

# **Shenandoah Community School District Preschool Program 2020-2021**

*Program Policies and Procedures*



***Shenandoah Community School District***

Located at 304 West Nishna Rd

Shenandoah, IA 51601

(712) 246-1581

## **Table of Contents**

WELCOME TO SHENANDOAH PRESCHOOL	3
MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND STUDENT GOALS	3
ENROLLMENT	4
A PRESCHOOL DAY	6
COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES	12
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT	14
HEALTH AND SAFETY	15
STAFF	22

# **Shenandoah Preschool Policies and Procedures**

## **WELCOME TO SHENANDOAH PRESCHOOL**

Shenandoah Community School District has a fully inclusive preschool program. The program’s goal is to provide a high quality preschool program meeting each child’s needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background. The preschool provides a rich learning environment that encourages children’s natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new skill development. It is a setting where children feel safe, respected, and cared for. This is an opportunity for three and four-year-old children to take part in planned, active learning experiences to build their foundational skills. This program also serves children on individualized education plans (IEP) that are transitioning from Early Access Services into the public school system. The preschool program has adopted and meets the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices. The IGDIs, GOLD, and C4L Assessments are used as tools to align all curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

### **Definitions**

In this handbook, the word “parent” also means “legal guardian” unless otherwise stated. An administrator’s title, such as superintendent or principal, also means that individual’s designee unless otherwise stated. The term “school grounds” includes the school district facilities, school district property, property within the jurisdiction of the school district or school district premises, school owned or school operated buses or vehicles and chartered buses. The term “school facilities” includes school district buildings and vehicles. The term “school activities” means all school activities in which students are involved whether they are school-sponsored or school-approved, whether they are an event or an activity, or whether they are held on or off school grounds.

## **MISSION, VISION, AND STUDENT GOALS**

### **Mission Statement**

The Shenandoah Community School District, in partnership with parents and the community, will provide an educational environment that maximizes each student’s potential to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world.

### **Vision Statement**

It is the vision of the Shenandoah Schools, in partnership with the community that we provide: students the tools to become responsible, successful citizens and lifelong learners in an ever- changing world; a safe and caring environment that ensures the dignity of all; opportunities that stretch student and staff capabilities; and school staff that are focused and visionary, collaborative and empowered to make knowledgeable decisions.

### **Student Goals**

- Students will listen for information and respond effectively. (Follow directions, limits & expectations)
- Students will use math skills to solve problems encountered as consumers and workers. (Connect numerals with quantities, 1:1 correspondence, quantifies numbers, and understands attributes)
- Students will apply technology to gather and use information in real situations.
- Students will write clearly to express their own ideas and to convey information to an audience.

- Students will reason to logically solve problems, make decisions, and resolve conflicts. (Manages feelings, interacts with peers, solves social problems)
- Students will speak and read to clearly express their own ideas and to communicate information using language that is appropriate for the audience. (Letters, sounds, words and ideas)
- Students will demonstrate study skills needed to be independent, lifelong learners. (Take care of own needs, attends and engages)
- Students will experience and recognize the value of the fine arts.
- Students will make choices leading to continuous personal growth and responsible, healthy lifestyles. (Take care of own needs)
- Students will use visual communication to express and interpret ideas. (Respond to emotional cues)
- Students will recognize the need to tolerate and cooperate with others in order to maintain harmony in their lives. (Balances needs of self and others)

## **ENROLLMENT**

### **Eligibility**

Shenandoah Community School District Preschool offers programs for 3 year olds and 4 year olds. Their program is based on their birthdate.

Children must be three years of age on or before September 15<sup>th</sup> of the current school year to participate in the 3 year old programming. Children must be four years of age on or before September 15<sup>th</sup> of the current school year to participate in the 4 year old programming. Interested families requesting to enroll their child in the preschool program may call the elementary office at 712-246-2520.

Pre-registration will begin in the spring prior to the start of the school year. Please contact the preschool office for registration information at 712-246-1581.

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance is mandatory for all Preschool students. Additionally, if your child is on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), attendance ensures she/he receives the services mandated.

If your child is going to be absent, please call the preschool office at 712-246-1581. Iowa Code, Chapter 299, covers compulsory attendance for preschool age students. Students who have excessive attendance concerns will follow the districts attendance policy (see below for guidance).

If your child is late to school, the student needs to check in at the office. Students are considered late immediately following the start time of class.

The days referred to below refer to total days missed or total tardies for a student. Exceptions will be made for approved, long-term absences.

1 Day Absent – If the parent does not report a student absent, school personnel will call to confirm the absence and the child's safety. If no phone contact is made, the school interventionist may make a home visit. If contact was not made by the school regarding an absence, a note should be sent or a telephone call made at the time of the child's return to school giving the reason for the absence. Any absence which occurs without parental knowledge will be classified as truancy. Parents will be notified when a student is truant from school. If a student is absent 3 or more consecutive days, the school may require a doctor's

statement confirming the illness.

7 Days Absent/Tardy – A letter will be sent to the parent addressing the absences. A home visit may be made by school personnel.

10 Days Absent/Tardy – An Attendance Cooperation meeting will be scheduled.

## **Tuition**

3 year old program: \$60.00/month

4 year old program: tuition free

\*Tuition is due on the 5th of each month, September through May. If the 5th falls on a weekend or school break, tuition is due the next regularly scheduled day of school.

September 8, October 5, November 5, December 7, January 5, February 5, March 8, April 5, May 5

\*The three year old program may be eligible for tuition assistance. Please contact the preschool office for more information.

\*The four year old program is tuition free due to state allocation for four year old programming.

## **Hours/Days**

3 year old program: 9 hours/week

- Session A: Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 8:00am-11:00am
- Session B: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 12:15pm-2:30pm

4 year old program: 8:00am-2:30pm

- All classes: Monday-Friday

The school district will provide a yearly academic calendar. The preschool programs are on the same schedule as the district calendar.

- Preschool will participate in early out Wednesdays per district calendar.
  - 4 year old preschool participates in 2 hour early dismissal; dismissing at 12:30pm.
  - 3 year old preschool schedule does not change for early dismissal Wednesday's.

Breakfast and lunch are served daily for both programs. Both meals are provided free for all students through Nutrition grants.

3 year old Session A will be served breakfast at school after 8:00am.

3 year old Session B will be served lunch after 12:15pm.

4 year olds will be served both breakfast and lunch at school.

*There will be no preschool for both the 3 year old and 4 year old program on the following days due to staff training out of district: September 21, September 22, December 9, December 10, March 31*

## **Transportation**

Transportation is available to preschool students. The school district will offer town stops and country stops. An adult rides the bus with the preschool students and driver. Transportation arrangements are made through the transportation department. To request transportation services, contact Holly Scherff at (712) 246-2815 or Jon Weinrich at (712) 246-2520.

## General Information

Prior to participating in the program, health records that document the dates of service will be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. These health records include birth certificate, up-to-date immunizations, lead and dental screenings.

- Our programs maintain a ratio of 1 adult to 8 children for 3 year old programs and 1 adult to 10 children for 4 year old programs. Additional staff may be provided based on the individual needs of children.
- Classroom student numbers will not exceed 20 and the number of children allowed is based on usable square footage.
- Each classroom has a licensed/certified early childhood teacher.
- All children will be within “line of sight” of adults both indoors and outdoors unless toileting.
- When toileting, students will be monitored by sound and checked visually when necessary.
- First Aid Kits are available for use in the classroom at all times.
- Adult-to-student ratios are maintained on field trips.
- The Director of Early Childhood will maintain a current list of available substitutes for both the teacher and associates. Should one of the teaching staff need to temporarily leave the room, arrangements will be made to cover the classroom to maintain the staff-to-child ratio.

## Inclusion

The preschool program includes all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff members are aware of the identified needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience for teachers, students, other children and their families. The preschool facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.

## A PRESCHOOL DAY

### Who Works In the Preschool

Program Administrator - The Director of Early Childhood is designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool program. The administrator meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.

Teacher - A full-time teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holding an Early Childhood endorsement is assigned to the preschool programs.

Teacher Assistant/Paraeducator - A full time teacher assistant in the classroom carries out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher assistant will have specialized training.

School Nurse - The preschool will have the assistance of the school nurse. She attends to the health needs of the students while they are at school. She is available for parent consultation when necessary.

Support Staff - Green Hills Area Education Agency support staff provide resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, school psychologist, and others.

### Daily Activities

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time,

indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play. The preschool team meets daily to discuss and review student observations and anecdotal notes to enable them to plan for instruction.

Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day:

- **Large and Small Group Activities**
- **Self-directed Play**
- **Learning Center Activities:** *Art Center, Science Center, Writing Center, Fine Motor Center, Reading Center, Block Center, Dramatic Play Center, Computer Center, Music Center, Sensory Center*
- **Story Time**
- **Individual Activities**
- **Outdoor Activities / Large Motor Activities**
- **Snack Time**

## **Curriculum**

Curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. It is a process by which learners obtain knowledge and understanding, while developing life skills. It is continually revised and evaluated to make learning fun and exciting.

It is the policy of this district that the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, and physical disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a multicultural nonsexist society.

The preschool program uses *C4L (Connected for Learning)*, *Heggerty*, and *Handwriting Without Tears*. This is research and evidence based comprehensive curriculums designed for three to five year-olds. It addresses all areas of early learning: language and literacy, math, science, physical skills, and social skills. It provides children an opportunity to learn in a variety of ways - through play, problem solving, movement, art, music, drawing, writing, listening, and storytelling. Suggestions for modifications and adaptations are an integral part of the curriculum.

## **Child Assessment**

Specific assessment plans are available upon request from the child's teacher.

*Guiding principles:* It is the school district's belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. The results will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All results will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and stored in a secure filing cabinet.

Children are assessed in the following ways:

- *Teaching Strategies/GOLD* is aligned with the Iowa Early Learning Standards. It records student progress in all developmental areas at the beginning, middle and end of the year.
- Observational data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities.
- Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and include the assessments, observational data, and child work samples collected on an on-going basis.

Families are asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development through the GOLD assessment tool and verbal or written communication with the teacher.

The information from above is used in the following ways:

- To provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for them;
- To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones;
- To indicate possible areas that requires additional assessment.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent/Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or information on the assessments given, the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, they will communicate this to the family during a teacher/family conference (formally or informally), sharing documentation of the concern. Suggestions for next steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents:

- The teacher requests assistance from the Area Education Agency (AEA) as an early intervention process. This team and special education teacher engages in problem identification, planning interventions, providing support, and making outside resources available to those individuals requesting assistance. The AEA team is available and functional for all students and teachers in the building.
- A request made to Green Hills Area Education Agency for support and additional ideas or more formalized testing can be made.

The preschool staff, AEA, and Director of Early Childhood will follow the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process. The preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

- The program provides families with information about programs and services from other organizations, such as Green Hills AEA, DHS, Child Care Resource and Referral, *Parents as Teachers* programs, and medical professionals, etc...

## **Program Assessment**

Shenandoah Community School District implements the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. Administrators, families, staff, and other routinely participating adults will be involved annually in a program evaluation that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives. The annual evaluation process includes gathering evidence on all areas of program functioning, including policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction. The program uses this information to plan professional development and program quality-improvement activities as well as to improve operations and policies.

## **Supervision Policy**

Before children arrive at school, the preschool staff will complete the following daily safety check indoors and



outdoors:

- All safety plugs and electric outlets covered, heat/AC, water temperature, and toilets, etc. in working order.
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of children's reach and stored properly.
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground.
- Supplies checked - first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
- Daily monitoring of environment - spills, sand, etc. Other serious problems reported to Director of Early Childhood.
- Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.

No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently, who are in the library area, etc.) Indoor and outdoor spaces will be zoned by teaching staff with special attention given to areas where injury could occur.

## **Child Guidance and Discipline**

Preschool staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, and planning ahead to prevent problems. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self disciplined. Where the child understands words, discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Preschool staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property and learn to be responsible for their actions. Preschool staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, learn turn taking, and respect and use property appropriately.

### *Challenging Behavior*

The Preschool staff are highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The staff anticipates and takes steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors, staff promotes pro-social behavior by:

- interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
- modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed

Preschool staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the Preschool staff, parents, principal, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Preschool staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

Permissible Methods of Discipline:

*For acts of aggression and fighting* (biting, scratching, hitting), staff will set appropriate expectations for children

and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident; (4) Notify parents of children involved in the incident; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

### *Prohibited Practices*

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

1. harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
2. physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
3. any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect.
4. withhold or threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

## **Water Activities**

There is a water table in the classroom for children to engage in learning activities through play. During water play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the water table is drained and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children comes to participate. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers as well as the water table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervises all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables.

## **Snacks/Foods and Nutrition**

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

A snack is served daily at a regularly scheduled time, two hours apart and not more than three hours apart, keeping in mind breakfast/lunch times outside of the preschool setting.

The preschool serves a wide variety of nutritional snacks and encourages children to expand their tastes by at least trying a portion of the food offered.

All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Snacks brought from home must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Clean, sanitary drinking water (city water source) is available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and specialist involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies will be protected from contact with the problem food. Children with food allergies must have the food allergy form completed by their physician. This form can be obtained at the elementary office. With family consent, the program posts information about the

child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. Program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and provide parents with that information.

High risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be served. For students in the three year old program, these include hotdogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

The school district does not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will teaching staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

## **Outside Play and Learning**

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. We use the Child Care Weather Watch guidelines produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play. If the wind chill is 15 degrees or colder or if the heat index is 90 degrees or warmer, all activities will be indoors.

In cases when we cannot go outside, children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside, it is important to dress him/her according to the weather. When it is cold outside he/she needs a warm coat, mittens or gloves, and a hat (labeled with your child's name). When it is snowing or snow is on the ground, your child needs snow pants and snow boots in addition to cold weather gear. Students are expected to have indoor shoes in addition to their snow gear. For the warmer days, dressing your child lightly is just as important. For those in-between days, dressing your child in layers is a practical idea. It is expected that all students will go outside unless there is a doctor's note indicating the reason why the child cannot go outside.

There are areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. We encourage you to bring a hat or other clothing for your child to wear as another protection from the sun.

## **Clothing**

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as comfortable shoes to school. While we encourage the use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects, we can't guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Clothing should be free of words, graphics, or pictures that are profane, immoral, illegal, or disruptive in nature. Families will be asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name or place in a gallon size baggie with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes. If your child is sent home in school clothes, please return the clothes to the school.

## **Toilet Learning**

Children are encouraged to be potty trained or in the process of being potty trained before entering preschool. The following toileting procedures are in place:

1. Diapering will only be done with a changing mat in the designated diaper area.
2. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards:
  - Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag

(without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.

- Staff check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every 2 hours. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
  - Staff change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
  - At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.
  - Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.
  - Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can). Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children. The container will be clearly labeled to show its intended use.
3. Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.
  4. Families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing as described under "Clothing" above.

## **Objects From Home**

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you do not bring toys from home. If your child brings an "attachment" item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy guns to school. The school will not be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

## **Weapon Policy**

No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real weapon or a look-alike weapon on any school premises, in any school vehicle or any vehicle used by the school or for school purposes, in any school building or other buildings or premises used for school functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. "Look-alike weapon" means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon.

## **Animal and Pet Policy**

No animals are allowed in the preschool. If you have questions regarding this, please contact the Director of Early Childhood.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. They afford the opportunity for children to be given special recognition. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Teachers will work with families to ensure that foods brought from home meet the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines. Those who have summer birthdays are welcome to celebrate their summer birthday on their half birthday. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES**

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes, daily folders, informal conversations, or e-mail. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Staff will inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and

well-being. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs - email, in person, notes, or phone calls.

### **Arrival and Departure of Children**

Parents are required to remain with their child/children until a staff member is present. The same procedure will be reversed with the staff member handing the child/children off to the parent at dismissal time. We will meet and dismiss in the preschool classrooms. No child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult. Adults will be responsible for the children coming in and out of the building at arrival and departure. Please keep the hallway outside of the office free from preschool traffic.

Other than parents, only persons with prior written authorization will be allowed to pick up a child from the school.

Students that are picked up late will remain with the preschool associate or teacher until the designated person picks them up from the teacher or associate in the classroom. An attempt will be made to contact the parent or an emergency contact. If no contact is made, a home visit may occur. If no contact is able to be made, the student will be transported to the police department.

### **Field Trips**

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. The Shenandoah Community School District buses are used for these field trips. Parents will be informed of each field trip well in advance. A parent must sign an informed consent form for trips for each child before each trip. Adult family members may be asked to volunteer to go on these trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios.

Chaperones attending field trips must be approved by the Director of Early Childhood. Chaperones are to follow all school policies. This includes no smoking cigarettes or e-cigarettes, using any other form of tobacco, staying within reach of the children being supervised, no alcohol, etc. Pictures will not be taken by chaperones. Chaperones may only take a picture of their child, not pictures of any other students on the field trip.

A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization information for the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

### **Ethics and Confidentiality**

Staff follow an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. Children are people who deserve respect. One way we demonstrate this respect is to refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation and to refrain from labeling a child negatively or positively. No information regarding any particular child will be shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.

### **Children's Records**

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest, are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's

records during regular office hours. Student records are kept at the K-8 Building.

Parents will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

### **Preschool Advisory Committee**

Shenandoah Elementary is striving to implement a Preschool Advisory Committee, a sub-group of the School Improvement Advisory Committee, composed of parents, school staff, and community members. This group would meet quarterly to provide input and feedback on services for preschool and elementary age children. Please let the Director of Early Childhood know if you are interested in being part of the Preschool Advisory Committee.

### **Grievance Policy**

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for assistance from the Director of Early Childhood.

If you have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, please contact the Director of Early Childhood who is the program administrator for the preschool. If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the Superintendent.

As part of our program assessment, in the spring of each year, we will offer each family the opportunity to provide written input which will help us evaluate our program. This information helps us to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. If you would like to visit, please arrange a time with the Director of Early Childhood. Visitors are asked to please use discretion with regard to bringing babies and toddlers to school as young children may disrupt class sessions.

Program staff use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of child-rearing practices and communication; and information about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds as they wish to share. Program staff members communicate with families regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of their children. At least one Family Event is held during the year.

Shenandoah Community School District values the time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. As the teacher learns from the families' expertise regarding their child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, goals for your child's growth and development can be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time.

Although in-person daily contact cannot be replaced, preschool staff also rely on notes home, emails, phone calls, and newsletters as alternative means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

We invite you to become involved in one or all of the following ways, and welcome other ideas as well.

1. Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities;
2. Keep the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child, allowing the teacher to be more responsive to your child's needs;
3. Attend family meetings;
4. Return all forms, questionnaires, and other paperwork promptly;
5. Attend Parent/Teacher conferences;
6. Check your child's backpack and folder each day;
7. Participate in field trip activities;
8. Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, preparing visuals, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken;
9. Share any of your families' cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs;
10. Read the material sent home with your child;
11. Help with special events. Helping takes many different forms such as preparation of materials at home, making telephone calls, preparing or posting flyers, recruiting other volunteers, collecting donations or prizes, run errands, photography, setup before the event, or clean afterwards;
12. Volunteer to be a PTO member or a Preschool Advisory Committee member.

The school district will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of families with children with limited English proficiency, families with children with disabilities, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent possible, in a language families understand.

The school district believes that families should be supported in making decisions about services that their children may need. The teaching staff will provide information to families about available community resources and assist as requested in helping the family make connections.

## **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

The preschool program will have formal parent/teacher conferences in the fall and spring. These dates are indicated on the district calendar. During the conference the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Together you can make a plan to continue to encourage your child's growth and development.

## **Transitions**

Home-school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program, such as special education. The child's family provides the consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child whether the transition is within the same building or in another location. Teaching staff will partner with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible by connecting family members with the next program's staff. Preschool staff will provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, program options, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible.

Preschool Round-Up is held every spring. Transitional information is shared at this time. Round-Up consists of a presentation by staff and a sign-up session for preschool screenings for the preschool student. If a student has

been screened by school personnel, they will not need to be screened again.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Shenandoah Preschool is committed to promoting wellness and safeguarding the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Emergency procedure plans are available upon request from the program administrators. Emergency procedures are also posted in each classroom.

### **Health and Immunization Certificates**

Before a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service will be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunization for which parents are using religious exemption.

Records that are needed for Shenandoah Preschool include copy of child's birth certificate, up to date immunizations, dental screening, and lead screening. The school needs updated records yearly.

### **Health and Safety Records**

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school nurse's office. Files are kept current by updating as needed. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent for access to records; the child's parent; and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

1. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
2. Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results;
3. Current emergency contact information for each child, that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year;
4. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;
5. Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes);
6. Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support; and
7. Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff implement a plan to



exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

## **General Health and Safety Guidelines**

- All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.
- Under the supervision of the preschool teacher, all staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.
- All staff follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.
- All staff complete “Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens” annually.
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children. When a child in the group has a special health condition that might require CPR, one staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR is present in the program at all times.

## **Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children**

In the case of serious illness or injury, the school will attempt to notify the parents according to the information on the registration form. If the student is too ill to remain in school, the student will be released to the student’s parents or, with parental permission, to another person directed by the parents.

If a child’s activity must be limited following an illness, parents are asked to notify the office.

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. In order to prevent the spread of disease, please keep your child home from school if he or she displays any of the following symptoms within a 24 hour period:

- fever greater than or equal to 100.4 degrees F
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- pink eyes with drainage
- cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge
- cold sores or lesions

If your child displays any of the above symptoms at school, parents will be notified and required to pick up their child. The district’s established policy for an ill child’s return:

- Fever free for 24 hours
- Chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- Strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage
- Cold sores or lesions shows signs of healing (scabbed over)

If an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children, or if a child’s condition is suspected to be contagious and requires exclusion as identified by public health authorities, then the child is made comfortable in a location where he or she is supervised by a familiar caregiver.

Preschool staff will inform the school nurse and elementary secretary of any symptoms or concerns. The school nurse or elementary secretary will contact the parents of the student.

### **Head Lice (Pediculosis)**

School settings are conducive to a greater risk of transmissions of Pediculosis (Head Lice), and therefore, proper and effective treatment of this condition is needed. The preschool staff will assist families with the removal of live lice or nits. This includes providing guidance and resources. The removal of nits/eggs is essential to help prevent self-reinfestation and transmission to others. Total nit/egg removal also helps eliminate diagnosis confusion and serves to document treatment. Confidentiality will be maintained to the best of the district's ability in all cases involving pediculosis.

### **Reporting Communicable Diseases**

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, made contact with those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur.

### **Medication Policies and Procedures**

**Policy:** The school will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. Because administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside preschool hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

**Procedure:** The school nurse coordinates and/or administers medication during school hours only if the parent has provided written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant. Any other person who would administer medication has specific training and a written performance evaluation, updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration: (1) verifying that the right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. Medication errors will be controlled by checking and recording these five right practices each time medication is given. Should a medication error occur, the Regional Poison Control Center and the child's parents will be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the school.

For prescription medications, parents will provide the school with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication; the date the prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage, and disposal instructions. Over-the-counter medications are only given with parental consent.

All medications are kept in a locked container and stored at the temperature recommended.

Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.

A medication log will be maintained by the school staff to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent, amount, the time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of medication. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take medication will be noted on this log.

## **Cleaning and Sanitization**

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately.

Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion is either to be washed by hand using water and detergent, and rinsed, sanitized, and air dried or washed and dried in a mechanical dishwasher before it can be used by another child.

All toys and surfaces will be disinfected according to the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials, and information required by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents.

Routine cleaning will be supervised by the preschool teacher and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table in Section III, page 47 of the QPPS manual.

Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure of the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Nontoxic substances will be used whenever possible. Staff are trained yearly prior to the start of the school year.

## **Hand Washing Practices**

Frequent hand washing is key to preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
- Staff assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- upon arrival for the day;
- after diapering or using the toilet (use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants);
- after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit);
- before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry);
- after playing in water that is shared by two or more people;
- after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals

Adults also wash their hands:

- before and after feeding a child;
- before and after administering medication;
- after assisting a child with toileting
- after handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include

- using liquid soap and running water;
- rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water).

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute, for hand washing in any situation listed above.

- Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
- Staff do not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal material.

In situations where sinks used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

### **First Aid Kit**

Fully equipped first-aid kits are readily available and maintained for each group of children. Staff take at least one kit to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

### **Fire Safety**

A fire extinguisher is installed in the preschool classroom with a tag indicating its annual service date. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. Fire drills are conducted routinely and recorded on a log.

### **Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Evacuation Policies and Procedures**

Shenandoah Community School District has a “Crisis Response Manual” booklet in place that describes the following situations and procedures to follow:

- Emergency phone numbers
- Fire procedures
- Utility failures (electric power failure, water line break, gas line break)
- Severe weather
- Bomb threats
- Physical threats/armed intruder
- Evacuations
- Crisis intervention plan, crisis intervention steps, and media procedures
- Accidental injury or illness procedures for life threatening and non-life threatening situations
- School crisis team members

### **Medical and/or Dental Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents**

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, the preschool staff will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any major incident or injury will be documented on an “Accident Report” form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

All staff will have immediate access to a telephone that allows them to summon help in an emergency. Emergency contact information for each child and staff member will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

### **Inclement Weather**

In the event that Shenandoah Community School District must be closed due to bad weather, we will notify school patrons through the district's SchoolMessenger automated communication system. This will be done by email and phone messaging. Local radio stations and the school website will also have this information available.

If there is a late start for the elementary, there will be no three-year-old preschool. However, the four-year-old program will start at 10:00am. If there is an early out due to weather, the four-year-old program will dismiss as the district indicates.

It is vital that current and up to date contact information is given to the elementary secretary so the school is able to reach parents for various reasons.

### **Protection from Hazards and Environmental Health**

Program staff protect children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns, or scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping or slipping.

The preschool classroom building has been tested for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass, and other hazards that could impact children's health with documentation on file. Custodial staff maintain the building's heating, cooling, and ventilation systems in compliance with national standards for facility use by children.

The program maintains facilities so they are free from harmful animals, insect pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children. The program uses the techniques known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) so that the least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation.

### **Smoke Free Facility**

In compliance with the Iowa Smokefree Air Act of 2008, Shenandoah Community School District buildings, grounds, and vehicles are smoke-free. A "No Smoking" sign meeting the law's requirements is posted at the entrance to school buildings to inform people that they are entering a non-smoking place. Smoking cigarettes/e-cigarettes is not allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children. This includes field trips and school parking lots.

### **Child Protection Policies**

The health and well being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility. An applicant for temporary or permanent employment or volunteer with the preschool program that involves direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children must submit to a background check. In addition no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

The program has written school board policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, or both by families, staff, volunteers, or others to the appropriate local

agencies. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. All district staff complete a Mandatory Reporter course in Child Abuse and Dependent Adult Abuse at least as prescribed by the certificate of completion and within six months of employment.

The school district does not tolerate employees physically, or sexually abusing or harassing students. Students who are physically or sexually abused or harassed by an employee should notify their parents, teacher, principal, or another employee. The Iowa Department of Education has established a two-step procedure for investigating allegations of physical or sexual abuse of students by employees.

## **Substance Abuse**

Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of the Shenandoah Community School District. At no time will children be released to a person under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## **Volunteers**

Parents, friends, grandparents, and other adults are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of the children. Please contact the Director of Early Childhood if you would like to be a school volunteer. For safety's sake, if a volunteer will be working with children, he/she will be expected to submit to a background check. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children. If a volunteer works more than 40 hours per month with children, he/she will also need to provide a current health assessment, not more than one year old. People interested in volunteering should contact the Elementary Secretary at 712-246-2520.

## **STAFF**

### **General Information**

Shenandoah Community School District has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff and volunteer positions. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluation. Policies detail job descriptions for each position, including reporting relationships; salary scales with increments based on professional qualification, length of employment, and performance evaluation; benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievance procedures. The policies are provided to each employee upon hiring.

### **Orientation**

Employees must know their role and duties. New preschool teaching staff will be required to participate in an initial orientation program that introduces them to fundamental aspects of the program operation including:

- Program philosophy, mission, and goals;
- Expectations for ethical conduct;
- Individual needs of children they will be teaching or caring for;
- Accepted guidance and classroom management techniques;
- Daily activities and routines of the program;
- Program curriculum;
- Child abuse and reporting procedures;
- Program policies and procedures;
- Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Criteria;
- Regulatory requirements.

Follow-up training expands on the initial orientations.

The employee's immediate supervisor should provide the new employee with a review of the employee's responsibilities and duties. Each new employee will be required to attend a New Employee Orientation. Administration Office staff will present information regarding our time clock and leave systems, technology information, staff resources, payroll procedures, and employee benefit programs. Regular employees ineligible for the school district's group health plan will be given information regarding where they can obtain health care or health care insurance.

### **Staffing patterns and schedule**

The preschool program is in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our program follows requirements for staffing for Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards of maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 at all times. The program administrator will maintain lists of current substitutes for both the preschool teacher and preschool teaching assistant in case of absence.

Staff are provided space and time away from children during the day. Should staff work directly with children for more than four hours, staff are provided breaks of at least 15 minutes in each four-hour period. In addition, staff may request temporary relief when they are unable to perform their duties.

### **Staff development activities**

All teaching staff continuously strengthen their leadership skills and relationships with others and work to improve the conditions of children and families within their programs, the local community, and beyond. Teaching staff are encouraged to participate in informal and formal ways in local, state, or regional public-awareness activities. They may join an early childhood group or organization, attend meetings, or share information with others both at and outside the program.

Teaching staff will be informed of professional development activities provided by Child Care Resource and Referral, the local Empowerment areas, and the Green Hills Area Education Agency. Staff are expected to attend all district staff trainings and meetings as assigned throughout the year. Trainings will focus on early childhood topics relevant to the program and community.

### **Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan**

All staff are evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor or, in the case of the program administrator, by the superintendent. Staff also evaluate and improve their own performance based on ongoing reflection and feedback from supervisors, peers, and families. From this, they develop an annual individualized professional development plan with their supervisor and use it to guide their continuous professional development.