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Child-centered, age-appropriate early learning for children 6 weeks to 12 years

Parent Handbook of School Policies

Philosophy

We at Blue Skies believe that every child is unique. We treat each child as an individual, working from the level each child has attained and moving forward a step at a time.

We believe that children learn through play. We provide developmentally appropriate programs which emphasize the process rather than the product, fostering a sense of accomplishment and pride.

We believe that children should be surrounded by caring, nurturing adults. Our teachers create an environment that fosters each child's creativity and positive self-image. Our teachers teach a "love of learning" that allows children to experience their own stage of development and help them feel success without pressure.

We believe parents are the most significant adults in a child's life. We at Blue Skies want to work in partnership with our parents to facilitate the growth and development of each child. We encourage daily communication between parents and center staff. Our doors are open to parents at all times.

Mission

To provide a holistic and developmentally appropriate early childhood experience for young children which honors and balances the development of their minds, bodies, and spirits.

General Policies

Blue Skies provides care for children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age. The center is open from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday. Upon initial enrollment, you will be required to pay the registration fee and 2 week deposit. While the registration fee is non-refundable, your deposit will be credited towards your balance due upon written two weeks' notice of your child's disenrollment. You will also be required to furnish a Certificate of Health and Immunization Record, to complete the Enrollment Record and a Personal Record for your child. Thoroughly reading this handbook will help you understand all of our policies and procedures.

Payment

Tuition is due in advance of care being rendered. When paying weekly, tuition must be paid on the first day of attendance for the week. If paying monthly, payment is required on the first day of the month your child is in attendance. If paying semi-monthly, payment will be required on the 1st and 15th of each month. If payment is not received by the 3rd day of the billing cycle, late fees will be applied as follows: \$20 per week for weekly billing, \$30 per billing cycle for semi-monthly billing, and \$45 per month for monthly billing. Any accounts not kept current or paid within 2 weeks of disenrollment may be sent to an outside collection agency and collection fees added.

Tuition

Tuition fees will be reviewed and adjusted annually. You will receive a written notice approximately one month in advance of any increase. A \$35 per child or \$60 per family registration fee will be assessed annually.

Holidays

Blue Skies will be closed for seven holidays during the year: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after, and Christmas Day. We will be closed for Saturday holidays on Friday and Sunday holidays on Monday. Remember that full tuition is charged for weeks which have a holiday.

Teacher Work Days

Blue Skies will close for 3-4 Fridays a school year for Staff Development Days. These days will not be charged to your account. Please check with the office to verify these dates.

For the 2015-2016 school year we will be closed Thursday, December 31; Friday, May 27, 2016; Friday, August 19, 2016; Friday December 30th, 2016.

Vacation/Sick Policy

Please see our tuition schedule for vacation time benefits based on the type of schedule your family is enrolling for. Vacation/sick time can not be carried over from one year to another. Credit can only be given for days your child is not present. After all vacation days have been used, tuition must be paid in full for days missed in order to keep your slot. New vacation will be earned on your child's anniversary date. Vacation days are a benefit, have no monetary value, and not paid out upon disenrollment.

State Licensing Requirements

The State of Colorado, through Social Services regulations and standards, licenses day care centers. These standards are enforced to ensure a safe day care environment for your child and relate to the physical assets of our center as well as to staff qualifications, health and safety procedures, nutrition, center records, and teacher/child ratios. The State of Colorado licensing office, in addition to the City of Colorado Springs health and fire officials, may inspect Blue Skies at any time without notice.

Emergency Notification Card

Upon enrollment you will fill out an Emergency Notification Card for your child. This is necessary so that you or your designated representative may be notified in case of illness or injury. It is, therefore, imperative that you keep this card up-to-date. In order for us to better serve the needs of you and your child, notify us when any of the following information changes:

- Work and home addresses.
- Work and home telephone numbers.
- Authorized people (at least two other than parent/guardian) to contact in case of illness or injury.
- Authorized people (at least two) to pick up your child.

Birthdays

We, at Blue Skies want to be a part of your child's birthday. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at the center, please contact the Director before your child's birthday.

Clothing

Please maintain a complete extra set of weather appropriate clothing at the center for your child. Be sure to label the clothing with your child's name since we can not be responsible for lost clothing. Blue Skies is an active place! Therefore, your child's clothing should be comfortable, manageable by your child and, above all, washable. We use art materials regularly so please do not dress your child in "fancy" clothes. Please do not send your child to Blue Skies in open toed shoes since these kinds of footwear may result in injury. Soft-soled shoes such as tennis shoes are recommended.

Personal Belongings

Blue Skies maintains a good supply of educational and play equipment and supplies which are shared by all of the children in our center. To avoid the stress of lost, misplaced, or damaged personal items, help your child understand that it is best to leave food (such as gum and candy), toys, and pets at home. It is permissible to bring a soft toy or blanket for rest time. Blue Skies will not be held responsible for lost articles.

Small Objects

Small objects from home such as coins, buttons, game pieces, small hair accessories, and marbles can pose a choking hazard. Please do not allow your child to bring them to school. It is preferred that all objects from home be kept at home or in the car. If ever in doubt, please stop by the office and ask to borrow a choke tube to check the object.

Lost and Found

Be sure to inquire as soon as possible if your child loses anything at the center, since it is easier to locate items soon after they are lost. It is also easier to locate lost items if they are properly labeled with your child's name. We donate unclaimed items to charity after they reside in our lost and found for a reasonable length of time.

Reporting Absences

Please notify the center office if your child will be absent. If the absence is due to illness, it is helpful to know the nature of the illness, especially when the illness is contagious.

Late Drop-Off and Pickup of Your Child

If your child will be arriving after 10:00 AM, call as soon as possible so we can properly plan for lunch and staff ratios during nap time. Blue Skies will charge \$1.00 per minute per child if you leave your child beyond our normal closing time of 6:00 PM.

Hiring Staff for Babysitting

If you choose to ask a staff member from Blue Skies to baby sit, you must understand that Blue Skies does not authorize or assume any responsibility for work done by our employees outside of our center or program.

Disenrollment

A minimum notice of two weeks is required when you decide to disenroll your child. If a two week notice is not given, you are still responsible for paying the two weeks. In order to better serve our parents, we appreciate knowing the reason for the disenrollment.

Blue Skies reserves the right to disenroll a child who presents a health or safety risk to staff or other children. We may also disenroll any child whose needs are not met by our program. Blue Skies may also disenroll your child if you or your child is not able to or chooses not to follow our policies.

Children With Special Needs

Blue Skies complies with local, state and federal law, as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act, in serving the needs of children with disabilities. We will strive to meet each child's needs within the scope of our program and health and safety standards.

Blue Skies will do its best to meet the occasional special needs of all children and the continuing special needs of children with disabilities. We want to be partners in this endeavor with you and your child's health provider. Prior to enrollment we will evaluate our ability to meet your child's social, emotional, and educational needs and we will collaborate with community and private resources to ensure we are meeting the needs of your child and you. All children with special needs must have a Health Care Plan completed annually. This is essential to providing the best possible communication for the care of your child between physician, home and Blue Skies.

Arriving at the Center

You must drop your child off with a classroom teacher. Children are not permitted to walk to class or through the hallways without an adult.

Please give your child your full attention while dropping off and picking up. It is greatly appreciated that you hold all cell phone conversations until you leave the building. Showing your child this respect reinforces their importance to you and makes the transition at both ends of the day much smoother because they have your undivided attention for a few minutes to say good-bye and to tell you about their day.

At the beginning of the day when only a few children are in the center, children will be in one room until there are enough children for them to move to their own rooms. This time gives children of different ages the opportunity to interact with one another. At the end of the day as children leave, we will follow the same procedures and assemble the children in one room.

Signing Your Child In/Out of Blue Skies

In accordance with regulation 7.702.42B, when dropping off or picking up your child from Blue Skies, the parent, guardian, or authorized person must sign in and out in the computer. The parent or guardian is the only person who can authorize someone else to pick up their child and this authorization must be in writing. The Enrollment Form asks you to list at least two adults who may pick up your child in case of an emergency. Be sure to keep this form up to date. Blue Skies will require a picture ID before releasing your child to anyone other than his or her parent or guardian.

If a custodial parent requests restriction on another parent's privilege to pick up a child, Blue Skies requires a copy of the legal documentation, such as a court order, which details the child's custody and visitation rights. Blue Skies will keep this information in the child's file and we will honor all legally mandated restrictions.

Blue Skies will never allow a child to leave the center alone to go to another location, such as to walk home or to a bus stop.

Child Identification Policy

The policy for identifying children throughout the day is as follows:

- Teachers will maintain an accurate head count at all times.
- When outside, and during any transition in or out of the classroom, the headcount must be taken every ten minutes.
- The office staff also maintains a count from every classroom and as children are dropped off and picked up, the numbers are changed accordingly. Office numbers are checked with teachers several times throughout the day to maintain accuracy.

Pick-Up Policy

Blue Skies Exploration Academy closes at 6:00 PM. If you are late picking up your child, the charge is \$1.00 per minute per child. If we do not hear from you the following procedures will be followed:

1. Try to contact both parents or guardians.
2. Wait 5 minutes and try to contact an emergency contact on file to come pick up the child.
3. If both parents and all emergency contacts cannot be reached within ½ hour of closing, the police department will be contacted.

Emergency Procedures

Blue Skies will follow its written policies and procedures in case of an emergency. Our emergency procedures are periodically tested and documented so that every child and staff member knows how to respond. Emergency evacuation plans are posted in every classroom.

However unlikely, should the center become unsafe or severely damaged, all staff and children will be evacuated to an emergency site to await your arrival. In addition to posting a notice at the center, the Center Director will attempt to notify you as soon as possible that your child is at our emergency evacuation site.

In the event of a fire the center will be evacuated according to the emergency evacuation plan posted in each classroom. The administrator on duty will notify 911 and check each classroom as long it is safe to do so.

In the event of a tornado or tornado warning all students will move to the interior of their classrooms, preferably the bathroom in the classroom. Children will be covered with nap mats until the threat has passed.

In the event of a lost child, all teachers will be notified to do a head count and room sweep looking for the child. An administrator will do a preliminary search of the premises before notifying both 911 and the parents.

Student Accidents

If your child is injured at Blue Skies we will administer first aid and, if needed, contact you and your doctor to provide additional treatment. If there is a bona fide emergency, we will ensure that your child receives treatment until we can contact you. You must sign the authorization for emergency treatment when you complete your child's Enrollment Record.

Medical Requirements

Blue Skies follows all state and local regulations which address your child's health records. For infants, immunization records and a physical signed by your physician must be provided on or before the first day of attendance. For children one year of age and older, the immunization record and physical must be provided no later than two weeks after the first day of attendance or you will not be able to return your child to the center until the proper records are provided. These records must be kept current. Per state regulations, a new physical signed by the physician as well as an updated copy of immunization records is required at every well child check-up. Please submit proof of physicals and immunizations as your child's medical records are updated.

Medication Policy

Since we are concerned with the safety and health of every child at Blue Skies we follow strict procedures for the administration of prescription and non-prescription drugs. Medications of any kind must be noted daily on our medication form. Medications are secured in a locked area which is inaccessible to children. All medications are administered by a single staff member. Expired medications are not acceptable. Refrigeration is available for medications which require it.

To minimize the necessity for administering medications at the center and to give yourself complete control over your child's medications, it is advisable for you to request that your doctor prescribe a 12 hour dose when possible.

If your child requires medication while at Blue Skies, the following guidelines apply.

- All prescription and non-prescription medication given in a child care setting requires a written authorization from your health care provider, as well as written consent from the parent. This is a child care licensing requirement. The medication authorization forms are available in the office.
- The instructions from your health care provider must include information regarding the medication (whether prescription or non-prescription), the specific time of administration, the specific dosage and the length of time the medication needs to be given. All medication must be brought in the original labeled container. Each time your child starts a new regimen of medication, whether prescription or non-prescription, a new form must be filled out by the doctor. *Note: Medication prepared in a bottle or "cup" may not be left with Blue Skies staff. Vitamins are considered like any other medication; please do not leave them with your child.*
- Blue Skies staff members who administer medication receive special training and are supervised by a nurse consultant.
- Blue Skies staff members are not authorized to determine when "as needed" medication is to be given. Specific instructions are necessary. For children with chronic health conditions, this can be determined in collaboration with the consulting registered nurse.

- Topical preparations such as petroleum jelly, diaper rash ointments, sunscreen, and other ointments may be administered to children with parental authorization as a preventative measure. These preparations may not be applied to open wounds or broken skin. The state of Colorado defines broken skin to any skin that is not normal and intact. Therefore cream will not be applied to a reddened area without a doctor's note.

As the parent or guardian, you may come to the Center and administer medications to your child. Parents may also give written authorization for an emergency contact person to give medicine to their children. All medications administered while your child is in the center must be noted on the Medication Form, indicating the medication, the dose, and the time of administration and the name of the person giving the medicine.

Staff members trained and certified in CPR and first aid are always present in the center to respond to an emergency. We will always follow the directions of the physician or poison control center in treating your child during an emergency situation.

Health Policy

Please do not send your child if s/he has vomited, had a fever, had diarrhea, or started an antibiotic in the last 24 hrs.

The health of your child is one of our greatest concerns. Your child will be sent home if any of the following symptoms of illness are exhibited.

- Vomiting once
- Two or more bouts of diarrhea
- Fever in conjunction with any of the above or the inability to participate in all classroom activities inside and out

If your child is sent home ill they may not return to the center until they have been symptom free for 24 hours.

If there are any changes in emergency contacts, please notify the office as soon as possible. This way we can be sure that if an emergency arises, we are able to get in contact with you immediately.

When your child has a rash or any other potentially contagious illness, we **must have a doctor's note** in order for your child to return to our care. This is not only for the well-being of your child but also for the other children that are exposed to any infections or illnesses that he/she may be carrying. **Even if the diagnosis is deemed non-contagious, a note must be presented stating so.** As a licensed facility, we are required to keep track of the illnesses that are present in our center so that we can provide accurate information to our contracted nurse and Health Department should any epidemics arise.

State law requires that parents of all children at the center be notified when children are exposed to a contagious disease. Please notify the Center Director if your child is diagnosed with a contagious disease so that other families may be notified. Families will be notified by a notice posted in the center.

Biting

Child development experts indicate that biting is a child's response to their frustration at being unable to communicate. The frustration may be due to a variety of things such as being new to the center environment or interactions with other children.

The following procedures will be followed when a child bites. The child who was bitten will be comforted and treated to prevent infection. An incident report will be completed for your child's file and you will be notified. The biting child will be directed to other acceptable activities and a copy of the incident report filed in his/her file. Every attempt will be made to reduce the child's frustration and the classroom situation will be evaluated to ensure it is meeting your child's needs. The teachers will report the incident to the parent and work with the parents to reduce the child's frustration. The biting child's identity will remain confidential. If a child's biting behavior continues, it may be necessary to remove him/her temporarily or permanently.

Toilet Habits

Please be sure to complete the part of your Child's Personal Record which addresses toilet habits. Parents must supply disposable diapers and wipes for children who are not trained to use the toilet.

Even though parents may be anxious for their child to be toilet trained, the child's development must be the primary factor for beginning toilet training. When you and your child's teacher decide the time is right, our staff will work with you to train your child. We will do our best to use the toilet training routine used by the parents at home. It is our goal to make toilet training a positive experience and to provide ample encouragement for doing well. Remember that toilet training goes well only when your child is ready. Your child's teacher will look for indicators that your child is ready to be trained and will discuss this with you when appropriate. The key is good communication and consistency in training between you and your child's teacher.

Cleanliness

Our program emphasizes good hygiene and cleanliness. All staff and children wash after using the bathroom, before eating and at other times, as appropriate. Our center is designed to sustain a high standard of sanitation. Toys and equipment are disinfected daily in addition to the disinfection of changing tables after each use. We routinely perform pest control and change the air filters on our furnaces.

Food and Nutrition

If your child is enrolled full time, he/she will receive a nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack daily. Meals and snacks are planned with a child's nutritional requirements in mind. Please do not bring your child food from home unless it is a special diet prescribed by your doctor. Blue Skies will post weekly menus. All food is served in the classroom so that our teachers may eat with the children and model good eating habits and nutrition. You are welcome to join your child for lunch at any time. Please tell the Center Director of your intentions by 9:00 AM so you may be included in our lunch-time plans.

Rest Time

If your child is at Blue Skies after lunch, he/she will be required to rest a minimum of 30 minutes per state regulation. Children who do not need to sleep must be engaged in quiet activities so that children who need to sleep may do so. Please send a crib sheet for your child. Children may also bring a small blanket or stuffed animal from home for rest time. All nap items will be sent home at the end of the week for laundering. Be sure your child's name is on the blanket.

Reporting Child Abuse

The State of Colorado requires that we report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. In doing so, we may be directed by Social Services not to notify the parents of the report. Please understand that such a situation is a legal obligation that is beyond the control of Blue Skies.

To report child abuse please call the El Paso Department of Human Services at 719-444-5700.

Classroom Environment

Blue Skies strives to provide your child with a safe, clean, and well-maintained environment. The center staff is responsible for ensuring our standards are met. Since all children are grouped by age and developmental skills, each room is designed to meet your child's needs. Each room has furniture appropriate to the size of the children in the room, along with child-sized sinks and toilets to help them confidently learn to take care of their personal needs. Our child development center offers a host of activities such as block play, dramatic play, science, art, and manipulatives for investigation and problem solving. Children work and play in small flexible groups, giving your child choice and the opportunity to direct his/her own activities. The teachers build developmental activities into the explorations.

Outdoor Play

Weather permitting, and in accordance with State of Colorado regulations, your child will be scheduled for at least two outdoor activity periods each day. **Your child should not attend on any day when they are not well enough to go outside for play.** Be sure to dress your child appropriately for outdoor activities. There will be no outdoor activities when the temperature or wind chill is below 20 °F or when the temperature exceeds 95 °F. Outdoor time may be shortened due to the weather conditions in which case gross motor activities will be offered indoors. During warm weather, water will be offered on the playgrounds regularly.

Video Viewing

The viewing of videos is done occasionally if it is directly related to the exploration currently be undertaken. Before videos are shown, teachers must obtain approval from the office staff. All movies are rated "G". The movie title and date will be posted prior to showing. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office.

Discipline Policy

We generally follow the Love and Logic approach of Foster W. Cline, M.D., Charles Fay, Ph.D, and Jim Fay. As experienced teachers and parents we understand the different developmental levels of the children and that each child has a unique temperament. We employ "time outs" if necessary but we find that by keeping high expectations, consistently reinforcing good behavior and addressing behaviors quickly we rarely have any problems. If we notice a behavior becoming a problem we will tell you - usually in front of your child - so that s/he realizes we are serious about the behavior stopping and so you can follow through at home. ***Sometimes, if a parent and a teacher are both in the same area (drop-off or pick up) a child may forget the rules, or test the boundaries. Please help us show your child that you respect the teachers and the rules of the center by reminding your child that the rules still apply when you are around. We will also remind him/her of the rules if needed.**

Blue Skies reserves the right to disenroll any child immediately when that child's behavior compromises the health and safety of other children and our staff. This action may be taken without following the steps and procedures outlined previously.

Certain forms of discipline will not be used at Blue Skies: punishment for accidents involving toilet habits; corporal punishment; embarrassment; humiliation; ridicule; not providing food, warmth, and other necessities; or physical restraint--except the amount absolutely necessary to ensure the safety of the child and others.

Parents Are Always Welcome

The staff members at Blue Skies believe that parents are the most important adults in every child's life. Therefore, we encourage you to be involved in all of our programs. Each staff member will make every effort to promote effective communication in order to keep you informed. We are also interested in your input so that we may serve you and your child more effectively. You should always feel free to share your thoughts and concerns with the Center Director.

If any problems develop for your child at home, at school, or at the center, please be sure to discuss the situation with your child's teacher or with the Center Director. Be sure to attend parent-teacher conferences, parent's night, and open houses at the center--these are designed to make sure you are a part of our child development center.

We encourage you to visit the center any time, with or without notice. You are always welcome to join us and your child in our daily activities.

Visitor Policy

All visitors must check in at the front office, sign the visitor's log, wear a visitor's badge, and be accompanied by a staff member.

If Your Child Is Upset

Many times there are upsetting events in a child's life, such as the loss of a loved one, divorce, the loss of a pet, or an illness in the family. Be sure to make us aware of these events so, with your guidance, we can provide the comfort and assistance your child needs.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Formal parent-teacher conferences are held twice each year for children aged 6 weeks to 6 years. Parents or teachers are encouraged to request a conference any time they feel it is necessary for the benefit of the child.

Picture Policy

Picture and video documentation is an integral part to the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Pictures will be taken often of the children's explorations and discoveries. These pictures may be printed and used for displays within the center.

Pictures may also be posted on our website or used in news media, social media, advertising or promotions. Such pictures posted outside of the center will never carry identifying information. If you would prefer not to have your child's image used in such venues, please fill out our Photography Non-Permission / Opt-Out form, available on our website or in the office.

Field Trip/ Transportation

Blue Skies Exploration Academy does not offer transportation services. For off campus field trips an outside transportation contractor may be used. For trips within .5 miles children 3 and up may walk. During walking field trips child counts will be done at every street crossing and every 15 minutes of the trip. For every field trip a separate permission form must be signed for each participating child.

To File A Complaint About This Center

Contact the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Early Care and Learning at (800) 799-5876 or (303) 866-5948 in order to file a complaint regarding this or any child care facility or you may write to them at 1575 Sherman St. Denver, CO 80203.

Blue Skies Exploration Academy
Policy Agreement

I have read and understand the polices of Blue Skies Exploration Academy.
Continued enrollment is based on complying with all policies.

Child's name

Parent Signature

Date

Administrator Signature

Date