

PURPOSE

Storybook Cottage is concerned with the love and care of your child. Our aim is to meet the need of each individual child and to educate him or her in all areas of life. We believe that each child is special and needs to develop his abilities to the best of his potential.

It is our objective to make a positive contribution to your child's emotional, social, intellectual, and physical needs. It is our intent:

1. To enable him to fully realize his/her potentials and train him for the years that lie ahead of him.
2. To place him in a pleasant classroom environment that is conducive to his development.
3. To make him emotionally and mentally aware of himself as a unique individual.
4. To help him socially to realize that other children have needs and feelings, and encourage him to learn to respect them.
5. To intellectually promote his readiness for participation in the classroom program.
6. To meet his physical needs by providing various types of equipment both indoor and outdoor and to promote the development of the child's body.

TUITION AND ENROLLMENT

It is the policy of Storybook Cottage to admit any healthy child who is at least two years old, and is ready for preschool. We do not practice discrimination as to race, color, national and ethnic origins.

School hours are from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. (School hours are 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Morse location.) Children may be enrolled from two to five days a week on a full or half day program.

A materials fee of \$60.00 is payable at the time of enrollment. The registration fee is not refundable.

Tuition is due the first of the week. A \$5.00 late fee will be assessed after Wednesday of each week. If payment is not received by Friday your child will not be allowed to return the following Monday.

After 6:00 p.m., an additional charge of one dollar (\$1.00) per minute, up to a maximum of \$20.00, will be charged. This is payable to the teacher in charge, at the time your child is picked up.

No credit can be given for days off due to illness or vacation except as stated below. Credit will be given for a yearly (once a year) two-week vacation if your child is enrolled on a year round basis. There is a minimum of one full week of vacation credit that can be given at a time. No credit will be given for less than one full week. Please notify us in advance and arrange to hold your child's place while he is not here. This will enable us to plan our monthly expenses accordingly. For school age programs only (before/after school K-6), there is no tuition deduction for vacations or illness during the school year. Vacation credit is given during the summer months.

ATTENDANCE

AUTHORIZATION FOR PICK-UP No child will be released from the Center's care unless the adult is listed on the child's emergency card and can establish identity with proper photo I. D.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE: When you arrive at school, please bring your child inside the building and sign in. When picking your child up, again, please come inside the building and sign out. Sign-in binders are kept for each program at the front desk reception area. Sign-in sheets are generated monthly for each child enrolled in the Center. It is important to make sure you always sign your child in and out even when you are in a hurry. Signing your child in and out will assist the staff in an emergency, which requires evacuation of the building. It is important to see full signatures, not initials. Since we assume you will stop at your child(ren)'s sign in sheet each day of attendance, we use it to relay written information to you. This may include your monthly billing statements, accident reports, etc. Please note that the teachers do not use the sign-in books, thus it is not a workable means of relaying messages to them.

ABSENCES We request that parents notify the Center if their child will be absent more than 2 days. This allows our office staff to document a child's absence, maintain helpful information on illnesses, and attendance. Please remember you are billed for days of contracted care given when your child is home due to sickness or parent choice.

SAFETY

EVACUATION POLICY The Director shall post a current emergency evacuation plan. This plan will be followed during emergency evacuations, including practice drills. Evacuation drills will be generally conducted on a monthly basis. In the event of an earthquake, fire, or other disaster which requires evacuation of the Center: (1) We will care for your child(ren) until your arrival. (2) Our immediate evacuation spot is inside the playground in the farthest corner. (3) No child will be released from the Center's care unless the adult is listed on the child's emergency card. (4) Before departure, parent or authorized adult must sign the child(ren) out. (5) If secondary relocation is necessary for the staff and children, our location will be posted on the front door of the Children's Center.

ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS POLICY Accidents and illnesses shall be brought to the parent's attention via written report describing the incident and the method of treatment. In life-threatening incidents, Police and 911 assistance will be activated immediately. It is the policy of the Center to attempt to locate parents in the event that their child requires medical treatment or observation. It should be understood that medical attention may take priority over locating the contact person as indicated on the child's emergency card.

UNUSUAL INCIDENT REPORTS Any unusual occurrence involving your child will be documented for your attention. The report will be attached to your child's sign-in sheet. An unusual event may include examples such as significant change in eating, sleeping or play habits.

HEALTH

HEALTH REGULATIONS Upon enrollment, the State law requires a report from your child's physician regarding his general health, a health history, a statement of immunization, emergency consent, an identification form, parents rights, and a personal rights form.

The child is to have had the following immunizations before entering school: Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Measles, Poliomyelitis, TB and Varicella. Health regulations also require that you notify the school immediately of any contagious diseases or illnesses in your family.

EMERGENCY In the event of an emergency we will try to contact you, the persons you specified on the emergency list, or the child's physician. If none of those can be reached, we will call 911 for the quickest possible aid.

ILLNESS Although we try our best to prevent your child(ren) from becoming sick, it is not uncommon for children in child care to share illnesses and diseases. This is especially true with the youngest preschoolers and toddlers. It is important that if your child becomes ill that he/she stays home to rest and get well. We expect that your child is well enough to participate in our daily scheduled program, which includes both indoor and outdoor activities. Please do not bring your child if he/she is too ill to go outside. Children may attend if they have a clear runny nose and appear healthy and active. Children may also attend if a physician is treating poison oak, allergy, asthma, eczema.

A child who is ill or who has a fever should not be at school. We do not have facilities to care for children who are not well, therefore it will be necessary that you make alternate arrangements. For the protection of all students, we can not accept your child if he/she is showing symptoms such as: (1) temperature of 101 degrees or higher within the last 24 hours (2) diarrhea or vomiting in the last 24 hours (3) rash of unknown origin or known to be contagious (4) discharge from ears or eyes (5) nasal discharge green in color. If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be notified. For the child's own welfare, please call for him as soon as possible.

The following illnesses will require exclusion from our program for the following period of time:

CHICKEN POX	Until all lesions are crusted.
CONJUNCTIVITIS (Pink Eye)	Until 24 hours after treatment started by physician. Medical documentation required.
GIARDIA	Medical release required. Children having diarrhea should not return until it has completely dissipated for at least 24 hours.
HEAD LICE	Pediculicide treatment required; nits need to be removed.
IMPETIGO	Until 24 hours after starting antibiotic therapy.
MEASLES (Rubeola, Hard, 10 day)	Medical release required. Immediately advise parents of other children to consult their physicians. Immune serum globulin may be required.
MENINGITIS	Medical release required. Immediately advise parents of other children to contact their physicians.
MUMPS	Medical release required.
PERTUSSIS	Exclude for three (3) weeks. Notify parents of other children to (Whooping Cough) contact their physicians.
PIN WORMS	Until 24 hours after treatment has been started by a physician.
RINGWORM	Until 24 hours after topical treatment started by a physician.
SCABIES	Until 24 hours after treatment started. Itching may persist for several days after treatment but should not be regarded as a sign of reinfestation. A second treatment may be required.
STAPHYLOCOCCAL SKIN INFECTIONS	See Impetigo.
STREPTOCOCCAL	Medical release required at least until 24 hours after antibiotic (Scarlet Fever, Strep Throat) treatment started.
SALMONELLA & SHIGELLA GASTROENTERITIS	Medical release required. Children in diapers having diarrhea should not return until diarrhea is completely gone for at least 24 hours.

VIRAL
GASTROENTERITIS

Until all symptoms have disappeared.

We will call you to pick up your child if staff recognize one or more of the following symptoms:

- Diarrhea
- Breathing trouble
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Unusual spots or rash
- Reddish, inflamed eyes
- Infected skin patches
- Severe coughing or cough producing sputum
- Elevated temperature (101 F)
- Bleeding sores which cannot be completely covered
- Unusually dark, tea-colored urine
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- headache
- Vomiting
- Loss of appetite
- Crying more than usual
- Dark yellow or green discharges from the eyes, ear, nose, throat, vagina, or rectum
- Unusual tiredness or irritability
- Gray or white stool

(Recommendations are taken from the Sacramento Health Department, Child Health and Disability Prevention Program.)

MEDICATION: Any medication to be taken during the day must be clearly labeled. Prescription medication must be in its original container with the pharmacy label. The teachers can only give medications out of the original prescription bottle with the drug name, the physician's name, date, child's name, dosage, and schedule of administration. The staff will only give PRESCRIPTION medicines that are CLEARLY marked, and have a RECENT issue day. The medication permission chart must be filled out when you drop your child off.

We will give over the counter medications ONLY if you have a physician's prescription, current date, child's name and dosage clearly defined by your child's doctor.

If you feel your child is in need of over the counter medication, then he or she is probably too ill to attend. Please allow your child time to recuperate before returning to the Center.

Please give all medication to the teacher in charge. Children are not permitted to carry medication themselves (such as aspirin, cough drops, etc.). Please record all instruction on the medication chart. Medications will be given only at lunch time. If medication needs to be given at another time a parent or guardian will need to administer the medication.

No asthma machine medication will be administered by staff. If an asthma machine needs to be used a parent or guardian must administer the medication. Inhalers may be given at school provided a consent/verification "Form for Nebulizer Care" is completed. Also included with this form is written instructions from a health care provider as detailed on the consent form.

SCHOOL POLICIES

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL We provide transportation to and from nearby schools. We use child care buses and vans to transport the children. When your child is enrolled to ride our buses from school, you will need to inform us if your child will be absent that day. Otherwise, we will wait and account for all children that we are scheduled to return to day care.

ENTERING OUR PROGRAM One of the most outstanding effects of group care experiences for children is its impact on their development of peer relationships. Learning to socialize and interact with others and coming into contact with their own feelings through learning about others is one of our goals. However, as with any learning experience, time and consistency are major factors. If subtle changes are apparent in your child's daily behavior, i.e., clinginess, whining, separation problems, etc., this is to be expected. After a routine has been established, the positive aspects of group care will manifest itself in your child's ability to relate to him/herself and others in a more competent manner.

Group care, along with the positive aspects, also has negative aspects. When dealing with such a large group, illness is bound to occur. Because of the frequency of hand, mouth, and mucus contacts with each other, germs are easily transmitted. Although sanitation precautions are used, germs still pass freely between young children so be prepared for bouts of illness.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS All written information is placed on your child(ren)'s sign-in sheet. It is the one place parents are required to check each time they enter or exit the Center. Information will include monthly fee statement, accident reports, illness reports, messages, etc. It is the parent's responsibility to read all information that is left on their child's sign-in sheet.

PARENT COMMUNICATIONS Parents wishing to discuss any concerns about their child should not hesitate to set up an appointment with the teacher. Our philosophy states the need for children to feel comfortable expressing their needs and feelings. It is equally important that parents and teachers communicate openly and effectively to model what we are hoping children learn in our program.

Questioning is welcomed. No matter how self-conscious you may feel about asking, it is important for us to know how you feel about our program. Questions and/or suggestions that might better meet your and your child's needs are valuable to the staff. The main concern is that you feel comfortable expressing your questions, concerns, or interests.

Since children react to even "minor" changes in their home and school life, it is important for parents and teachers to "keep in touch" daily. Teachers will make a point to inform you of any problems at school. Parents are encouraged to inform the teacher of such things as a death in the family, parent illness, birth of a sibling, change in family structure, or anything out of the ordinary routine. This will allow the staff to help the child through understanding.

COMPLAINTS To resolve a problem or issue direct communication with the person involved is recommended. If the problem is not resolved then the Director needs to be informed.

LABEL PERSONAL BELONGINGS: Please label everything your child brings to school; all clothing, blankets, sweaters, coats, medicine, etc. If your child brings a lunch box, clearly print his name on it.

WHAT TO BRING FROM HOME: Your child may bring one small blanket for nap time. Do not bring a pillow. Please bring a blanket that may be labeled with a black permanent marking pen. We will label the blanket at school as we need to write the name very large on the blanket. Bring a set of extra clothes to leave in the preschool. When your child uses them, please return the items the next day.

WHAT NOT TO BRING FROM HOME Please do not send your child to the Center with: (1) Gum (2) Candy/Treats (3) Money (4) Toys from home (5) Food from home (unless arrangements are made with your child's teacher due to food allergies or celebrations.) **NO TOYS SHOULD BE BROUGHT FROM HOME.** Storybook Cottage is not responsible for lost or damaged toys.

We have plenty of things for your child to play with at the Center. Possessions from home often cause friction between children. Each classroom and school has its own policy regarding Share Days. Teachers will let you know if, when, and what is appropriate for your child to bring on these days.

MENU The Center uses a monthly cycling menu to provide children with a variety of foods. Menus are available upon request.

CUBBIES AND LOCKERS: Each child will have an individual cubby or locker in which to keep school papers. It is the parent's and child's responsibility to see that these things are taken home each night. At the end of each month the school will clean out all unclaimed items left at school. After an attempt to find their owners, these clothes and items are given away.

ART FOLDERS Please check your child's art folder often to take home current creations. The folder will periodically be emptied.

WHAT TO WEAR TO SCHOOL: Think of your child's comfort and provide simple clothing that is free of complicated fastenings. Think of the messy art activities and provide clothing that is washable. Think of our play ground and provide clothing which is sturdy, and allows for ease in moving and climbing. If your child is potty training, please use elastic waistband clothing during this time and refrain from belts, tights, overalls, etc.

Soiled clothing will be placed in plastic bags and put in your child's cubby for parents to launder and return.

For safety reasons we strongly discourage cowboy boots, slippers, or flip-flops. All sandals must have back straps. Playgrounds are treacherous for children wearing shoes that do not provide traction and grip. Open-toed sandals without socks may increase the likelihood of scraped or smashed toes, therefore socks are strongly recommended.

BIRTHDAYS: We think birthdays are very special. We invite children to celebrate their special day with us at school. Birthday treats are served for morning or afternoon snacks. We prefer that you send cupcakes instead of a full size cake. They are easier to serve and clean up. Please check with your child's teacher for dates and number of children.

HOLIDAY PARTIES: We celebrate holidays throughout the year with classroom parties. Children are invited to contribute to the menu. Notes will be put out for sign-ups.

DONATIONS: We will be happy to accept donations such as art materials; yarn, fabric scraps, spools, etc. We will also accept any toys, in good condition, that your child has outgrown or lost interest in; books, wooden puzzles, etc.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTION: If you have special instructions for your child on a particular day, please write them down and hand them to the teacher in charge at the time you sign in.

MEALS: Lunch is provided for all full time and half-day children who are present during lunch. Morning and afternoon snack is also provided. Breakfast is served for an additional fee.

HOLIDAYS: The school is closed on the following holidays:

Labor Day	New Year's Eve at 1:00 PM
Veterans Day	New Year's Day
Thanksgiving Day	Martin Luther King's Birthday
Thanksgiving Friday	President's Day
Christmas Eve at 1:00 PM	Memorial Day
Christmas Day	Independence Day

VIDEO AND PHOTOGRAPHS: Pictures of students participating in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear on our web site. This part of the web site will be available for parents only. You will be notified when there is an activity which can be viewed on the web site. We hope this will be enjoyable and informative for our parents.

CHILDREN'S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

When you and your child arrive, please allow the teacher time to greet you. This allows the teacher to recognize your child as a special person. A warm, friendly arrival sets the tone for the day.

Sometimes when a parent and a child separate for the first time, the result is often a crying child and a guilty, anxious parent. It has been our experience that once the child and the parent begin to trust the adults at the Center, the separation transition is much smoother. Building trust takes time and lots of communication.

The first couple of weeks of school you may want to spend more time with your child in the Center so that you both become familiar with the staff and daily routines. Or you may find that the longer you stay in the Center, the more anxious your child becomes waiting for the inevitable good-bye. Separation routines should be discussed with the teacher to ensure a positive beginning experience. Each child has individual preferences, wants, and needs and our staff respects the rights and dignity of each child. Remember that eventually your child will adjust to the routine of coming to school. It will take time, but our happiest moments are when your child enters the doorway happy and excited to start his/her day with us. With love, trust, and communication - it will happen!

How you handle the events surrounding your leaving will affect the adjustment your child makes into our program. The following suggestions can help make separation easier.

1. Always leave your child with a staff member, and make sure the two of them have a chance to get acquainted before you go.
2. Visit our program several times and stay for an hour or two with your child before leaving him/her there. Familiarity helps!
3. Before you go, tell your child you will be leaving soon.
4. Devote the time before you go to helping the child connect with a care giver. Help your child get started on some enjoyable activity with the care giver.
5. **Never sneak out!** Always say goodbye directly to your child.
6. Don't try to discourage tears or your child's sad feelings. Let him/her express feelings for as long as he/she needs to and at whatever intensity he/she needs to. Don't expect him/her to be "reasonable".
7. Remain calm, reassuring, and stable yourself, whatever happens. Express sympathy for your child's feelings, but don't allow his/her tears to change your mind about leaving.
8. A more relaxed departure is less upsetting for children than a rushed, abrupt one. The parent may say goodbye at the door and ask the child to wave at the window or fence with the care giver. (Other departure routines might be helping get your coat, bag, or hat.)

When you are picking up your child, please allow time to put away any materials that the teacher asks the child to put away before going home. Remember to always tell the teacher when you and your child are leaving. It is important for the teacher to see each parent and to exchange greetings and information concerning your child(ren)'s day.

DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES AND MILESTONES

PREPARING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT The early education philosophy of Storybook Cottage focuses on the needs of the whole child. Our age appropriate integrated goal based curriculum nurtures all areas of development (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive). We use the Core Knowledge Curriculum which encourages children to be active participants in the learning process. We believe learning is based on meaningful experiences and these experiences are best directed by the children and facilitated by the teacher

During the course of the day, children are provided with a predictable schedule, which allows them spontaneous and planned events. To ensure growth for the child in all areas of development, planned activities are provided each day. These activities include literacy and language skills, cognitive skills (math, science, orientation in time and space, music and visual arts), motor skills, work habits, and social skills. During “center time,” a variety of activities are set-up for the children and they are encouraged to move freely into the area of their choice. In planning the daily routine, we are sensitive to children’s needs for quiet/active time, indoor/outdoor time, large/small group time, and adult/peer interaction. Our goals as teachers is to provide a wide range of activities, which help integrate the child’s various developing skills.

The educational activities offered through planned activities and arrangement of the classroom environment, coupled with the focus on social-emotional development through communication and play provide the basic framework needed for future development and studies.

Children are provided activities in the following areas:

1. Dramatic Play: Play house and block areas where children mimic grown-ups is their way of learning about the world around them; unlocks imagination through fantasy; allows for acting out emotions and ideas; opens up creation and exploration.
2. Music: Exposure to classical as well as traditional children’s music and singing, instruments, tape player, authentic “native” instruments, rhythm of finger plays, coordination and creation through dance; development of vocabulary, memory, and vocal skills.
3. Art: Learning to use paint, crayons, glue, chalk, scissors, shapes, sizes, colors, textures; learning to scribble, write, and recognize through watching and experimenting.
4. Science: Care of plants and animals, materials to touch and explore, textures, scales to weight, magnets, magnifying glasses, mirrors, play dough, sandbox, measurements, experiments, cooking, nature walks.
5. Multi-Cultural Awareness: Daily experience with customs, songs, foods, artifacts, language, dance, stories, family traditions, etc. from the culture of our families, our country and from around the world.

6. Reading: Exposure to language, sequencing of events, contextual cues, use of imagination and problem-solving through listening to, browsing through and creating stories and books; exposure to letters, numbers (symbols) through circle time, art, and bulletin boards, lotto games.
7. Math: Shapes, colors, sizes, quantities, comparisons, numbers, ordering by size, counting, matching, “guess-timating” through use of concrete materials; abundance of containers, rulers, objects in quantity, table games, dice, dominoes.
8. Writing: Practice of holding and manipulating writing utensils - crayons, chalk, pencils, markers, finger paints; tracing, visually orienting symbols; emphasis of hand and eye movement from left to right and from top to bottom.
9. Gross Motor: Using the large muscles of the body - running, jumping, hopping, sliding, climbing, riding tricycles, balancing on borders and beams, dancing, crawling, rolling, swinging, kicking/throwing balls, playing games such as ‘Follow the Leader”, “Simon Says” and”Duck, Duck, Goose.”
10. Fine Motor: Using the small muscles of the hand - “Eye-hand coordination”: using fine motor motions and judgment at the same time e.g. rhythm sticks, musical instruments, finger plays (Itsy Bitsy Spider), puzzles, crayons, paint brushes; use of small manipulative toys e.g. legos, scissors, snaps, buttons, zippers, small blocks, stringing beads.
11. Bible Story: A popular time is our Bible Story Time. We teach well-known Bible Stories. Various methods of presentation are used such as flannel graph, pictures, puppets, drama, videos, books, and music. Bible verse memory is also encouraged. (At the West Sacramento locations only, no Bible stories or religious instruction will be taught during the daily 3 hour UPK class.)

READING READINESS - Why don't we teach young children to read? There are two essential parts to reading, which educators call decoding and comprehension. Decoding means figuring out what the letters and words are. In other words, decoding is the ability to look at the printed page and decipher the words, phrases, and sentences. Comprehension is what the letters and words mean. Comprehension is the ability to understand what concepts and images the words convey, what information they are giving, what feelings they arouse, what beauty or despair they illuminate.

It is easier to decode than to comprehend. Decoding is a necessary but a learned rote skill, one that can be learned in a series of planned steps for most children. But comprehension requires far more subtle skills. It requires a child to be exposed to rich experiences, usually by a guiding adult hand; a child that has been encouraged to question, to experiment, to test, to make judgments, evaluations, and conclusions, right or wrong. It requires a child with skills to approach new experiences with confidence and eagerness; and above all, a child who has been “bathed” in language, who has been familiar with books and stories from crib days. Such a child brings a richness of understanding to what words mean, and is physically, emotionally, mentally,, and socially - in other words developmentally - ready to read successfully. (Reprinted from “Getting Ready to Read”, Betty D. Boegehold.) Parents and teachers can prepare children to read successfully by:

1. Reading aloud and telling stories.
2. Helping children to decode signs they see around them.
3. Encouraging children to tell and dramatize stories themselves.
4. Dictation of children's own stories.

DISCIPLINE: The children are taught to be kind and to share with each other. They are also taught to obey parents and teachers. Children who show defiance will be told to sit near a teacher for a "time out". Children who are continually unkind and hurt other children or who do not respond to discipline from the teacher will be considered not ready for the preschool experience. Storybook Cottage reserves the right to dismiss such children.

We believe it is important for children to know the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Our emphasis is on children being sensitive to their own and other's feelings and learning appropriate expression of these feelings. We help children develop this sensitivity by teaching them to express their feelings with words. As role models for children, teachers will never use corporal punishment. Intimidation, embarrassment, teasing, or provoking comparison of children are not acceptable forms of discipline. When conflicts do occur, children are brought together to resolve the problem. If they cannot communicate at the moment, they may need to be removed to a quiet area to regroup, calm down, and plan a resolution.

Teachers also create a preventative school environment, which limits the frequency of disciplinary situations. We accomplish this by trying to foresee behavioral conflicts, redirecting children into more appropriate activities, by promoting cooperative play, and by providing enough rest and stimulation.

Teachers may consult with parents to work together on an individualized plan of action.

BITING No behavior among small children elicits as strong a reaction from parents than biting. Parents and care givers are often frustrated by this experience as it can be both frightening and painful for the child involved. Children, just like adults, experience times of frustration, anger, and intimidation. Unlike older preschool children and adults, toddlers do not have the "words" to express their feelings. We have found that a very quick and effective way for the young toddler to express anger or fright is through crying or physically striking out, often biting. At Storybook Cottage, we maintain a policy of firmly telling children who have bitten, "No, you may not bite," and removing them from the conflict situation. We attempt to help children find more appropriate, less harmful ways to express their feelings of anger, frustration or intimidation. As adults, it is our role to model the type of behavior we expect of our toddlers. Patience, consistency, and a wealth of alternatives for the biting toddlers are essential in helping children express feelings in a healthy, acceptable manner.

By preschool, children should no longer be biting, but using verbal communications to express feelings. If a child does begin to use biting as a means of problem-solving, teachers and parents will come together to discuss ways for each to help the child. In the event that a bite breaks the skin, parents will be notified.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PROBLEM SOLVING At all age levels we encourage children to solve their own problems. On a daily basis children will be challenged to resolve conflicts with other children and the environment. Depending on the age group, a teacher will intervene at different times to ensure safety. By not constantly and prematurely interrupting, adults allow children to work through a situation and develop their own solution. Adults intervene only when it is apparent that guidance is needed. Children become empowered as they learn that they have the capacity to take care of their own situations and/or interactions.

SWEARING Unfortunately, children learn quickly those words that shock adults. Children enjoy shocking adults and the power they derive from doing so if the adult feeds into the situation. The adults in our program are told to remain calm and simply tell the child that those words are not to be used at school. Children are encouraged to tell children using swear words that they do not like hearing them. It is confusing if an adult at school says swear words are naughty if the child learned them from home. A simple sentence, “I don’t like that word and I wish you wouldn’t use it around me” is usually enough said to a child experimenting with “shocking” language.

APOLOGIES Children, in learning to socialize, will encounter peer conflicts. Sometimes the result of these conflicts is the injury of the child. Many people’s first reaction is to have a child say they are sorry. We believe that a child needs to understand other children’s feelings before he or she can use the abstract concept of being sorry. Insisting on an apology teaches a child how to please an adult rather than teaching the child an understanding of others.

When a conflict arises between non-verbal children, we start the understanding process by modeling appropriate behavior and talking about how the other child feels. As children acquire language, we continue the process by getting the children involved helping with the words they need to express their feelings. The adult facilitates the process further by suggesting ways the aggressive child can help the upset child. For example, a child who has pushed another child on a cement walkway will be asked to help that child back up. There is a point when a child understands being sorry. It is then that we encourage apologies to start.

LABELING BEHAVIOR - NOT THE CHILD Another important practice at the Center is to use objective words to describe children’s behaviors, “Nathan, you carefully put those blocks away” instead of “What a good boy for putting away the blocks”. When judgmental words are used it creates the notion that children are only as worthy as their actions.

This approach is especially important with young children who are developing their self concept based on the opinions of others (most importantly the one they love). Commenting directly on the child’s action allows them to focus on the behavior rather than their value as a person. “Be good today” and “bad girl” are overwhelming expectations and generalizations that set children up for failure. No child is always “good” or “bad” during an entire day. For example, when leaving your child instead of saying “Be good today”, simply say, “Goodbye, I love you and I’ll see you this afternoon.” This type of statement reassures the child of the parent’s unconditional love, acceptance, and promised return.

SHARING AS A SOCIAL SKILL Sharing, like apologies, is appropriate only when children are cognitively and emotionally ready to understand the social benefits of this interaction. Toddlers and young preschoolers, for the most part, are still very egocentric and cannot grasp the concept of sharing something that they want. We believe these children should not be forced to do so. We try to respect children's needs to have private space, individual time with materials, and some control over their play situations.

The staff's responsibility is to provide more than one of any toy or activity. Staff facilitates problem solving while verbalizing children's feelings and desires; teachers introduce simple language that children can eventually use in future situations. The Center also believes adults modeling sharing is one of the best ways to expose and demonstrate the different ways to share.

DIAPERS FOR NON-TOILETING CHILDREN Parents are required to provide a sufficient number of disposable diapers for their child(ren) each day.

TOILET LEARNING Before children can attempt bowel or bladder control, certain muscles and parts of the nervous system must mature to a point where they can be consciously controlled. Children must also be cognitively and verbally mature enough to understand and follow toileting instructions. A casual, relaxed approach to this aspect of child development lends itself to success without trauma to parent or child.

Toilet learning needs to begin with clues of interest from the child. Once a child expresses an interest in learning about toileting, staff and parents need to discuss a consistent method of developing toileting skills. It is important that toileting be an encouraging process rather than pressuring a child into a process he/she is not yet willing to learn.

Our policy reflects our general philosophy of respect for each child. We are sensitive to the growing sense of autonomy. We encourage active participation by the child in care giving routines and respect for individual pace and style. Even before the self-toileting begins, the child is included in the care giving process by getting their own diaper helping to dress themselves, washing their own hands, etc. While diapers are being changed, care givers talk to the children, giving them language they will use during toileting process. We ask the child if he/she would like to sit on the toilet and respect their decision. Children in underpants are taken to the bathroom regularly. If training pants are used, wet pants are dealt with in a very matter of fact way, while respectful of the child's feelings. The child helps get the dry pants and is reminded of where the toilet is. The process of self-toileting is a gradual one and one which is impacted by the developmental issues of autonomy and a continued need for security and nurturing. The greatest tool a parent or teacher has in this process is the child's own strong desire to begin self-toileting.