2 toddler rooms, and 2 two year old rooms. Each 0-3 classroom serves 8 children. Educare also operates 6 preschool classrooms that serve children ages 3-5 years old. Each preschool classroom serves 17 - 20 children.

Educare West DuPage at Glen Arbor operates 4 classrooms that serve children between the ages of 6 weeks and 3 years old.

Every Educare classroom is staffed with 3 full-time staff. The typical staffing model has a Lead Teacher, a Teacher Assistant, and a Teacher Aide.

Our professional staff qualifications exceed Illinois licensing standards. In the preschool classrooms, all Lead Teachers are required to have a Bachelor's degree in Child Development, Early Childhood Education with an ISBE 04 certification or to have an elementary certificate and be in the process of achieving early childhood teacher endorsement. A Lead in 0-3 needs a Bachelor's degree and an Infant Specialist certificate, or in some related field with a minimum of (18) credit hours in child development. Assistant Teachers are required to have an Associate degree in Early Childhood Education, a CDA or at least 6 credit hours in child development. A Teacher Aide is required to have a high school diploma or the equivalent, some experience is preferred. Preschool Assistant Teachers and Aide should have a State of Illinois educator's license stipulated for paraprofessional status.

Educare West DuPage is committed to providing high quality care with skilled and educated professional staff that are culturally and linguistically sensitive to the families we serve. In addition, Educare West DuPage provides a dual language learner model designed by a consultant with the State of Illinois Board of Education to ensure that children are exposed to and supported by a rich vocabulary in both their primary home language as well as English. In our program children continue to learn in English and Spanish, with a goal of fluency in both languages by kindergarten.

OUTDOOR AREA

There are 2 playgrounds on the Educare West DuPage grounds. One playground is specifically designed for children ages 0-3 and the other is specifically designed for preschool aged children.

Educare West DuPage at Glen Arbor has a playground that supports the developmental needs of children 0-3.

CONTINUITY OF CARE & PRIMARY CAREGIVER SYSTEM

Continuity of care is the high-quality practice of having teachers and children stay together for several years, rather than having children change teachers and groups of peers each year or more frequently. Because learning occurs simultaneously with emotional attachment, it is best for young children to have a stable caregiver throughout their early years. Educare West DuPage has established continuity of care by looping at minimum one staff person with the same group of children through the Infant, Toddler and Two year-old classrooms. Children are moved as a group into the next classroom once a year. Once children are enrolled in our preschool program, every effort is made for them to remain in the same classroom until age 5. Staying in the same preschool room allows for continuity by having the same staff and group of children. This practice fosters strong attachments and benefits the children by giving them caregivers who really know them and their parents well.

All education staff members are assigned as primary caregivers for specific children in their classroom. All the children in our school will have a Primary Caregiver. The primary-caregiver system ensures that every child has a "special" person and that each parent has a primary contact. Depending on the staffing model established in your child's classroom; the Lead Teacher, Teacher Assistant or Teacher Aide may be your child's primary caregiver. The primary caregiver forms a caring, nurturing, and responsive relationship with your child. In the classroom, she/he will be the "expert" on your child, knowing pertinent information such as your child's individual schedule, developmental abilities and special needs, sleeping needs, and individual interests. Having a primary caregiver gives children a secure base. They learn to trust someone familiar who will care for them as they explore and who will be there to comfort them when they are tired, upset, or frightened. Their relationship with a primary caregiver helps children feel secure enough to relate to other adults in their environment. However, "primary" does not mean exclusive. Children should not become totally dependent on the presence of one person. The other staff in the classroom will develop a warm relationship with your child and have caring and learning interactions as your child explores the learning environment. Parents will have a parent conference at the end of the fall and spring with their child's primary caregiver.

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

Educare will implement a screening process for every child enrolled within 45 days of enrollment. In collaboration with each child's parent Educare West Dupage/Educare at Glen Arbor will perform linguistically and age appropriate comprehensive screenings to identify concerns regarding a child's development. Comprehensive screenings cover health status, developmental, sensory (vision/hearing), and behavioral. All screening tools are standardized instruments that are both valid and reliable. Children enrolled in our 0-3 programs are screened using the *Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ)* for developmental status, the *Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA-IT)* for behavioral status, and are required to have a complete physical and sensory screening by their primary healthcare provider. Children enrolled in our preschool program are screened using the *Early*

Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R) for developmental status, the *Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)* for behavioral status, and are required to have a complete physical and sensory screening by their primary healthcare provider.

CHILD ASSESSMENT

Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor uses Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment System as the assessment, which aligns with our chosen curriculum, Creative Curriculum. The GOLD system blends ongoing, authentic, observational assessment for all areas of development and learning and intentional, focused performance assessment tasks for selected predictors of school success in the areas of literacy and numeracy. This seamless system for children birth to age 6 is designed for use as part of everyday, meaningful experiences in the classroom or program setting. It is inclusive of children with disabilities, children who are English-language or dual-language learners and children who demonstrate competencies beyond typical developmental expectations. Teaching Strategies GOLD recognizes that young children's development is uneven and rapidly changing and that development and learning are interrelated and overlapping.

In addition, Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor participates in the Educare Learning Network Implementation Study. The Implementation Study will allow Educare to describe and better understand the progress children and families are making in our program. The results will also show links between child and family outcomes and the implementation of the Educare Model. Child assessment data will be collected using standardized assessments.

Developmental Approach for Infants, Toddlers, and Two's and Preschoolers

The most important goal of our approach is to help children become enthusiastic learners. This means encouraging them to be active and creative. Our goal is to help them become independent, self-confident, inquisitive individuals who know how to learn. We provide a foundation that includes good habits, and attitudes, with an emphasis on a positive sense of self, which ultimately supports their interest in academic or "school" learning.

During the first two years of life, children are working on acquiring a sense of trustworthiness of oneself and others. This is the sense of safety and security that comes from responsive and predictable care from familiar caregivers to whom the child is attached. In the toddler years, a strong sense of autonomy is building. This comes from being treated as an individual and being allowed opportunities for independence.

When children feel a sense of independence, power, and competence, they begin to step out into the world and become active learners and problem solvers. Young children need a safe environment full of opportunities to explore and have fun. They need to be able to see, touch, feel, and move. They need to be talked to, read to, and sung to in both their primary home language as well as English. Educare of West Chicago will provide a culturally and linguistically responsive dual language program.

The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, Two's and Preschool, which was developed by Teaching Strategies Inc. will be used as a framework for the daily curriculum. It applies theory and research to everyday practices, giving staff a road map for development and learning. All individualized written

education plans follow the child development theory and research described in *The Creative Curriculum*.

Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor strongly believes in developmentally appropriate practices in providing a quality learning experience for young children. To implement this in our educational program, staff will be sensitive to each child's age and individual needs.

THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM INFANTS, TODDLERS AND TWO YEAR OLD FOCUS:

- Fine and large motor skills
- Sensory learning
- Language-Communication
- Cognition
- Social-Emotional Development

The developmental approach to curriculum with infants and toddlers involves everything that happens to the child throughout the day. Responsive caregiving is the key component to setting up a safe and secure environment and developing trusting relationships. Throughout the day, staff will take advantage of these caregiving experiences that are so important in the early years of life and turn them into meaningful and positive experiences for a child's healthy development.

Along with the individual caregiving moments, teachers will also plan and organize their environments to provide experiences which enhance motor development - reaching, grasping, crawling in and out, throwing, pulling; cognitive development - object permanence, cause and effect experiences, language, listening and responding to sounds and voices, and problem solving; social development - playing among others, positive peer interactions, and expressing emotions towards others.

Planning for infants and toddlers includes using the environment as a source of learning opportunities. When teachers organize materials for the room, they will take into account children's individual differences along with their knowledge of child development. Planning is based on observations of the children using their interests, their new skills, and their reactions to materials. As children grow and change, teachers will change the classroom environment. Teachers may put out more challenging climbing equipment or add a building area with different toys. A classroom may look very different at the end of a semester than it did at the beginning.

THE CREATIVE CURRICULUM FOR PRESCHOOL FOCUS:

- Responsibility for self and others
- Positive behavior and self regulation
- Problem-solving and logical thinking
- Listening and speaking
- Reading and writing
- Mathematical representation and symbolic thinking
- Physical development and movement
- The world around them
- Ways to communicate

We will provide a rich environment where language and pre-reading skills are included in all activities that prepare children for kindergarten. In addition, early learning in the Arts will be a main focus. Providing activities where preschoolers are involved in dance, music, creative writing, visual arts, theater, pretend play, and sculpture will enrich their learning of academic concepts.

Preschool classrooms will also focus on supporting the stages of writing for children. Writing and shared reading is purposefully planned to support the development of writing in an appropriate way. The teacher addresses the areas of literacy and writing development in a meaningful context while engaging and meeting the needs of all the children in the classroom. The teacher models writing. Teachers engage all of the students with various teaching strategies such as turn-n-talk, posing open-ended questions, sky or palm writing, and group share. They use their observations of children to plan individual support for each child in order to further a child's learning and interest.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily schedule for the children is a guide. It provides a framework for planning and organizing the daily routine and play activities for the children. The daily routines for children may be a little different based on the age of your child. Infants follow their own biological needs. They are fed, changed, and nap when they need it. Toddlers are changed/taken to the toilet before transitions in the day and as needed. Adjustments to the schedule are made as your child gets older and his/her needs change. You may also notice that as your child gets older, s/he may alter her/his own schedule to fit in with the group. Some common changes you may notice in your child's behavior after enrollment in any group care situation include altered sleep/wake patterns (staying awake for longer hours or napping more frequently for short periods of time) or changes in appetite.

The following daily schedule is an outline of a typical day with infants, toddlers and twos. Keep in mind again that, if needed, the schedule will include children's individual needs based on their age. This is a *sample* that includes different types of components to the daily schedule.

TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE SAMPLE: INFANT/TODDLER AND TODDLER AND TWO'S CLASSROOMS

MORNING EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM (7:00am - 9:00am)

7:00 9:00 Arrival/Health and Wellness check/Attendance and Sign-in

7:00 8:30 Free Choice: Learning Centers and diapering/toileting

8:30 9:00 Breakfast and Tooth Brushing

FULL DAY PROGRAM (9:00am – 3:00pm)

9:00 9:15 Group time (Songs/Finger Plays, Daily Plans, Learning Centers choices)

9:15 9:25 Read Aloud

9:25 10:00 Outdoor Activities/Gross Motor

10:00 10:30 Free Choice: Learning Centers and Small Groups (Language/Literacy Focus)

10:30 10:50 Music & Movement Activity

10:50 11:00 Read Aloud

11:30 12:00 Lunch and Tooth Brushing

12:00 1:30 Rest Time

1:30 1:45 Art Activities

1:45 2:15 Outdoor Activities/Gross Motor

2:15 2:30 Read Aloud

2:30 2:45 Free Choice: Learning Centers and Small Groups (Math/Science Focus)

2:45 3:00 Snack Time

AFTERNOON EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM (3:00pm – 5:30pm)

| | | |
|------|------|---|
| 3:00 | 4:30 | Free Choice: Learning Centers and diapering/toileting |
| 4:30 | 5:30 | Outdoor Activities/Gross Motor |

TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE SAMPLE: PRESCHOOL

MORNING EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM (7:00 am - 9:00am)

7:00 8:30 Arrival/Attendance, Sign-in, Choice Time

8:30 9:00 Breakfast and Tooth Brushing

FULL DAY PROGRAM (9:00am – 3:00pm)

9:00 9:15 Group Meeting (Songs/Finger Plays, Daily Plans, Learning Centers choices)

9:15 9:30 Read Aloud

9:30 10:00 Outdoor activities / Gross Motor

10:05 11:05 Choice time in centers

11:05 11:25 Read Aloud

11:30 11:50 Small Group Activities (Language/Literacy Focus)

11:50 12:20 Lunch, Hand Washing and Tooth Brushing

12:30 2:00 Rest Time

2:00 2:15 Waking up from nap/journal

2:15 2:30 Read Aloud

2:30 3:00 Outdoor Activities/Gross Motor

3:00 Snack Time

AFTERNOON EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM (3:00pm – 5:30pm)

3:00 4:30 Free Choice: Learning Centers

4:30 5:30 Outdoor Activities/Gross Motor

MEAL SERVICE

The goals of our Meal Service Program is to

- Provide a wide variety of nutritious food of the highest standard of quality and sufficient quantity to meet the growth, development, and allergic needs of each child we serve;
- Encourage healthy eating habits by creating a relaxed, caring and unhurried atmosphere where foods are served family style. Staff will provide support, model appropriate behavior, and encourage time for socialization.

Educare West DuPage will follow the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Pattern requirements which meet the nutritional needs of the children we serve. We will serve both the birth to three and preschool programs. We will provide formula and baby food for infants who are not ready to take cow's milk or table food.

Preparation of Meals

The preparation of all meals will comply with IDPH Food Service Sanitation Codes and be managed by a contracted meal provider. Meals will be portioned in the kitchen in a designated food preparation area that meets IDPH Food Service Sanitation Codes.

All food service areas and equipment will be clean & maintained according to all health & safety regulations. Food will be prepared and brought to the classrooms in a timely manner to keep hot foods hot & cold foods cold.

Storage of Food

Leftover food that has been delivered to the classrooms will be discarded and not saved or stored. Leftover milk or juice from small serving pitchers will be discarded and not saved. Extra food that remains in the kitchen will be handled, labeled, stored & discarded in accordance to all IDPH Food Service Sanitation Codes.

MEALS FOR INFANTS

Infants will be on individual meal plans that are created in partnership with the parents and meet the nutritional meal pattern requirements of the CACFP. Infant bottled water, formula, infant cereals & jar foods will be provided by Educare West Dupage. Infants go through rapid growth & development their first year. Dietary needs may also change rapidly. Parents and staff will discuss and modify meal plans as needed. A doctor's note is needed to accommodate dietary plans that differ from the CACFP nutritional requirements. Parents will be required to complete a Formula/Milk waiver if they choose to supply their own formula.

Bottle Feeding: Educare provides bottle-fed babies with bottles to be kept at the school. Bottles and lids are labeled with the child's first and last name. Formula remaining in a bottle after feeding must be discarded within two hours. Only breast milk, formula, or water will be placed in your child's bottle. No bottles will be served with cereal, juice or other food products in them.

A rocker/glider in the Lactation Room is available to parents if they are available and choose to breastfeed or, they may bottle feed their baby in the classroom as long as they have completed all of the volunteer requirements established by Educare.

Breast Milk Feeding: Fresh or frozen breast milk can be brought to the school. It must be in a container labeled with the child's first and last name and the date the milk was pumped. Fresh breast milk will be stored for 24 hours in the refrigerator or up to two weeks in the freezer. Milk that exceeds this period will be discarded. Contents remaining in any bottle after feeding must be discarded within two hours.

If your child is breastfed and you forget to bring in breast milk or the frozen supply is depleted, the infant will be fed our store bought formula. We will try to get in touch with the parent first to see if breast milk can be supplied in a timely manner. However, if we are unable to get in touch with the parent and the child is hungry, we'll feed them the formula served at the school.

Infants will be held and fed when they are unable to sit up on their own. As your infant grows and becomes more capable of eating independently, they will be placed in a low chair with an attached tray and encouraged to use their fingers for eating "finger-foods" as well as using infant utensils. As infants gradually start to eat cereals, jarred foods, and table foods, parents will inform the primary caregiver in the classroom as to what their child can eat. It is recommended that infants try new foods at home first, then parents can add the new food to the classroom list.

MEALS FOR OLDER INFANTS, TODDLERS, TWO'S, AND PRESCHOOL AGED CHILDREN

Children old enough to eat table food will be served their meals, family style. Infants 6 weeks to 12 months will be served formula in a bottle or a sippy cup with a lid. Children 13 months to 2 years old will be served whole milk in an open cup and those older than 2 shall receive skim milk. Special dietary needs (e.g.: food allergies, food intolerances) must be shared with school staff. Documentation of special dietary needs from a physician or head of a religious group is required. ***Without documentation, we must provide the child with all food items being served.*** Educare will provide substitute foods or supplements to accommodate such needs, when required by written documentation from a physician.

Older infants will be seated in either low chairs with trays or a small table with chairs; toddlers and two year olds will be at tables when served their meals. Children in the toddler and twos room will use open cups and metal utensils and non-disposable plates/bowls when possible.

MEALTIME

Mealtime shall have a relaxed, caring & unhurried atmosphere. Food will be served family style and provide time for socialization. Staff shall sit at the tables modeling table manners & assisting children with meals. Children will be encouraged to feed themselves as they become capable. Staff will provide supportive help as needed. Children will be encouraged to eat, but not forced or bribed. Food will never be used as a reward or punishment. Staff shall not have any other food or drink in the classroom. Water will be available to staff & children at all times. Food will be served and handled in compliance with all IDPH Food Service Sanitation Codes.

Weekly menus will be posted in each classroom and on the school's parent bulletin board and will be corrected if any substitutions are made. A set of menus will be given to parents upon request. Menus will include items that reflect families' culture and ethnicity. Food may not be brought in from home. Foods that are choking hazards will not be served to children under three years old.

SLEEPING & NAPTIME

Infants nap according to their own schedules. If an infant should fall asleep while being rocked, lightly bounced, or taken for a walk in a stroller, they will be put in their cribs to continue their sleep. Children transition from a crib to a cot at approximately 15 months old. All the bedding is provided by Educare and is washed on site.

To minimize the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (**SIDS**), infants will be placed on their backs to sleep in a crib. When an infant cannot rest or sleep on his or her back due to a disability or illness, Educare will ask for written instructions, signed by a physician, detailing an alternative safe sleep

position or special sleeping arrangements for the infant. The infants at Educare West Dupage are provided with a firm, tight-fitting mattress in a crib that meets current safety standards.

There will be no pillows, quilts, bumpers, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, or other fluffy products in the crib. Two children never share a crib. The above practices are supported by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. These practices are required by the DCFS licensing standards.

Educare understands that practices may be different at home and that some children have unique situations (e.g. - twins who may sleep together in the same crib). However, we must follow licensing guidelines and adhere to the above stated policies. It may or may not be difficult for some children to adjust if they are used to sleeping in a different position or with a parent/sibling.

Each child will be assigned their own sleeping space at the beginning of the program year; infants will be assigned a crib and all other children will be assigned a cot. Each child's name will be placed on their assigned crib/cot to ensure it will not be used by more than one child at any time. The bedding on cribs and cots will be washed at least once a week. When illnesses are prevalent, laundering happens even more often. After every sheet change, the cots or crib mattresses are disinfected. The infant soft toys are washed as much as needed to prevent the spread of germs.

DIAPERING AND TOILETING

Educare West Dupage will provide store-bought disposable diapers and wipes for children in our program who are not potty-trained. If your child wears diapers, they will be changed at regular intervals throughout the day as needed.

Children in diapers will be changed on a diapering table, available in the bathrooms connected to the classrooms. Staff will use non-latex gloves and follow the posted procedure for diapering. Staff will wash their hands after changing a child's diaper and will assist the children in hand washing as well. Soiled diapers will be disposed of in a garbage bag kept in a lidded container that will only be used for this purpose. The diapering area will be cleaned and sanitized after each diaper change. The soiled diaper container will be cleaned and sanitized daily. Soiled linens will be placed in a dirty clothes hamper and dirty clothes will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home for laundering.

Educare will not apply baby powder on children after a diaper change. The use of powder has been linked to childhood asthma and other respiratory difficulties. However, diaper rash ointment will be applied if there is a need and the parent has signed the consent form.

Potty Training:

Educare West DuPage will not introduce any toilet training to a child who is not ready. At Educare West DuPage, child-sized toilets are in every bathroom connected to the classrooms. Educare Glen Arbor has toilet risers for the children to use. Children who are being potty trained at home, will be encouraged to use the toilet. However, the actual use of the toilet will only be utilized at the child's initiation or acceptance. Parents must meet with staff to discuss potty training for their child.

If a child's clothing becomes soiled, they will be immediately changed. The child's body will be cleaned with mild soap and water in any area that was in contact with their elimination. **Families need to provide an extra pair of clothing to be kept at Educare so that in the event of an accident, the child's clothes will be changed.**

BATHING ARRANGEMENTS

Should a child need to be bathed while at Educare; infants will be placed in a portable baby bath for washing and rinsing. Older children will be washed and rinsed in a shower stall with a detachable showerhead. Child will be bathed and wrapped in bath towels to be dried. Bathed children will be changed into clean clothing and their soiled clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag to be laundered at home.

Educare Glen Arbor will utilize portable baby bathing tubs in the event that a child needs to be bathed.

FEE & PAYMENT INFORMATION

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CCAP) CO PAYMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor is an approved provider of Child Care Assistance Program services as regulated by the state of Illinois. Though Educare relies on federal and state grants for the majority of our program funding, we also count on the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to help with funding the services that make our program "high quality". Once a family is determined to be eligible for 5 days a week of CCAP funding, Educare receives the additional funding directly from IDHS. However, CCAP also requires each family to pay a sliding scale portion for child care. The family's portion is called the CCAP Co-Payment. CCAP approved families will receive notice of their co-payment fee based on a sliding scale. CCAP fees are based on the total family income, size, and number of children in the family.

Once a family's co-payment fee is determined, Educare requires the CCAP Co-Payment Fee to be paid no later than the 15th day of each month. Fees can be paid in cash, debit/credit card, money order, or a cashier's check.

TUITION/PRIVATE PAY STUDENTS

Children whose parents are paying privately will follow the tuition payment plan given upon registration. Payments are due the first of each month with a five day grace period.

PARENT CO-PAYMENTS

Families receiving CCAP must adhere to all rules established by Educare West Dupage and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). Parents need to make sure paperwork is completed in a timely manner and deadlines are not missed. If we provide any child care that was not approved by the subsidy program, the parent(s) will be responsible for paying the full cost of care. Based on the CCAP regulations, families must keep an 85% attendance rate in order to stay eligible for Educare.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend school every day. Attendance builds nurturing and caring relationships. When parents are consistent and involved in their child's life, children are happy, curious, and natural learners. In addition, if children do not maintain consistent

attendance they will be dropped from the CCAP program because this negatively affects our reimbursement.

DELINQUENT PAYMENTS

A late payment notice will be issued if the fee is not paid consistently each month. A payment plan will be arranged to help pay off balances. If the plan is not followed a notice requesting a parent conference will be given to discuss a plan for full payment. The parent conference will only be canceled if payment is received prior to the meeting date indicated on the notice. Educare West Dupage reserves the right to deny services beyond the EHS/HS portion of the day to families delinquent in their CCAP co-payment.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

Educare provides full day child care from the hours of 9:00am until 3:00pm, Monday through Friday. However, Extended Day Child Care is also available from 7:00am to 9:00am and in the afternoon from 3:00pm to 5:30pm. Extended Day enrollment is based on each family's school and/or work schedule. Extended Day programming is not provided to every family, only those whose schedule requires child care during the Extended Day Program.

LATE DROP-OFF/PICK-UP

Parents must drop-off and pick-up their children based on the schedule they submit in their application. Official time will be based on the school's clock, since it is the clock used to determine staff hours. If a family is frequently late, a notice will be issued and a parent conference will be required to discuss a plan for correcting the late drop-off or pick-up behavior. Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor reserves the right to deny services to families who are consistently late in dropping-off and/or picking-up their child.

LATE DROP-OFF/PICK-UP PROCEDURE

When a parent or guardian is late dropping off their child to school in the morning, the parent will escort the child to the classroom and sign them in. Delete tardy slip comment. Parents are responsible for ensuring the classroom staff are aware the child has arrived and are expected to place the child under the supervision of the classroom staff prior to leaving the school.

When a parent or guardian is late picking up his or her child from the classroom, the child will remain at the school. Staff contacts the parents and all the child's emergency contacts several times. For this reason, parents must keep their Emergency Contact information up-to-date.

If the parent or authorized persons cannot be reached, the child will be made as comfortable as possible. The late pick-up concerns will not be discussed with the child or in front of the child.

Staff will contact the legal authorities, as required by law, when the parent, guardian, or authorized persons cannot be located or contacted, and it is time for the last staff to leave. The closing staff or site supervisor will supervise the child until the parents or outside authorities arrive.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Educare West DuPage is a part of a national network of high-quality early childhood schools that combine the best of federal and state early childhood programs, to serve families and their children, ages 6 weeks to 5 years.

ELIGIBILITY FOR HEAD START

Families interested in enrolling their children in the Early Head Start/Head Start Program at Educare West DuPage/ Educare Glen Arbor must be determined eligible by the Child Care Assistance Program and EHS/HS program. Each funded grant has its own set criteria that Educare will use to determine eligibility. Families will be required to provide documentation as evidence of what they report in the registration packet. Once eligibility is determined, families will be required to complete an enrollment packet. Children, who are homeless, have a diagnosed disability, or whose parent is a High School student have priority placement. Also, currently enrolled 0-3 children will receive priority placement in the Head Start program.

POLICY ON CERTIFIED COPY OF BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Parents need to provide proof of their child's identity and age. A certified birth certificate must be provided to school staff at the time of registration. Once the birth certificate is verified by staff, a copy of the document will be placed in the school files and the original will be returned to the parent.

For children under 8 weeks of age; a 30 day grace period will be given to the parents, before the certified birth certificate must be on file. After 30 days, if the parent has not provided the school with a certified birth certificate, then Notification of Failure to Comply will be turned over to the state police or the local law enforcement agency.

REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO ATTENDANCE

A completed registration and enrollment packet must be on file and all other required documentation along with parent signatures.

Children will be required to have a current physical examination (less than 6 months old and updated every year after initial enrollment) which includes; Tuberculin (TB) Test and Lead Screening, prior to admission. All immunizations must be current or up-to-date (DTaP, Polio, MMR, HIB, Hep B, Varicella) Children are required to adhere to the check-up/immunization schedule.

Parents/Guardians are required to participate in an Orientation which may occur in the child's home or at school. This orientation will occur at a mutually agreed upon location and time.

REGISTRATION FOR ENROLLMENT

A child is registered when the enrollment application and all federal/state required forms including complete medical and immunization records are on file at the school.

THE REGISTRATION PACKET WILL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING FORMS:

- Enrollment Application
- Health and Nutrition History

- Certified Copy of a Birth Certificate or other (see below)
- Child Health Exam with TB and Lead results, and up-to-date Immunizations*
- Emergency Contact List
- Signed Consent forms from Parents
- Verification of Receipt - DHS Child Care Pamphlet
- Application for IDHS Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP),
- Family Agreement & Code of Conduct

A child will not be able to attend if all of these documents are not on file prior to the first day of attendance.

ADMITTANCE POLICY

A child is officially admitted into the Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor program once the following activities have occurred:

- Program eligibility requirements have been met;
- All required child and family documents have been reviewed by staff and copies are on file
- A physical exam with up-to-date immunizations and both TB and Lead screening results
- It has been determined that there is an age appropriate open slot for an incoming child
- Incoming children are pulled from the waiting list of eligible children
- All above apply to tuition paying students, except eligibility requirements

DISCHARGE POLICY

We require a 2 week notice of withdrawal from the program.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor will operate year-round from 7:00am until 5:30pm, Monday through Friday.

HOLIDAY AND SCHOOL CLOSING SCHEDULE

Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor is open year-round, Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. However, there are days when our school is dismissed early, is closed for holidays and breaks, staff training and program review. Dates are provided on the School Calendar. School calendars are available at the front desk and can be viewed on our parent bulletin board.

INSERVICE DAYS - EARLY DISMISSAL FOR CHILDREN 1:00 PM OR FAMILY MEETING DAYS 4:00 PM

On occasion, Educare may have days throughout the school year that are early dismissal. On these days, children are to be picked up by 1pm or 4:00pm (please see annual calendar)

WEATHER CONDITION CLOSINGS

In the event that the school is closed, due to bad weather, it will be announced by a phone call or text to the primary phone number you provide to Educare. It will also be announced on local radio

stations and posted on the Educare West Dupage website. If you do not receive a message or hear information on the radio and the weather is questionable, you may go to the Emergency Closing Center at www.emergencyclosings.com to check whether Educare West DuPage is closed. If the school has to close early, all parents/guardians will be notified by telephone or text.

EVACUATION PLAN AND EMERGENCY DRILLS

Monthly fire drills will be conducted under the direction of the School Director or their designee. The Director or designee will also conduct a minimum of two severe weather/ indoor evacuation drills each year. There will also be one to two lockdown drills, one of which will involve the Police Dept. Parents will be notified the day the lockdown drill takes place.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Children need to arrive at the school by 9:00am and must be picked up no later than 5:30pm.

Children must be signed in and escorted into their classroom and placed under the supervision of his/her teacher before leaving the premises. The parent or guardian must sign-in and sign-out their child and verbally inform the on-duty staff member that the child is either present or leaving. A daily sign-in/sign-out sheet will be provided. No child should ever be left alone or unsupervised.

Best Practices.....

Never leave without saying good-bye to your child. Give the child a warm hug and kiss, say goodbye and then leave without hesitation and without looking back.

Please make arrangements to pick your child up on time. The date, time, and signature by the adult to whom the child is released are recorded on a daily departure log. When you come to pick up your child, please encourage him/her to put away whatever he is playing with before you leave.

If by $\frac{1}{2}$ hour before pick-up time you feel that you may not make it on time, you need to call someone on the *Release of Children* form.

If you will not be picking the child up, please make sure your child knows who will come for him. We must have written permission in order to release a child to someone other than a Parent or guardian. The children are released only to adults (18 years or older) authorized on the *Release of Children* form.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

Parents are responsible for the safety and well-being of their children any time in which you are together at the school (Parent Programs, drop-off, and pick-up times), but staff will step in if we feel a child is exhibiting an unsafe practice.

Please do not allow your child to wander off or run off anywhere in the school building without you (classrooms, large motor room, etc.). It is imperative that children are always supervised.

When entering and exiting the building, your child must remain with you at all times. They should not run ahead to their classroom or run out the front door without you - this is teaching them a very unsafe practice. Children should never be outside of the building without direct adult supervision. Families must enter and exit the building through the front entrance, not the side exit. The side exit is for emergency purposes only.

TRANSPORTATION

Educare West DuPage does not provide transportation.

MEDICAL CARE (EMERGENCY AND NON-EMERGENCY)

HEALTH DEPARTMENT VISITS

Educare West DuPage is visited by a registered Nurse through the DuPage County Health Department on a monthly basis. The nurse visits the 0-3 classrooms, inspects the facility, reviews records and answers questions or concerns of the school staff. The nurse also provides information that staff will in turn provide to the parents.

TREATMENT OF ILLNESS

It is not our intent to allow children who are truly sick to stay at school, but it is also not our intent to exclude children who are only mildly ill. We are relying on parents to make good decisions regarding your child's health, so please don't send your child to school if they are sick. The staff will assess and monitor the health of all children in the program and will need to decide if a child is too ill to attend. Please provide the teachers with accurate information about your child's health so they can make the best decision for the welfare of your child as well as the other children in the program.

We understand it can often be difficult to determine the seriousness of the situation when a child is not feeling well. We tend to look for signs of a child getting better versus feeling worse. We encourage you to consult with your physician as well as the staff to help you determine if your child is too sick to attend. Every situation is different, but we will use three criteria to determine if a child needs to be excluded:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in our daily routine and activities.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
3. A fever is accompanied by any of the symptoms or conditions previously listed.

Please keep in mind that children should not be given fever-reducers, such as Tylenol, just prior to attending school in an effort to disguise a fever. The medicine will wear off and, if a child is truly sick, s/he will relapse quickly and will most likely be sent home.

If a child becomes ill while at school, the parent(s) will be notified immediately. We will contact parents by phone. It is imperative for all parents to provide us with accurate contact and scheduling information so we can access you during the day. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact someone on your emergency list. We will sometimes call parents to notify you of a low-grade temperature or an incident of vomiting or diarrhea. If we determine your child is too ill to stay, parents are expected to pick up within one hour (sooner for a child with a high fever).

Please notify Educare if your child has a communicable illness such as lice, chicken pox, pink eye, strep throat, ringworm, etc., so we can post a note informing others of their exposure.

ACCIDENTAL INJURIES

In the case of a serious accidental injury to your child, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. However, when necessary prompt services of a physician and hospital will be obtained by calling 911. If needed, an ambulance will transport your child to the nearest hospital.

Because of this, it is essential for parent(s) to let us know the following information:

1. Where you can be reached while your child is in attendance at school.
2. Physician's name and phone number.
3. Emergency contacts and phone numbers.

If injuries are not of a serious nature, we will apply first aid and notify parent(s) at the end of the program day, through an *Incident Report* form.

MEDICATION DISPENSING

Parents need to administer all medicine to their children at home whenever possible. Even when two doses are required, it is best to administer both at home, one in the morning before school and one in the afternoon, after school. Always check with your doctor to see if this is possible for your child's medical condition.

If medicine *must* be administered at school, the following policy applies.

- Medication that needs to be given to a child by the director or designee **MUST** be in the original labeled, Doctor's prescribed bottle.
- Over-the-counter medication may *only* be administered if there is a signed note from the physician with the following information: child's name, name of prescribed medication, explanation of condition requiring medication, date, and dosage.
- Fever-reducers, such as Tylenol, cannot be administered by our staff and should not be given to a child for that purpose just prior to attending school. Also remember that cough drops may not be given at school; they are considered a choking hazard.

HYGIENE PRACTICES

Per licensing standards, we are unable to perform a couple of things that are considered invasive procedures to the child and it is potentially also a situation where germs could be spread thus increasing the risk of infections, so we ask the parents to do these procedures as needed to their child.

- **Fingernails** - The first is maintaining trim fingernails on your child. Infant and toddler fingernails grow very quickly and can be very sharp. Unfortunately, we have had children being scratched by other children and the length of fingernails makes the wound worse. We are unable to clip nails, so we ask parents to please make sure their child's nails are trimmed.

- **Splinters** - Also, we are unable to remove splinters from the children. Sometimes when playing outside a child will get a splinter from all the wood that is around them. We are unable to use tweezers if a splinter is deeply embedded in the child's skin. We will wash off the area and place a band aid over the splinter for you to remove at home.

HEALTHY PRACTICES

Center based programs pose many different and new situations that children are exposed to on a daily basis. One thing they are typically exposed to is different types of illness. As a general policy, we do not refuse mildly ill children. Children may have a cough or a snuffle and still attend school.

It is common for infants and toddlers to frequently get sick in center-based programs. Perhaps you will see a runny nose lasting a long time or you find yourself visiting the pediatrician every few weeks during those colder months. Children this young have not yet built up their natural antibodies for fighting off viruses and bacteria that invade their little bodies. Young children's immune systems are immature, making them less resilient to illness.

- **Hand Washing** - To help control the spread of illness, children are required to wash hands upon arrival at school and at other times throughout the day. Washing hands is the best way to prevent the spreading of illness.
- **General Disinfecting** - Toys that have been mouthed in the Infant, Toddler and Two's classrooms are disinfected every day throughout the day. Teachers often will place a toy into a container after a child has mouthed it to be cleaned in the next batch. At the end of the day, other equipment and materials will be cleaned as well. The diaper changing area is disinfected after each use. A quat solution is used for general disinfecting and the Infant room uses an automatic sanitizer.
- **Fresh Air/Outdoor Play** - Classrooms are aired frequently, particularly during the colder months with warm, stale heated air warming the school. The children play outdoors daily, weather permitting. Fresh air in the colder months does not cause or promote illness; it actually facilitates good health. Cold air is not related to making a child sick. If a child is in attendance during the outdoor time, she/he is healthy enough to then go outside with the rest of the children. All children in attendance during their classroom's outdoor play time will go outside.

Educare West DuPage will include outdoor experiences in their daily activities during all seasons. Children benefit from the fresh air by breathing air that has fewer germs in it than indoor air, and outdoor exercise will increase their general fitness and resistance to infection.

Colds and flu are more common during the winter months because they spread easily when people spend more time in closed, heated rooms. Breathing warm, dry indoor air irritates tissues in the nose and throat, making it easier to catch a cold. Therefore, outdoor experiences help promote health not illness.

Taking the children outside is considered healthy practice in a quality child care program. Of course the infants and sometimes toddlers are not as mobile and free to move and play in the snow as the preschoolers are. The younger children go on short walks in buggies for fresh air and sunshine.

STATEMENT OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION/PRACTICE

Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor is a non-profit organization that is not affiliated with any religious denomination or group. Therefore, no religious doctrine will be promoted at the school and no religious instructions or practices will be implemented.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS ON-SITE POLICY

CLOTHING/SEASONAL ITEMS

Active and sometimes messy play is going to be a part of your child's day. It is recommended that children wear comfortable, washable play clothes. Children should come dressed and not just wearing a diaper and/or onesie. Parents are asked to bring a complete change of labeled clothing, including socks, shirts, pants, shorts, etc. to be left at school. All clothing items should be labeled with your child's name. Please send a light sweater or sweatshirt to be kept in your child's cubby.

During the warmer months children should also bring a hat. Sunscreen will not be applied to infants under 6 months. If you want your child to have sunscreen applied before reaching 6 months of age, a doctor's note must be provided to Educare stating your child can have sunscreen applied.

During the colder months children should be properly dressed to go outside. *Every child goes outside.* Children must have warm and protective clothing and they need to have clothing appropriate for playing on the playground (boots, snow pants, hat, scarf, waterproof mittens).

OTHER PERSONAL ITEMS

If your Infant/Toddler child uses a pacifier, parents are asked to provide a labeled one.

At times a new child may have a hard time transitioning; we try to work with the families in helping this adjustment be less stressful. A child is welcome to bring a comfort item, if needed, to help him or her transition into the program. Eventually, your child will not feel the need for it at school and will have formed positive relationships with his teachers. We view transitional comfort items as something that will benefit the child in helping him/her feel secure in their new environment. Educare West DuPage maintains a generous supply of materials, toys, and equipment for the children to use. Therefore, children are asked to keep toys and other personal items at home. This helps us to avoid hurt feelings if an item is lost or broken. Teachers cannot be responsible for personal possessions, such as toys, that children might choose to bring to school. If it helps your child to take a toy or special item with when they leave the house each day, leaving it in your car is a safe and secure place where your child can have it later. If a child brings a toy into school, the teacher will place it in the office or it will stay in the child's cubby during the day.

CONFIDENTIALITY/RELEASE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Information shared with staff is confidential. A signed release from parents must be obtained before sharing or discussing information with other agencies.

Confidentiality is an important component to the parent/school relationship. It is honored by the teachers for all children and their families. Please understand that the teachers do not and cannot discuss any child's development; family situation; or any other personal information unique to that child with other parents.

PERSONAL SPACE POLICY

While we understand the well intentions of a parent seeing another child crying or wanting to pick up a child to console them; we ask that our parents refrain from handling other people's children. Ultimately, Educare is responsible for all children in our care.

It is not the wish of Educare for parents to feel we are intending extreme measures on this issue or for parents to feel like they cannot sit on the floor with their child for fear another child will come up and want to interact. Of course friendly, non-caregiving, warm interactions are appropriate. Talking with another child or reading a book if they hand you one is fine.

GUIDANCE & DISCIPLINE POLICY

PHILOSOPHY

techniques:

Discipline is the on-going process of helping children develop their behavior controls so that they can manage themselves in socially approved and appropriate ways.

Discipline techniques will always be based on respect for the child and appropriate for the child's developmental level.

Our expectation is for children's behavior to be appropriate to the child's age and developmental stage, and it is based on the belief that children learn from their mistakes.

GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES

Guidance techniques are designed and carried out in such a way as to help the individual child develop self-control and to assume responsibility for his or her actions. The rules are simple and understandable; redirection, along with an explanation, is a common technique. Natural and logical consequences are used to help children learn to make good decisions.

If a child is removed from the group or an activity to gain control, it will be for a short period of time. Generally, a child having difficulty in one area will be redirected to another area to play.

Please remember that young children need the experience of interacting with other children on a consistent basis. Learning how to share and cooperate with others is an ongoing process for young children, and consequently some aggressive behavior will occur (i.e., hitting, yelling, name calling, biting, pinching, kicking, etc.). Although we do not allow this behavior to persist, it takes time for a child to learn a more acceptable way of dealing with his/her anger and frustration (i.e., using appropriate words to express his/her feelings). To appropriately engage children, the school will offer an organized, stimulating program that includes the following appropriate discipline

- Reinforce positive behavior
- Acknowledge the child's feelings
- Acknowledge appropriate behavior
- Model appropriate behavior
- Redirect to more appropriate behavior
- Set clear limits
- Offer choices
- Ignore negative behavior (when appropriate)
- Remove the child from the situation for a short period of time to calm him/herself (maximum of one minute per age of child, but usually less) **ONLY FOR CHILDREN AGE 2 AND OVER**
- Include the child in resolving the problem when possible and age appropriate

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE GUIDANCE PROCESS

- The child's teacher will verbally notify a parent if a pattern of unacceptable behavior is observed.
- As needed, the teacher will discuss the child's behavior with the parent. If an unacceptable behavior occurs repeatedly, a Behavior Report will be completed, signed by the parent, and a copy will be retained in the child's file until the child leaves the program.
- The Director may request a formal conference with the parent.
- If necessary, the parent may be asked to pick their child up from school.

CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE GUIDANCE PROCESS

- Children will be aware of the classroom rules and will be reminded of the rules throughout the day.
- Older children may be involved in creating classroom rules.
- Preschool children will have reasonable opportunity to change inappropriate behavior.

TECHNIQUES THAT WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED

The following behaviors are **prohibited** (by ALL persons) in all child care settings:

- Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching, and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear
- Screaming or shouting at a child
- Ridiculing a child or the child's family
- Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom
- Abusive or profane language
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment
- Any form of emotional abuse, including blaming, shaming, teasing, insulting, name-calling, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child

This policy also applies to parents. Children may not be yelled at, spanked, or threatened to be spanked while at the school.

It is also our policy that we will handle ALL discipline situations that may arise with enrolled children while they are at school, according to our stated philosophy.

If a parent has concerns regarding *another* child's behavior, we ask that the parent discuss their concern with their child's teacher. Parents are not allowed to approach a child or their parents in an effort to deal with a situation.

Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor is committed to working with all children and families to make sure each child's experience is positive.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

Separation can be a difficult process for both the children and parents. When babies are somewhere between 8 and 10 months of age they are often distressed when they are separated from their parents. This anxiety can last into the second year of life and may also continue through preschool years. Typical reactions associated with separation anxiety are crying, clinging, and trying to follow. Every child is unique and they all respond to separations differently. Parents should be aware; however, that children take their cues from them. When a parent feels good and responds positively to dropping their child off, the child will sense this. The following is a list of things that parents can do to help the separation process go smoother for both you and your child. These helpful hints can be applied from the youngest of babies to the oldest of preschoolers.

- Talk to your child ahead of time as to what is going to happen, such as "Today is a school day!"
- Talk with your child's teacher daily and establish a friendly relationship. This helps when you place your child in their care at drop off and the more comfortable you are, the better your child will respond. You can help your child begin to settle by offering a toy or read a book.
- Say your good-byes to the child and then leave. Make the departure definite. Depending on your child, he or she can get mixed signals from a parent who hangs around for too long or from ones who go and then turn around and come back. On the other hand, it is never recommended to simply sneak away from your child without saying good-bye. Always tell your child good-bye and you will see him later. Sometimes it is helpful for a parent to get into a routine as to saying the same thing every drop off, like "I'm going to work now. Have a great day at school. I love you very much and I'll see you later. Good-bye." Children become comfortable with routine and life becomes somewhat predictable for them. When a child sees their parent departing positively, and then discovers that every day they do come back, separations become easier and a trust is built between the parent and child and makes him/her feel comfortable and good about being in school.
- Finally, if your child begins to cry while you are leaving, please don't turn around and come back. It is a natural reaction for many parents to immediately want to go back to comfort their child when they are distressed. Of course the teachers are sensitive to that. However, coming back to ease a crying child will not make the separation any easier when a parent really has to leave; in fact, it may be harder for your child the second time around. After you leave, feel free to call the school to see how your child is doing. It is typical for children to regain their composure and get into their daily routine shortly after mom or dad leaves.

Sometimes children who have had easy drop-offs for the first week or two suddenly start to become upset at their parents' departure. This is a *typical* reaction in center-based programs.

By this time children have become accustomed to the idea of coming to school every day or every week. Providing continuity of care helps your child deal with their separation anxiety by having a consistent caregiver and group of friends in a trusting and predictable environment.

BITING

Children biting other children are unavoidable occurrences of group child care, *especially* with toddlers. It is a common happening in any child care program. When it happens, and sometimes continues, it can be scary, very frustrating, and very stressful for children, parents, and staff. *Every child in the Infant, Toddler and Two's classrooms is a potential biter or will potentially be bitten and it may continue through the preschool years, depending on the child's developmental level.* It is important to understand that because a child bites, it does not mean that the child is "mean" or "bad" or that the parents of the child who bites are "bad" parents or they are not doing their job as parents to make this stop happening. Biting is purely a sign of the developmental age of the child. It is a developmental phenomena - it often happens at predictable times for predictable reasons tied to children's ages and stages.

Why do children bite?

Every child is different. Some bite more than others; or some may not bite at all. If a child has not really been around other children very much, he probably would not bite because neither the cause for biting or opportunities for biting would have presented themselves. There is always the possibility that any child, including your own, can be either a biter or be bitten. Center based programs present challenges and opportunities that are unique from home. The children are surrounded by many others for hours at a time. Even though there are plenty of toys and materials available for all the children, two or three children may want one particular toy. The children are learning how to live in a community setting. Sometimes that is not easy. Biting is not something to blame on the child, parents, or caregivers. Confidentiality is also practiced with biting. We cannot tell a parent "who" bit their child. There are many possible reasons as to why an infant or toddler may bite:

1. *Teething.*
2. *Impulsiveness and lack of control.* Babies sometimes bite just because there is something there to bite. It is not intentional to hurt, but rather exploring their world.
3. *Making an impact.* Sometimes children will bite to see what will happen.
4. *Excitement and overstimulation.* Simply being very excited, even happily so, can be a reason a child may bite. Very young children don't have the same control over their emotions and behaviors as some preschoolers do.
5. *Frustration.* Frustrations can be over a variety of reasons - wanting a toy someone else has, not having the skills needed to do something, or wanting a caregiver's attention. Infants and toddlers are simply lacking the language and social skills necessary to express all their needs, desires, and problems. *Biting will often be the quickest and easiest way of communicating.*

What do the teachers do in response to children who bite?

It is our job to provide a safe setting in which no child needs to hurt another to achieve his or her ends and in which the normal range of behavior is managed (and biting is normal in group care). Again, the name of the child who bites will not be released because it serves no useful purpose and can make a difficult situation even more difficult. Punishment does not work to change a child who bites: neither delayed punishment at home, which a child will not understand, nor punishment at the school, which will not be used and would make the situation worse.

There are several things the teachers do to assess the biting situation and what can be done to prevent it from happening again. Teachers can try to minimize the behavior by:

- Letting the biting child know in words and manner that biting is unacceptable.
- Avoiding any immediate response that reinforces the biting, including dramatic negative attention. The teachers will tell the child that "Biting hurts" and the focus of caring attention is on the bitten child. The biter is talked to on a level that s/he can understand. The teacher will help the child who is biting work on resolving conflict or frustration in a more appropriate manner, including using language if the child is able.
- Examining the context in which the biting occurred and looking for patterns. Was it crowded? Were there too many toys? Was the biting child getting hungry/tired/frustrated?
- Not attributing willfulness or maliciousness to the child. Infants explore anything that interests them with their mouths, and that includes others' bodies and limbs!

When biting changes from a relatively unusual occurrence (a couple times a week) to a frequent and expected occurrence, it will be addressed with added precautions.

- The teachers will keep track of every occurrence, including attempted bites, and note the location, time, participants, and circumstances.
- "Shadow" children who indicate a tendency to bite. This technique involves having a teacher with a child who bites. This teacher would be able to then anticipate biting situations and to teach non-biting responses to situations and reinforce appropriate behavior in potential biting situations.
- The teachers may consider changes to the room environment that may minimize congestion, commotion, competition for toys and materials, or child frustration.

TEMPER TANTRUMS

If you haven't yet experienced a temper tantrum in action, you probably soon will. Often it is marked by a screaming child and a frustrated and sometimes embarrassed parent performing unsuccessful attempts to make the whole thing go away. During toddlerhood, children struggle to develop a sense of themselves as separate from their parents. This process, called differentiation, actually starts at birth and lasts well into young adulthood. It is the process of becoming a separate and successful individual.

The first step in differentiation is related to control - who is in control of me, my body, and my emotions? Early in your child's life you are in charge. Now, you want your toddler to begin to take charge of some of his or her own behavior. This process of transferring some responsibility for control usually results in children losing exactly what you are striving to help them gain - control!

When your toddler feels angry, frustrated, or helpless, he or she may kick, scream, and flop on the ground. *Tantrums are a normal, natural, and inevitable part of growing up.* That does not make them fun. Make a plan now for how you will handle it when your child begins to tantrum.

The first step of the plan is preventative in nature. Help your child have some control over his or her life. Start small. Maybe your toddler can help you pick out what he or she wants to wear from several choices. Giving your toddler choices gives him or her experiences with making decisions and having

them turn out successfully. This experience is crucial in helping your toddler make good choices about whether or not to throw a temper tantrum.

Make sure to reward appropriate progress in taking charge. When your child shows competence in getting in or out of the car, eating with a spoon or fork, or pulling on his or her own socks, reward these early attempts at independence and self-control with lots of hugs and kisses and validating their efforts! ("You did it Joe - you put your socks on all by yourself!")

It is important to follow through with your response to tantrums. If children get attention from tantrums, they will last much longer than if they have no audience. Removing yourself as an audience quickly and calmly is the best thing you can do to lessen the frequency of tantruming.

When a tantrum is over - it's over. Accept the child back into family life as if nothing has happened. Tantrums are a developmentally normal step in developing a competent, capable child. As frustrating as they can be for parents, a calm, confident approach will go a long way to preventing this stage from lasting very long.

MANAGING NORMAL AGGRESSION IN VERY YOUNG CHILDREN

Every parent dreads the day when the teacher reports that his or her child is responsible for hurting another child. But that day will probably come. *Aggression is a normal part of young children's experiences. Aggression results from powerful emotions that are not yet under the child's direct control. Children hit, pinch, bite, slap, and grab when their emotions cause them to act before they can think about doing something different. Children at this age have such limited social and language skills that the best way to communicate is often through physical means.*

Children learn to manage aggression when supportive adults *help them learn other skills* and connect consequences with aggression. Using aggression to stop aggression only teaches children that they must submit to adults who are bigger and more powerful. It does not help children gain control over aggressive behavior or replace it with more appropriate skills. Replacing aggressive behavior with more sophisticated skills is a process. Learning to express feelings appropriately is a lifelong task. The first steps are taken in the first three years.

Early experiences with consequences for aggression help children learn over time that aggressive behavior doesn't accomplish much. After this lesson is learned, children can begin the process of becoming assertive enough to prevent being victimized and becoming authoritative enough to be seen as a leader. Both of these important lessons will never be learned unless parents and teachers help children learn to manage normal aggression and convert it into constructive assertion and leadership.

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor personnel are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect and to cooperate with the Department of Children and Family Services in the investigation of such cases.

PESTICIDE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Any extermination of pests or rodents at Educare will be conducted by a commercial pest control business, with certified technicians. Educare will request the use of a variety of non-chemical methods as well as pesticides, when needed, to reduce pest infestations to acceptable levels and to minimize children's exposure to pesticides.

Educare West DuPage is responsible for the oversight of the pest management practices and for the record keeping requirements. A *Record of Pesticides or Herbicides* is kept to document spraying for pests. The pest contractor's business license number, address, and telephone number will be available at the school.

Parents and guardians of children enrolled at Educare will be notified in writing of pest applications on the Parent Bulletin Board. The written notification will include the date of the application of the pesticide.

Children will not be present during the application and will not return to the treated area within 12 hours after a pesticide application or as specified on the pesticide label, whichever is greater.

Toys and other items mouthed or handled by the children will be removed from the area before pesticides are applied.

SMOKING POLICY

Due to the acknowledged hazards, both to adult nonsmokers and especially to young children arising from exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, it shall be the policy of Educare West DuPage to provide a smoke-free environment for staff, children, and volunteers.

CELL PHONE POLICY

All personal cell phones must be set on vibrate while in the school building. This policy includes cell phones belonging to staff, volunteers and parents. Staff and Parents will not use their cell phones for personal use during times they are scheduled to provide care to children.

PARENT COMMUNICATION & INVOLVEMENT

Parents are welcome to come to Educare at any time during program hours. Parental involvement is valued and therefore encouraged. Parents should feel free to come and spend time with their child. We encourage you to visit, play with your child or come early at pick up time so you can spend some time letting your child "show and tell" you about their day. However, because the children are our first priority it is best to schedule an appointment if you need time set aside time to discuss a specific problem. Matters directly concerning your child are best not discussed in the child's presence.

COMMUNICATION

We encourage parents to talk with their child's teacher at drop-off and/or at pick-up. It is important for the teacher to know information about your child, like how they slept last night, when they ate

last, if they have any medicine, if they are teething, etc. The sharing of this information is important to best meet your child's needs.

- A Daily Care Report will be completed on every child enrolled in our 0-3 program when they are in attendance for the day. It will communicate: DIAPERING, FORMULA/MEALS INFORMATION (foods, liquids, amount, and time of day), and SLEEP HABITS.
- Newsletter/Calendars -Newsletters/Calendars are provided to parents sharing information on child development topics, curriculum, policies, and other announcements. Classroom newsletters may also be sent out with information pertaining specifically for a specific classroom.
- Parent board: Check the parent board in the foyer for important information.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent conferences are scheduled twice a year (fall and spring) and may also be held at any time parents or teachers find it necessary. The early childhood years are marked by so much growth and change that conferences are a good time to discuss all the developmental issues surrounding them. Teachers put out sign-up sheets prior to the times conferences will be held. Parents are encouraged to sign up to talk with their child's primary caregiver. A developmental summary is shared with the parents during this time. Parent conferences typically take around 30 minutes.

EVENTS IN THE CHILD'S ENVIRONMENT

If there is something unusual going on in your home, please take a minute to let us know. (This could include illness or death in immediate family, separation, divorce, or remarriage of a parent, being involved in an accident, or numerous other occurrences.) Even though your child seems unaffected, we may see by their behavior that they are upset. If we know what the cause may be, we are better prepared to help the child. Any and all information that we are given for this purpose remains strictly confidential.

PARENT MEETINGS AND FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Parent meetings and family activities are held monthly to provide a chance for parents to meet one another, share ideas and concerns, and learn more about topics such as child growth and development, child management, school readiness, child nutrition, etc. Parent meeting information is posted on the Parent Information bulletin board and parents will receive notices through letters sent home with their child.

HOME VISITS

At least two home visits will be conducted during each school year, for children in our Early Head Start/Head Start Program. Home visits are optional for children not in the Head Start Program. The purpose of the first visit is to give you an orientation to the Educare model and our program and to meet the child in his or her own environment and to begin to build a relationship where the child is most comfortable. The second home visit will be a chance to meet with you in regard to family goals and educational goals you have for your child. The primary caregiver or teacher and your family

engagement specialist are typically the staff who will be doing these visits. If having a home visit in your home is not possible, another location can be determined. In addition to the two annual home visits, our Birth to Three families will also be receiving personal visits on a monthly basis. Details of these visits are provided by your Family Engagement Specialist.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT, PARENT AGREEMENT & CODE OF CONDUCT

All parents are required to sign a Participation Agreement, Parent Agreement and Code of Conduct. These documents outline the terms and conditions of the child's enrollment and the responsibilities of the parent. It is signed at the time of enrollment and must be on file by the first day of attendance. A copy of both the "Participation Agreement", "Parent Agreement" and the "Code of Conduct" are attached.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer at Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor Volunteer opportunities can happen on site or off site. Parents are encouraged not only to be involved in the children's developmental care and educational experience. Educare is also excited about having parents on-site assisting in the classrooms, participating in activities with children and working towards their goals. Parent volunteer hours will be collected and reported to administration. Those parents who meet and exceed their required goals will be recognized for their involvement.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Parents need to supply extra clothing for their children in case it is needed for accidents, or other messy situations.
2. Please call us as soon as you know if your child is going to be late, or absent before 9:00 a.m.
3. Please pick up your child on time. If you will be later than your regular pick-up time, please call ahead to let staff know you will be late.
4. Parents are responsible to provide us with changes in information:
 - Changes in adults who are authorized to pick-up children.
 - Changes in addresses, phone numbers, emergency information, etc.
5. Parents are responsible for walking their child to or from their classroom each day to sign them in on arrival and out at dismissal. Parents should check their child's "cubby" for daily correspondence from the staff.
6. Parents are responsible for checking the Parent Bulletin Board for program information.
7. Parents are responsible for payment of fees on time.

8. Parents should not bring their child to school, if he or she is severely ill. Parents should keep a sick child at home until symptoms have been absent for at least 24 hours. A child who becomes severely sick at school must be picked up immediately.
9. Children will go outside every day that weather allows. If a child is too ill to go outside he/she should be kept at home.
10. Parents will notify the Educare West DuPage/Educare at Glen Arbor two weeks in advance of a child's withdrawal from the program