

2022-2023 HEARTPRINTS FAMILY HANDBOOK (10.B.02)
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WELCOME TO HEARTPRINTS CENTER FOR EARLY EDUCATION

Our Mission:

The Mission of HeartPrints Center for Early Education is to strive for a more peaceful world by involving young children, their families, and their teachers in a process of self-directed, lifelong learning which will encourage young children to think clearly and creatively, to discover cultural and aesthetic values, to respond sensitively to others, to manage conflict respectfully, and to recognize that they are members of the worldwide community.

Our Philosophy:

HeartPrints' approach to teaching is founded in three respected approaches to early childhood education: Montessori, High/Scope, and Reggio Emilia. Our approach is aligned with the guidelines set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for developmentally appropriate practice.

We use developmental goals as a systematic framework for focusing our program and assessment design. Our staff is well versed in a variety of educational approaches, and we choose teaching strategies, daily routines, classroom arrangements, and curriculum structure that will encourage each child's development. Teacher observations and documentation of individual development are used to adjust the program to better challenge each child's development, as well as to conference with families about ways we can work as a team to support each child.

HeartPrints is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as a private academic school serving children ages two through kindergarten between the hours of 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Copies of all licensing regulations and the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for preschool and kindergarten are available to parents in the office. HeartPrints Center also holds a DPW Day Care License.

Families as Partners:

HeartPrints offers adult family members and other caregivers a variety of ways to become involved in the child's school community, to participate in family activities, and to confer with the staff to build a strong bond between home and school (7.A.09). During the school year, teachers meet with families to share information about the child's school and home life. Regular communication is encouraged among families, caregivers, and the school staff so that multiple perspectives on the child's development and interests can be used to enhance the child's school experience. In addition to the detailed family handbook and web site, we have newsletters, See-Saw App., and frequent spontaneous interaction (7.B.01). A family bulletin board in each classroom provides duplicate information, extra copies of forms, interesting articles, flyers about local family events and resources, and other parent resources (7.C.05, 8.B.03). Please **"like us"** on Facebook to receive the newest information on the HeartPrints' community.

Annual family events offering families opportunities to participate in the child's school include Parent Orientation, Student Visitation Day, Fall Festival, Winterfest, Herofest, Family Fun Night, and field trips. In addition, adult family members can extend their involvement by volunteering in school-wide or individual classroom activities. We ask that families contact administration if they would like to be involved in any of the listed activities. Additional parent volunteer opportunities: library assistance, fall festival volunteer, garden helper, school picture volunteer, Herofest committee and classroom volunteer (7.A.12-14).

If you have questions or have experienced a problem at home or school, please approach the child's teacher or one of the directors (7.C). Toileting efforts, changes in care-giving arrangements, the death of a pet, an extended absence of a parent, etc. can cause changes in a child's demeanor and behavior at school. Timely communication helps the staff respond most effectively to the child. We make every effort to dialogue with children and families in a positive manner, to plan strategies, to resolve issues, and to provide timely and effective assistance (3.F.03). We encourage families to suggest ways that we can strengthen our partnership with you as together we seek to provide a high-quality learning environment for everyone involved in our school community.

Our Purpose/Programs:

Come Play with Me: Our parent/toddler program for young children ages two to three years old introduces them to collaborative learning experiences with the support of parents and teachers. Each week our staff will design activities within the classroom that help toddlers build quality relationships with their families, classmates, and teachers.

New Toddler Program: This class is a 2-day morning class for ages two to three years old. We will have fun playing and learning with supportive teachers who will encourage exploration and provide lots of hands-on learning. You may choose M/W or T/TH.

Preschool/Pre-K Programs: HeartPrints Center supports young children and their families by offering an educational program that encourages young children and their parents to become active participants in a community of learners and facilitates the development of a positive relationship between home and school. We provide developmentally appropriate programs for children three to six years old.

Kindergarten: HeartPrints supports young children and their families by offering both full and half-day kindergarten programs that facilitate children's individual development and stimulate their creativity, problem-solving skills, and enthusiasm for learning. Children must be five years old by September 1st to be enrolled in our kindergarten

Afternoon S.T.E.A.M. Clubs: Families can elect to enroll their preschool or kindergarten child in these exciting afternoons where creativity, imagination, learning, and fun abound. The foundation of our club curriculum is STEAM education. STEAM is an acronym that refers to education-related programs in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics.

Organizational Information:

Your director is responsible for the hiring, training, and supervision of all faculty members. The Director is responsible for overseeing curriculum plans, adhering to PA Department of Education Private Academic Licensing, DPW Licensing, and NAEYC regulations and guidelines, monitoring of health and safety procedures and standards, and the overall daily operations of the center.

Your Assistant Director is responsible for assisting the Director with overseeing the curriculum plans, adhering to PA Private Academic Licensing, DPW Licensing, and NAEYC regulations and guidelines, monitoring health and safety procedures and standards, and the overall daily operations of the center.

Your Programs Coordinator is responsible for assisting the Director with overseeing the curriculum plans, adhering to PA Private Academic Licensing, DPW Licensing, and NAEYC regulations and guidelines, monitoring health and safety procedures and standards, and the overall daily operations of the center.

Our Business Manager is responsible for assisting the Director and Assistant Director with adhering to PA Private Academic Licensing, DPW Licensing, and NAEYC regulations and assisting with managing the financial aspects of our programs.

Our HeartPrints Center for Early Education Board of Directors serves in an advisory role in the management of all programs. Our Board of Directors is comprised of parent representatives as well as representatives from institutions of higher education, local businesses, local early childhood agencies, and members at large. If you are interested in serving on this board, please contact a member of our staff.

Enrollment:

We invite all families to take a personal tour of our classroom before enrolling their children in HeartPrints. During this time, our philosophy and policies will be reviewed. Families are encouraged to bring their children with them on this visit. Questions regarding our programs can be answered during your visit.

Program Schedules:

Preschool/Pre-K: Our classes will be comprised of three- to five-year-olds in a mixed-age setting. Our teacher/child ratio will not exceed 1 teacher/8 children and a maximum group size of twenty children. Our morning class will meet between 9:00 AM – Noon, while our afternoon class will meet between 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM.

Afternoon S.T.E.A.M. Clubs: Preschoolers and kindergarteners can join our clubs. These classes meet Monday through Friday afternoons to spark children's curiosity and creativity. Classes meet from 1:00 – 4:00 PM. The foundation of our club curriculum is STEAM education. STEAM is an acronym that refers to education-related programs in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics.

Kindergarten: Our kindergarten class will be comprised of five- and six-year-olds. Our teacher/child ratio will not exceed 1 teacher/9 children and a maximum group size of 2 teachers/18 children. Our half day program will meet between 9:00 AM – Noon. Our full day program will meet between 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Monday - Friday.

Come Play with Me: Our parent/toddler class meets on Friday mornings between 9:00 – 11:00 AM. A parent or adult must accompany the toddler in this class.

Toddler Program: Our toddler class meets either Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursdays mornings between 9:00 – 12:00 AM.

Registration:

Families can register for all school programs through the Jackrabbit Parent Portal on our website. Registration for HeartPrints families will begin during January for the upcoming school year and will remain open until all placements are filled. Community families' registration will begin in February.

Financial Information:

Registration Fees: All families will pay a nonrefundable registration fee at the time their child is enrolled in a HeartPrints program.

Toddler Program, Preschool & Kindergarten	\$200.00
Kindergarten Book Fee	\$25.00
Steam Clubs	\$50.00
Come Play with Me	\$50.00

Tuition Payments: Tuition is based upon the number of days per week a child attends HeartPrints and is assessed as an annual fee that is divided into ten equal payments for the convenience of our families. September tuition payments are due by May 30th. October tuition is due by September 1st with subsequent payments due by the first of each month through April 1st. A late fee of \$10.00 will be assessed if tuition is paid after the 1st of the month. Tuition payments are automatically withdrawn using the payment method entered by the parent in the JackRabbit Parent Portal. HeartPrints must be notified at least 10 days in advance if you need to change your online payment method. You may access Dependent Care receipts through the online JackRabbit Parent Portal. Bank fees accrued due to bounced e-checks or rejected credit cards will be deferred to the parent

2022-2023 Tuition:

For your convenience, tuition is divided into ten equal payments.

Program	Monthly Tuition
Come Play with Me	
Friday Morning Program 9:00 to 11:00	\$95
Toddler Program	
2 Day Morning Toddler Program M/W or T/TH 9:00 – 12:00	\$275
AM Preschool Program	
4 Day Morning Preschool – Monday-Thursday	\$535
5 Day Morning Preschool – Monday- Friday	\$660
Kindergarten Program	
5 Day Morning Kindergarten 9:00 – 12:00	\$660
5 Day Full Day Kindergarten 9:00 – 4:00	\$1,470
Afternoon Preschool 1:00-4:00PM	
2 Day Afternoon Preschool – Tuesday-Thursday	\$275
3 Day Afternoon Preschool – Monday-Wednesday-Friday	\$405
5 Day Afternoon Preschool – Monday-Friday	\$660
Afternoon S.T.E.A.M. Clubs 1:00-4:00PM	
STEAM Club 2 Day Afternoon T/TH	\$275
STEAM Club – 2 Day Afternoon with Lunch T/TH	\$335
STEAM Club – 3 Day Afternoon M/W/F	\$405
STEAM Club – 3 Day Afternoon with Lunch M/W/F	\$495
STEAM Club – 5 Day Afternoon	\$660
STEAM Club – 5 Day Afternoon with Lunch	\$810

Discounts:

- There are no discounts or refunds on registration fees.
- A family may only use one discount during the school year.
- 5% tuition discount will be given on the younger sibling(s) tuition when two or more siblings are enrolled in preschool or kindergarten classes.
- Please note - this discount does not apply if children are enrolled in either Afternoon Clubs or Come Play with Me.

Extra charges: Parents are responsible for all fees on returned checks and HeartPrints Center for Early Education reserves the right to request cash payments after a check has been returned for insufficient funds.

Tuition Refund Policy:

- July 31st is the last day to withdrawal from the school year and receive a refund for September tuition
- 30-day written notice is required if withdrawing from a program to receive a tuition refund. Tuition paid beyond 30 days is eligible for refund.
- No tuition refunds are granted for absences due to illness, vacations, or scheduling conflicts. Children cannot *make-up* days they are absent by attending additional sessions.
- All registration fees are nonrefundable.

Afternoon Clubs:

- No tuition refunds are granted for absences due to illness, vacations, scheduling conflicts or weather.

Special Event Programs:

- Registration fees paid for special event programs are nonrefundable.
- Tuition paid for special event programs is nonrefundable.

Curriculum:

Using current research about children's development and learning, HeartPrints has designed an early learning program that reflects the principles and guidelines established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Based on a developmental approach, the curriculum focuses on the whole child and fosters social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and aesthetic development. The latest research about early literacy and numeracy learning in young children guides the day-to-day curriculum experiences in the center. In the area of social and emotional development, a primary focus is to help children learn to manage their feelings and use conflict management skills with the support of a caring and nurturing environment.

Developmental Objectives: Throughout the year, the following objectives guide our development of specified learning goals.

I. Self-Esteem & Active Learning:

- Encouraging young children to become actively involved in the learning process.
- Encouraging each child's developing sense of self-worth and responsibility for self.

II. Social Competence & Community:

- Promoting the young child's active involvement in building meaningful, reciprocal relationships within the family, the learning community, and the local community.
- Fostering the young child's understanding that he/she is a member of the world-wide community.
- Supporting the young child as he/she develops conflict management skills.
- Promoting children's social competence in caring for their learning community.

III. Communication & Aesthetics:

- Facilitating the young child's development of comprehension and expression skills that will enable him/her to express feelings, needs, ideas, and information in effective and appropriate ways.
- Cultivating the young child's developing artistic expression skills that will enable him/her to express feelings, needs, ideas, and information through art, music, movement, drama, and literature.
- Encouraging the young child's development of an understanding of and an appreciation for the artistic expressions of others.

IV. Discovery, Exploration & Appreciation:

- Supporting the young child's development of discovery and exploration skills including: observation, questioning, theory building, researching, and experimentation.
- Cultivating the young child's developing respect and appreciation for the natural world.

V. Creativity, Imagination & Problem Solving:

- Supporting the young child's development and expression of creativity and imagination.
- Promoting the young child's development of problem solving and decision-making skills.

VI. Body Awareness, Care & Control:

- Promoting the young child's physical development including both small & large motor skills.
- Promoting the young child's developing sense of coordination, body awareness & control, including relaxation strategies.

Our staff developed the Continuum of Developmental Objectives to reflect our understanding of young children's natural developmental progression. Teaching teams use the six categories of objectives as a flexible framework for planning learning experiences to promote the growth of each individual child (3.F.01) rather than using a fixed curriculum guide. After careful observation of the children, we develop our plans to provide children with a variety of opportunities for learning and continually encourage deep exploration. We support children's autonomy in learning and strive to provide numerous opportunities for children to take ownership of their learning. Our teachers frequently assume the roles of facilitators, questioners, and observers.

Thematic approach to Curriculum:

After careful observation and documentation of children at work and play, the teachers prepare the learning environment for exploring themes/projects emerging from the children's interests. Teachers choose a wide range of quality materials to engage children in each study. The curriculum encourages our teaching staff to implement a variety of tools within the early childhood classroom including flexibility in group size, varied learning or activity centers, cooperative project work, individual projects, parent and community volunteers, and free play. Daily group meeting times set the stage for introducing relevant concepts and for upcoming investigations. Open-ended materials support explorations that promote creativity and imagination. Screen time is limited to research or creative design activities.

Classroom learning will be enhanced through field trips or visits from special guests

Child Nutrition:

We are committed to providing healthy foods and beverages and a positive snack time and/or lunch so that children can learn good eating habits and grow up strong.

*Children are offered a fruit and/or vegetable at each snack time.

*We ask children to bring a water bottle to school.

*Teachers and children eat snacks and lunch together, so that children can learn and practice table skills.

*Teachers never force or bribe children to eat any foods or to clean their plates.

*Teachers will offer a variety of different fruits and vegetables to try throughout the month.

*We ask that you provide only non-food items to help celebrate a child's birthday or when celebrating special holidays throughout the school year.

*Children learn about food and eating each week through stories and activities.

*Each year, all staff and teachers participate in training on nutrition topics.

Physical Activity and Outdoor Play:

*Teachers will encourage all children to try new activities and celebrate with children when they participate at any skill level.

* Physically active play is important for the health and development of all children. Our program is committed to providing children with opportunities to move throughout the day. Teachers and staff members are role models and leaders when it comes to getting children active. Our teachers and staff members are expected to:

- wear shoes and clothing that allow for active participation in indoor and outdoor play with children.
- incorporate physical activity into classroom routines, transitions, and planned activities throughout the day, and use "teachable moments" to talk with children about the importance of physical activity.
- use the outdoors as an extension of the classroom by planning outdoor lessons, activities, and field trips.
- plan weekly lessons, indoors or outdoors, that help preschool children learn and practice gross motor skills (such as skipping, jumping, throwing, catching, kicking, balancing, stretching, etc.).
- take an active role to help children stay active during indoor and outdoor free play time, including verbally encouraging children's activities, and when appropriate, joining in with children's activities to encourage more movement.
- never manage challenging behavior by taking away scheduled or promised physical activity time or removing children from physically active playtime for more than a couple of minutes to "cool off".
- talk with families about the ways our center is supporting children's physical activity and gross motor skill development each time there is a good opportunity to do so.

To support our teachers and staff members, our program will provide:

- opportunities for professional development related to children's physical activity and outdoor play and learning.
- a variety of toys, in good condition, both indoors and outdoors, to help encourage children's physical activity.

Assessment Plan (4.A.01-03):

Assessment is naturally integrated into the course of every day as ongoing teacher observation of group patterns and individual development is used to adjust the program to better support group and individual progress. Teaching teams meet weekly to identify the group's current interests and needs and then plan accordingly for the next week's explorations (4.D.02). The classroom environment will be altered and new strategies and/or activities will be implemented in accordance with children's interests and growth. If concerns about individual children's development arise and cannot be easily remedied via classroom adaptations, teachers initiate a dialogue with colleagues and families to plan approaches to try at both home and school (7.C).

Informal assessments are supported by more systematic assessments of each child relative to the school's developmental objectives for the purpose of describing each child's developmental progress at least twice each school year. These descriptions are shared with families both in writing and/or in conferences.

Occasionally, the staff and/or families identify the need for additional screening and referral for professional diagnostic assessment (7.B.04, 7.C.01-04). In those cases, staff and families typically include the Director and/or Assistant Director in the dialogue for the purpose of more precisely identifying the focus for the screening/diagnosis and to review the resources available to children and families in our community, which depends heavily on where the family lives and what type of health insurance the family has.

Because of the detailed discussion of child progress, conferences typically last 20 – 30 minutes and are not appropriate for children other than nursing infants to attend. Childcare is not provided at the school during conferences, so families are encouraged to make other arrangements for their children. Many families share these responsibilities by arranging consecutive conferences and sharing babysitting responsibilities.

Assessment Procedures (4.B.01):

Most HeartPrints' assessment is informal, with direct observation by staff members as the primary method. Teachers document observations in their own unique ways, though most record anecdotes, take photographs of constructions and interactions, and collect samples of the children's artwork and other projects. Children's word books and portfolios also provide documentation of each child's development.

Because even young children are savvy enough, however, to avoid tasks in areas that are difficult for them and to rely on peers to support their performance when avoidance is not possible, HeartPrints' teachers occasionally conduct more formal, individual assessments focused on precisely determining what a child knows or can do. Whenever possible, these assessments are designed as typical classroom activities and are widely distributed in time. For example, a teacher might assess knowledge of letters and numerals by having the child be the caller in a bingo game played with peers. Gross motor skills may be assessed by having children practice an obstacle course set up in the classroom or outside. Teachers often use puzzles or other manipulatives to check a child's knowledge of shapes, etc. All these assessments are conducted within the regular program space and during the typical program hours. In cases where a child's performance on these more formal assessments is not consistent with more informal observations, the assessment will be repeated and/or conducted by another teacher so results can be verified.

Data from both informal and formal assessments are incorporated into the narrative sections of conference reports written by the child's teacher in the fall and spring. (4.E.02). The checklist portion of our conference report is designed to provide a brief overview of the child's development relative to the primary goals within each developmental area as expected for the child's age. Different symbols are used to designate a child's progress.

HeartPrints' assessments and conference forms are sensitive to diversity in the following ways (4.B.01). Assessments involve only activities that are familiar to the children, and every effort is made to eliminate verbal directions that might not be understood by a child with a language disability or limited English proficiency. Teachers may eliminate from the conference report any items that cannot be fairly assessed because of the child's language abilities. Conference forms are routinely adapted for children with special needs at the level that qualifies them for the support of itinerant therapists or full-time therapeutic support staff. In these cases, a level of independence rating is often added to the proficiency rating.

Teachers will incorporate the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards and the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards in the ongoing assessment of children's development and learning. HeartPrints will also employ our own written assessment tools to evaluate each child's individual growth and will be discussed with parents at parent conferences.

HeartPrints does not conduct any norm-referenced or standardized assessments of preschool children for comparison purposes (4.B.03). At present, we are using the assessments above, together with our professional judgment, rather than a standardized screening to determine whether to recommend that further professional screening should be initiated (4.C.01). Children in the Kindergarten class participate in the national DIBELS Assessment three times per year.

Child Assessment:

Assessment is defined as the continual process of observing, recording and documenting the work that children do and how they do it, as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child. All children attending HeartPrints will be assessed on a regular basis to ensure their individual needs are being met and to ensure that our curriculum is responsive and effective in meeting the needs of all children enrolled in our programs.

Our staff has selected a variety of tools to ensure that all children will be assessed accurately. These assessment tools include:

- Observation by classroom teachers – daily
- Documentation by classroom teachers - daily
- HeartPrints' Growth Profile – completed in Fall and Spring for Parent Conferences
- Individual Child Portfolios – include work samples, photographs and documentation of classroom activities reflecting each child's overall development
- Family Conferences – in Fall and Spring or upon request
- Family input – Our teachers encourage families to share information about their child with teachers on a regular basis through conversations, emails or notes.
- Reflections by children – Children will receive consistent opportunities to evaluate their learning.
- Child Observation Forms

Copies of the HeartPrints' Growth Profile will be kept in your child's file within the HeartPrints' office. All child files are confidential and will not be shared with other sources without the written consent of the child's parent or guardian.

Uses of Assessment Results (4.B.05)

Results of HeartPrints' assessments are primarily used to shape the current year's program planning and to discuss individual children's developmental progress with families so that we can work together to best support each child's growth. In addition, the group results impact the school's quality improvement process via each teaching team's annual evaluation and the whole school annual evaluation, both of which are conducted in May in preparation for enhancements implemented for the next school year (10.B.07, 10.F.01).

Confidentiality (4.E.07):

Because the staff at HeartPrints works as a team, each adult knows and interacts with every child. Therefore, all observations and other assessment data may be shared with all staff members. Information about family situations, special needs, and other sensitive issues is shared on an as needed basis. Volunteers and other adults working within the school are only informed of such sensitive issues when they are a part of keeping the child safe or support the child's inclusion.

All adults working in HeartPrints sign the following confidentiality agreement.

As an adult working and/or regularly volunteering at HeartPrints, I may become privy to confidential information regarding children and families. It is of the utmost importance that I realize that all such information is strictly personal and confidential and can only be shared within the confines of HeartPrints. I will discuss children's behavior out of the hearing distance of the children, and I will discuss the families, children, and staff for professional purposes only. When I encounter families, children, and staff outside the school, I will be courteous but use discretion. I understand that written authorization is required before disclosing any information regarding a child to an outside agency or individual. I know that confidentiality is an ethical obligation and that it is a requirement for my continued involvement at HeartPrints. By signing this statement, I agree to understand and practice the HeartPrints' confidentiality policy at all times.

In accordance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines, official written records for each child are kept in files in a locked file cabinet in the HeartPrints' office and released only to the individuals working with a child, as described above, or those for whom parents have signed a written release (7.C.08). These files include enrollment forms, final conference reports, health assessments provided by physicians, results of health screenings conducted at school after parent authorization, reports of diagnostic assessments released to the school by parents, individual education plans, etc. Staff documentation of children's behavior and development, including specialized records for children whose special circumstances require extra classroom documentation are kept in classroom locations accessible to teachers but out of the reach of children and out of sight of classroom visitors.

Teacher Qualifications:

All our lead teachers have met the qualifications outlined by NAEYC, the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This means that they have degrees in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Child Development, or a related field, or they have become qualified by providing verification of credit hours within the field of early childhood education. Staff members submit and update all clearances recommended by the state.

Interaction Guidelines (7.A.01):

Staff members adhere to the ethical principles of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (6.A.01). We share the following core values as guides for interactions among staff members, between staff and children, between staff and families, between staff and community representatives.

- We strive to respect each individual and work to create a positive emotional climate for all learners, with sensitivity to differences in age, ability, background, language, culture, religion, and family structure.
- We use direct eye contact, smiles, warm tones of voice, positive touch, social conversations, and joint laughter to support the development of effective working relationships.
- Our partnership in learning is supported by regular, reciprocal communication; affirming recognition of effort and accomplishment; predictable developmentally appropriate responsiveness to initiative, emotion, and concerns; and proactive conflict resolution.
- We are committed to reaching out to people of different races, genders, ethnicity, and ability, and we strive to create an environment of inclusion that celebrates our differences and highlights our commonalities (3.F.03). Our program accepts children with special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided for the child consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (9.C.03). Our desire is to build positive relationships with all learning partners by appropriately balancing quality of care for the group with services tailored to individual needs. Our goal is to develop the school's caring community for learning through broad participation and involvement in program improvement for all of our staff and families.

We make every effort for all children to know and be known by all adults in our open environment so that they are comfortable interacting with and receiving assistance from any adult. Each preschool classroom has two or three teachers and our kindergarten classroom has two teachers. Each child will be assigned to a small group led by a teacher who will remain their small group teacher for the school year. Because our program runs on an academic calendar, children typically stay in the same class with the same staff from August through June (10.B.14). Children may stay with the same class and teachers for several years.

When absences are planned in advance, we recruit substitutes who have long-term familiarity with our program and/or use a teacher working in another classroom. Our administrative assistant is also qualified as a substitute teacher and can fill in when needed.

Communication:

Ongoing effective communication with families is critical to the overall success of our programs. Please note several key methods we will use to communicate effectively with you.

Cubbies: Each child will be assigned a cubby. Children will use this cubby to store their coats and other personal belongings from home. Teachers will use the shelf in this cubby to send home parent newsletters as well as items children have worked on in preschool. If you decide to use a backpack to transport these items to and from HeartPrints, please make sure that it is clearly marked on the outside with your child's name.

Parent Board: Inside all classrooms, you will find Parent Information Boards. Please take time each week to check these boards for information regarding special programming, volunteer opportunities, and Regional Learning Alliance news. Current pictures of classroom activities will also be posted on these boards. Some classes have large rolodex files in their rooms or hallways displaying this information.

Website and Email Notifications: Important information pertaining to our programs including current photographs of children will be sent to families via our SeeSaw App. We encourage families to visit our website on a regular basis and to use our email, hpc@heartprintsed.org, to ask questions or communicate information with our staff. "Like us" on Facebook to receive the most updated information.

Orientation for Children:

The entry process is carefully planned to make the children's first days of school as comfortable and secure as possible. Before the beginning of the school year, your child will receive a special letter from the teachers to visit the classroom and meet the staff. The child's first school experience for the year, Open House, is a visit with a family member or caregiver to become familiar with the space, the teachers, and other members of the school community.

Parents and teachers collaborate on individualized plans for children whose separation requires more transition time. Parents are welcome to stay with their children or to wait if they are concerned about their child's transition. If families believe transition into school might be problematic, they are encouraged to make plans regarding transition preferences before the school year

begins. During children's first days of school, HeartPrints will increase the number of staff available within each classroom to assist with children's transitions.

Routines and Transitions (3.D.01):

All families will enter our classrooms through their designated class door. Children will exit their classroom directly from their individual classroom. Please do not arrive earlier than five minutes before drop off and pick up. This helps with congestion by the doors.

Arrival: For your child's safety, we require that you or another authorized adult bring your child into the classroom each morning or afternoon, help them wash hands, and help them get settled. Be certain that the teacher is aware of your child's arrival before leaving.

If you will be away from home or work during the day, please be certain that the teachers have a phone number where you can be reached in case of a medical emergency.

Please bring your child no more than five minutes before class begins and do not enter the classroom until a teacher opens the door. We ask that you be prompt at both arrival and dismissal to allow teaching staff ample time to prepare the classroom. Class times may be extended on field trip days.

Dismissal: We will only release children to persons authorized on your emergency contact form/agreement form. If we have not met an individual listed on these forms, we will ask for photo identification before we release your child. Please make sure the information on this paperwork is current.

If your child is still in our classroom after closing time and we have not had contact from you, we will take the following steps (in order):

1. Attempt to reach you at home or work.
2. Call individuals listed on your emergency contact and/or agreement forms and ask them to come and pick-up your child.

We ask that morning preschool families be sensitive to the fact that staff must begin immediately after class to prepare our classrooms for afternoon classes. Afternoon families should also be prompt in picking up their children. While we understand that circumstances can arise that cause you to be late for pick-up, a late fee will be applied if families are consistently tardy in picking up their children.

Kindergarten Arrival and Dismissal: Will follow these above procedures but use the door with direct access to the kindergarten classroom.

An important reminder: The Regional Learning Alliance is a partnership of many educational organizations working together to offer educational experiences to both children and adults. Please supervise your children as you enter and exit the building.

We need your assistance with several important matters.

- Families should wait for entrance to our classrooms. Please refrain from roaming around the Regional Learning Alliance. Please do not block any entrances or exits to the RLA building.
- All children need to be supervised in the parking lot area. Children should not be running and/or playing on the sidewalks or parking lots.
- The handicap buttons should be used by individuals who need assistance with opening doors and/or by parents carrying small children or pushing strollers.

Parking: Transporting young children to and from vehicles can be a hectic process. For this reason, we do our best to provide convenient and safe parking arrangements for all families. PLEASE always DRIVE SLOWLY, and please remember that small children are very hard to see around vans and larger vehicles.

Parents may approach HeartPrints from either Freeport Road or Cranberry Woods Drive. Please note that there is no through traffic between these two roads. On most school days, ample parking is available just outside the main entrance of the Regional Learning Alliance.

There are two spaces on each side of the parking lot that have been designated for HeartPrints. They are clearly marked with signs. Throughout the year, the Regional Learning Alliance may schedule conferences that require additional parking spaces. If you are unable to find a convenient parking space, you may park along the yellow curb while you are dropping off or picking up your child.

Note: The Vehicles Law of Pennsylvania states that "a person driving or in charge of a motor vehicle may not permit a child under six years of age to remain unattended in the vehicle when the motor vehicle is out of the person's sight." In addition, the HeartPrints' staff requests that parents do not leave older children in the car while they drop off or pick up their child from our center.

The Preschool/Pre-K Day

Morning Preschool...

Greeting: A teacher will greet each child, family and/or caregiver as they enter our classroom.

Quiet Play/Outdoor Time: After following the arrival routine, children choose from a variety of activity centers or play outdoors depending on the weather.

Meeting Time: Children meet as a classroom community with their teachers to discuss the school day. Conversation, music, movement and discussion are central to meeting time.

Small Group & Planning Time: Children transition into their small groups and work with one teacher. Children make their plans for later play before they transition to snack.

Snack Time: Provided and served by staff.

Free Play: Children follow through with their plans and choose from a variety of activities and centers in the classroom.

Review Time: Children return to their small groups to review their daily plans.

Closing Time: Children return to a large group setting, share a story and summarize their day.

Lunch & Afternoon: Children staying for lunch and/or afternoon classes move into the library as other children are dismissed. When lunches are ready, teachers walk with these children to the lunch tables.

***Afternoon Classes and Morning Preschool Classes follow the same routines.**

**Naps are not a regular part of our program, though children who are tired will be provided a quiet, supervised area for a nap if necessary.*

The Kindergarten Day

Kindergarten weekly schedules are distributed to all families enrolled in our kindergarten. Other interested families can request a copy from the HeartPrints' Office.

Health and Safety Guidelines (9.C.08, 10.D.01):

At all times, health and safety are top priorities at HeartPrints. We ask all parents to work with us to provide a healthy environment for your children. Everyone's vigilance regarding health and safety issues contributes significantly to our effectiveness. Always assume that you are the only one who notices a problem or potential problem and bring it to the attention of a staff person.

Staff Responsibility

Staff members are responsible for maintaining a healthful environment (5.C.01-05). We begin with our own health by submitting biannual health appraisals and following even more strict illness exclusions than those required for children. All staff submit criminal record and child abuse clearances as part of the employment process. We participate in a pediatric first aid/CPR class (5.A.03), fire safety class and review of our emergency procedures. Each classroom has a well-equipped first aid kit which travels with the class (9.C.10). Staff members are responsible for daily checks of their classrooms and shared spaces for hazards such as missing safety covers on outlets, trash and discarded cigarettes or food in the outdoor classroom, etc.

The Regional Learning Alliance is a certified LEED building. These standards are monitored and maintained by the Regional Learning Alliance. Our staff is responsible for notifying the RLA of any building issues within our classroom and outdoor space.

HeartPrints employs a cleaning staff to assist with the NAEYC frequency table for cleaning and sanitation throughout the school, including toys and water play areas (5.C.01, 03, 10). All staff members follow standard precautions to minimize spread of infectious disease (5.C.02) and store hazardous materials in locked cabinets. We follow parent and/or health professional recommendations regarding children who have allergies, and we limit classroom pets (5.C.05). We use the Child Care weather watch chart to determine safe temperatures for outdoor play (5.A.07, 9.D.03). We will apply sun block with a minimum UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 if it is authorized in writing and provided by the family (5.A.07). At this time, our area is not designated by health

authorities as high-risk of insect-borne disease; but if those change, we will use daily application of repellent containing DEET when parents provide written authorization and appropriate repellent (5.A.07).

Because hand washing is the #1 preventative measure to avoid the spread of disease (5.A.09), we explicitly teach, scaffold, and monitor hand-washing procedures that involve the use of liquid soap and running water, with vigorous and thorough rubbing for at least 10 seconds (the length of the alphabet song), followed by paper towel drying and faucet contact. We and the children wash our hands upon entry, before snacks and meals, before and after food preparation, after toileting and diapering, after contact with bodily fluids, after play in the water table, and after re-entry from the outdoor classroom, as well as after any messy activities or contact with pets. Adults also wash their hands after assisting with toileting, handling garbage or cleaning, and before and after feeding a child or administering medication.

HeartPrints contacts with outside agencies to provide annual hearing/speech/language screening (4.C.01). Participation in this optional service requires permission from a parent or guardian, as well as a fee determined by the agency.

Staffing & Supervision

We maintain required staff: child ratios at all times and better ratios most of the time (10.B.12). Our staff: child ratio for all classes is a minimum of 1:8. These ratios are applicable both indoors and outdoors.

At any time, when children are present in the school, there are at least two staff present. Staff members, as a group, supervise children primarily by sight (3.C.04). Classroom space is designed so that there are no areas of the room where children can hide.

Illness & Injury (5.A.04)

Staff members greet children at the beginning of the day, monitoring their appearance as they enter and throughout the day. Children who become sick at school are removed from the group and cared for until parents can be contacted to come for the child.

Young children often experience falls or bumps during the day. Usually, they do not result in injury and are handled with simple comfort, a drink of water, or a sympathetic band aid or ice pack (i.e., not necessary but comforting). When children sustain a cut, bruise, or other injury, staff members will provide treatment according to procedures specified in our pediatric first aid training (10.d.09). They will verbally report the injury to parents, guardians, or caregivers, recommend treatment by a medical professional if appropriate, and complete an injury report within one day. Copies will be given to the family and placed in the child's file.

Parents or guardians will be notified immediately in case of a more serious accident and prompt action will be taken by contacting emergency personnel. If necessary, we will accompany the child to the hospital preferred by the family in an ambulance. In these instances, injury reports are supplemented by the EMS report.

Family Responsibility

As a part of the enrollment process, families must complete an emergency contact form giving permission for staff members to administer basic first aid to their child and to contact EMS for more advanced care. Review of this information is required every 6 months. Families take responsibility for updating this form whenever there is a change in the emergency contact information. Additional consent forms are required for the administration of medication and sunscreen application or the use of hand sanitizer.

HeartPrints requires that a yearly health appraisal, signed by a physician, must be on file for all students (5.A.11). This includes making sure that your child has an annual physical and is properly immunized for their protection. Children who do not have current health assessments and immunizations records on file within their first 30 days of school will not be permitted access to our programs until this information is current. Parents must submit an updated health form after the initial yearly well-child checkup (10.D.05). Parents of children with allergies must meet with the director to provide guidelines with detail regarding provision and storage of special foods, necessary adaptations of activities or environment, response staff should take in the event of an allergic reaction, and any necessary staff training (5.C.04, 9.D.07). Parents of children with other special needs should contact the director or assistant director for guidance regarding necessary documentation and advance planning with the staff.

Sick Children (5.A.04)

HeartPrints relies on family members' thoughtful assessment of each child's health before sending him or her to school. Please keep your child at home if any of the following symptoms are evident. Any of these may indicate the beginning of an illness, which might be easily communicated to other children.

- Oral temperature above 99 degrees within the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea

- Rash, bump, or other out-of-the-ordinary skin conditions
- Flushed face, watery or glossy eyes
- Excessive running nose
- Deep or dry cough
- Continuous sneezing
- Sore throat
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours
- Unusual irritability listlessness, fatigue

Please be advised that if your child's health condition interferes with classroom activities or requires a staff member to care for their symptoms, then you will be asked to pick up your child. If necessary, the teacher has the right to refuse admission to any child she/he believes is sick or who could be contagious.

When your child will not be in school, please call at 724-741-1008 or send us an email at hpc@heartprintsed.org or on See-Saw.

Contagious Diseases: We will try to notify all parents in a class if a contagious disease is a possibility (5.A.05). To minimize the spread of diseases such as pink eye or chicken pox please notify the office at once. Speak to your doctor to determine when your child can return to class.

Medication: If medication is to be administered, please complete, and sign a medical instruction form. Medication can only be accepted in its original container, and our staff can only administer prescription medication with written instructions from the doctor on a prescription form (5.A.11, 10.D.10). For the safety of all our children, please do not leave medication in book bags.

Weather Cancellations:

Decisions to cancel classes are based primarily upon the decisions made by our surrounding school districts. Reasons for cancellations include transportation safety issues and severe weather such as storms, snow and/or severe temperatures.

HeartPrints has built snow days into tuition cost. If the number of cancelled days exceeds the number of built-in days, families will be contacted with a compensation plan.

Listen to KDKA, WTAE or WPXI for class cancellations or delays due to severe weather.

We will also send a weather information message to families through our email system and on SeeSaw. Parents are always encouraged to use their own discretion when it comes to bringing their child to school on a snowy day.

Emergency Preparedness Plan (10.D.08):

In compliance with federal law, HeartPrints has a current emergency preparedness plan. A copy of this plan is available in the Birch Room and the school office. This plan outlines all plans for taking care of the children in our center in the event of severe weather, a building emergency, an environmental emergency, and/or a terrorist threat. Each family will receive a letter designating our emergency relocation site at the beginning of each school year.

Closures Due to Health Pandemic or Natural Disaster:

In the case of a health pandemic or natural disaster which require HeartPrints Center to close, teachers will provide children with learning activities to complete at home. Tuition will not be refunded if the school is required to close due to a health pandemic or natural disaster. In compliance with our withdrawal policy, written notice is required to withdrawal a student and receive pre-paid tuition paid beyond 30 days. Re-enrolled later is based on availability.

Parents will be notified of any changes to school procedures and policies because of Health Pandemic or Natural Disaster.

HeartPrints' is not responsible for any damages caused by a Health Pandemic or Natural Disaster.

Snacks & Lunches (5.B.02):

We will provide a daily snack to children attending our programs. Our staff selects healthy snacks including fruits, vegetables, and grains. If your child has food allergies, please make sure that you indicate these allergies on the Child and Family Information Sheet. Snack selections will satisfy the dietary needs of all children enrolled in our center.

HeartPrints is a peanut-free & tree-nut environment. If you are sending a lunch to school with your child, please remember peanut butter, peanuts and other tree nut products are not permitted in our classroom because they are life-threatening to children enrolled in our programs. Our teachers will be happy to help you select alternative menu items. Families provide lunches in labeled lunchboxes for children. We are equipped with a refrigerator and a microwave oven. Children are not permitted to share foods from their lunchboxes with other children.

The Child's Belongings:

Please send your child to HeartPrints in play clothes that are comfortable and appropriate for the season. While we do order washable paint and art supplies - learning, growing, and playing can be messy business! We want children to be totally involved in their learning experiences without undue concern for special clothing. We recommend comfortable, washable clothes and sturdy shoes. Sneakers are the preferred footwear as flip-flops, crocs, or clogs are difficult to run and climb in. We often visit a nearby creek. Children are encouraged to leave a change of shoes/boots at school that can get wet.

Because we know that drink spills, paint spills, collisions, nosebleeds, toileting accidents and upset stomachs are frequent occurrences in the lives of young children, **we ask parents to send in a change of clothing for their child.** Children can become upset when these unexpected occurrences interrupt their day, and a set of their own clothing can be comforting. Please place these clothes in a clear plastic shoebox (provided by HeartPrints). Please note that the temperature within our classrooms fluctuates. We highly recommend adding a sweater to your child's clothing box.

Children attending HeartPrints will play outdoors if the weather permits. Children may be taken outdoors for play and walks in cold, snowy weather if the temperature is above 30 degrees. Please make sure that your child brings the clothing necessary to play outdoors.

All additional clothing and belongings such as jackets, boots, hats, mittens, and book bags should be clearly labeled with the child's name. Please avoid necklaces, rings and bracelets or other items that can be easily lost. If your child believes he/she needs to bring toys or books to school, please make sure they are clearly labeled.

Holidays, Birthdays & Special Events:

At HeartPrints, holidays are viewed as educational opportunities that give us the chance to learn about our diverse school community (3.F.03). As part of our emphasis on family identity and respect for diversity, we encourage children to talk about their family traditions, and we share stories related to the meaning of holidays. We plan age-appropriate activities to involve the children in preparing simple school celebrations and to help them contribute to family events. We limit school celebrations to specific times and blend them into our regular school routines.

Heritage and Holiday Celebrations: Our teaching staff makes every effort to encourage families to share their heritage and holidays. If your family would like to share aspects of your culture and family traditions within your child's class, please set a time to meet with the staff to plan the experience.

Birthdays: Your child's birthday will be a big day at HeartPrints. Our staff will help your child select several favorite HeartPrints' classroom activities to commemorate this special occasion. Your child might want to bring in a favorite story from home to share with classmates. We encourage parents to join in the celebration by sharing part or all day with us.

Because we are an allergy-sensitive and peanut/tree-nut free preschool, families may not send in any non-edible treats.

Field Trips (8.B.02, 9.C.15): The preschool offers field trips as opportunities to extend classroom learning. Destinations will vary from year to year, depending on availability and topics currently of interest to the children.

Our standard policy is that adult family members will transport their children to the field trip location or HeartPrints will arrange transportation with a licensed transportation company. Our teachers are not allowed to transport students in their vehicles (10.D.07). If necessary, a child may be transported to a field trip by another parent. Parents are required to make these arrangements and notify the HeartPrints staff of the arrangements. All parents will receive a permission form stating the date, time, and location of the field trips. Parents will need to sign and return the permission form to the HeartPrints staff.

When parents are asked to help with transportation and supervision, they must keep a copy of their driver's license and proof of insurance in the HeartPrints office. Parent drivers will also observe all PA laws regarding child restraint in a motor vehicle (9.C.15). The HeartPrints staff will provide for an additional vehicle on all field trips in case the need for emergency transportation arises. During the field trip, our staff will carry a completed parental permission form for each child in attendance. A ratio of no greater than one adult/three children will be observed on each field trip.

In House Visits: Sometimes we do in house field trips at HeartPrints. We also enjoy visits with special friends from our local community and our worldwide community.

Guidance (1.E, 1.F):

Our teachers realize that social skills are complicated and take into adulthood to fully learn. Teachers believe in the positive potential of each child and implement a comprehensive approach in working with young children as they develop self-control and respect for others. Through the guidance process, children develop the ability to employ constructive behaviors instead of mistaken behaviors in managing conflict situations.

The teachers are trained to implement six essential steps in helping children manage conflicts. This conflict management strategy, designed by High/Scope, supports young children as they grow into active problem solvers.

The six steps in the High/Scope approach to resolving conflict include:

1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.
 - Place yourself between the children, on their level.
 - Use a calm voice.
 - Remain neutral rather than take sides.
2. Acknowledge children's feelings.
 - "You look really upset."
 - Let children know you need to hold any object in question.
3. Gather information.
 - "What's the problem?"
4. Restate the problem.
 - "So, the problem is..."
5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together.
 - "What can we do to solve this problem?"
 - Encourage children to think of a solution together.
6. Be prepared to give follow-up support.
 - "You solved this problem!"
 - Stay near the children.

Non-Violence Policy/Toys: HeartPrints supports a loving, peaceful environment. We do not allow toys or books of a violent nature in our school. Examples are guns, war-related items or any type of weapon. If children come to school with such weapons, teachers will ask families to take the weapons with them upon leaving.

Staff shall observe all children and document any problem behavior to help ascertain any patterns re: events, activities, and interactions, as well as any precipitating contextual factors. If a child's behavior problem persists or becomes dangerous to the other children in the class, the teacher will bring the child to a quiet area to regain composure and talk. Such situations are rare at HeartPrints and are discussed thoroughly with the child, the teacher, and the family to determine positive steps toward a solution. Families are referred to specialists for help with persistent problems that may be linked to developmental issues, with the goal being to support the child's successful inclusion in the classroom.

Parent Concerns:

Occasionally, interpersonal conflicts or misunderstandings can occur between parents and staff. Working together, we are confident that any concern can be heard and addressed. If you experience a conflict with another parent or member of the HeartPrints staff, we encourage you to voice your concern in private conversation with that parent or staff member. If you feel that further conversation or remedy is necessary, please speak with the HeartPrints Director. In an unusual situation, if you feel that the Director is not able to sufficiently address your concerns, please contact a member of the HeartPrints' Board of Directors.

Security Policies:

Your child's safety and the safety of all our children, parents, and staff, are of the utmost importance. With this in mind, we have put several procedures into place. Please cooperate with the teaching staff to help enforce the following safety measures.

Parental Supervision: While your child is with you in the hall before entering or upon leaving the classroom, the safety and care of your child is your personal responsibility. Please note that the Regional Learning Alliance can be a busy place.

Emergency Contact Procedures: Parents are asked at registration to provide a list of all adults who will regularly pick up your child and a list of individuals who are permitted to pick up your child in an emergency. It is important that the teacher be informed in writing if someone other than a designated person is picking up your child. Parents are advised to review their emergency contact list throughout the school year.

Prohibited Practices & Reporting Child Abuse (10.D.03-04)

If any staff member or person from the child's family, while in the vicinity of HeartPrints, engages in a practice prohibited by the program, the Director and/or Assistant Director will take necessary steps to assure that there is not a reoccurrence of the practice. Prohibited practices include:

- Corporal or any type of physical punishment including hitting, spanking, beating, shaking, pinching, or other measures that produce physical pain
- Withdrawal or the threat of withdrawal of food, rest, or bathroom opportunities
- Abusive, profane, or derogatory language, including yelling and belittling
- Public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment
- Emotional abuse, including rejecting, terrorizing, isolating, or corrupting a child

All observations or suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the child protective services agency no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The Director or Assistant Director will call 412-355-5701 to report suspected abuse or neglect. The Director will follow the direction of the children protective services agency regarding completion of written reports. If the parent or legal guardian is suspected of abuse, the Director or Assistant Director will follow the guidance of the child protective agency regarding notification of the parent or legal guardian.

A staff member who is accused of child abuse may be suspended or given leave without pay pending investigation of the accusation. Such caregivers may also be removed from the classroom and given a job that does not require interaction with children. Parents or legal guardians of suspected abused children will be notified. Parents or legal guardians of other children in the program will be contacted by the Director or Assistant Director if a caregiver is suspected of abuse so that they may share any concerns they have had. However, no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Caregivers found guilty of child abuse will be summarily dismissed or relieved of their duties.

Nondiscrimination in Services Policy Statements:

SUBJECT: Nondiscrimination Policy Statement
Equal Employment Opportunity

TO: Staff

FROM: Mary Grace Byrnes
Executive Director, HeartPrints Center for Early Education

An open and equitable personnel system will be established and maintained. Personnel policies, procedures and practices will be designed to prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age, or sex.

Employment opportunities shall be provided for applicants with disabilities and reasonable accommodation(s) shall be made to meet the physical or mental limitations of qualified applicants or employees.

Any employee, who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with any of the following:

HeartPrints Center for Early Education
850 Cranberry Woods Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Room 225, Health & Welfare Building
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17110

PA Human Relations Commission
Pittsburgh Regional Office
301 Fifth Avenue
Suite 390, Piatt Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Western Regional Office
301 Fifth Ave Suite 410 Piatt Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-1210

U.S. Department of Health & Human
Services
Office of Civil Rights
Suite 372, Public Ledger Building
150 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

Revised July 2022

SUBJECT: Nondiscrimination in Services
TO: Clients/Parents
FROM: Mary Grace Byrnes
Executive Director, HeartPrints Center for Early Education

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to; equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any individual/client/student (and/or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with:

HeartPrints Center for Early Education
850 Cranberry Woods Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Room 225, Health & Welfare Building
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17110

PA Human Relations Commission
Pittsburgh Regional Office
301 Fifth Avenue
Suite 390, Piatt Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Western Regional Office
301 Fifth Ave Suite 410 Piatt Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-1210

U.S. Department of Health & Human
Services
Office of Civil Rights
Suite 372, Public Ledger Building
150 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

Revised July 2022

Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma) Prevention Policy

This policy is designed to prevent the possibility of abusive head trauma during care. Abusive head trauma (also referred to as Shaken Baby Syndrome) occurs in infants and young children, whose neck muscles are not well-developed and whose heads are larger relative to their bodies. As a result, they are especially susceptible to head trauma caused by any type of forceful or sudden shaking, with or without blunt impact. Damage can occur in as little as 5 seconds.

Abusive head trauma can occur in children up to 5 years of age; however, infants less than one year are at greater risk of injury. Shaken baby syndrome can lead to serious conditions including:

- Brain damage, problems with memory and attention, cerebral palsy;
- Blindness or hearing loss;
- Intellectual, speech or learning disabilities; and
- Developmental delays.

Signs and Symptoms

The signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome or head trauma include:

- Seizures;
- Bruises;
- Lack of appetite, vomiting, or difficulty sucking or swallowing;
- Lack of smiling or vocalizing;
- Rigidity, inability to lift the head;
- Difficulty staying awake, altered consciousness;
- Difficulty breathing, blue color due to lack of oxygen;
- Unequal pupil size, inability to focus the eyes or track movement; or
- Irritability.

Injury Prevention

Infant crying is normal behavior, which improves as a child ages. Caregivers should develop proactive strategies to manage stress levels and appropriate responses to a crying child. This includes being self-aware and noticing when the caregiver may become frustrated or angry. Parents/guardians, caregivers and coworkers should discuss what calming strategies are successful with a particular child at home or in the center.

Emergency Response

If a child presents any of the above symptoms or you suspect a baby has suffered abusive head trauma:

- Call 911, call the parent/guardian and inform your director and regional manager.
- Report to the appropriate child protective services agency (or law enforcement, if applicable) within 24 hours or less as required by law. See *Child Abuse/Neglect and Mandated Reporting Policy and Procedure* for further information.
- See *Medical Emergencies-Calling 911* for additional information.

Strategies for Caregivers and Parents

A child is usually shaken out of frustration, often when the child is persistently crying or irritable. The following strategies may work some of the time; but sometimes nothing will comfort a crying child. **A teacher should seek support from a coworker or center management.** If a child is inconsolable on a regular basis, the director and regional manager should be notified and determine if the right supports are in place for the child and for staff.

Do:

- Hand the child to another caregiver.
- Place the child somewhere safe in the classroom (or home) and call the office (or a neighbor) for support; take deep breaths and count to 10.
- Check to see if the baby's diaper needs changing.
- Give the baby a bottle. If baby readily takes bottle, feed slowly stopping to burp often. **Do not force the baby to eat.**
- Check for signs of illness and call the parent if you suspect the child is sick.
- Give baby a pacifier.
- Hold the baby close against your body and breathe calmly and slowly.
- Gently rock the baby using slow, rhythmic movements.
- Sing to the baby or play soft, soothing music.
- Use "white noise" or rhythmic sounds that mimic the constant whir of noise in the womb
- Hold the baby on its side or stomach position to help with digestion. **Babies should always be placed on their backs to sleep.**
- Take the baby for a walk indoors or outside for a ride in the stroller.
- Be patient: let the baby cry it out if necessary.

Never:

- Shake a child.
- Drop a child.
- Throw a child into the air or into a crib, chair, or car seat.
- Push a child into any object including walls, doors, and furniture.
- Strike a child's head, directly or indirectly.

Resources

In addition to any required state training, the following resources are available to parents/guardians and staff:

Websites:

Abusive Head Trauma-How to Protect Your Baby <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Abusive-Head-Trauma-Shaken-Baby-Syndrome.aspx>

National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome
<https://www.dontshake.org/>

Mary Ann Tocio University (MATU) Resources (can be printed for parents):

Introduction to Early Brain Development

https://mybrightweb.brighthorizons.com/EducationPortal/Supplemental%20Materials/ILM_Brain%20Development.pdf

Independent Learning Module: Infant Development

<https://mybrightweb.brighthorizons.com/EducationPortal/Supplemental%20Materials/ILM%20Infant%20Development.pdf>

Growing World of Toddlers

<https://mybrightweb.brighthorizons.com/EducationPortal/Supplemental%20Materials/ILM-Toddler%20Development.pdf>

Early Brain Development Research Review and Update, Exchange Magazine

<https://mybrightweb.brighthorizons.com/EducationPortal/Supplemental%20Materials/Early%20Brain%20Development%20Research%20Review%20and%20Update-Pam%20Schiller.pdf>

Related Policies and Procedures

- *Child Abuse/Neglect and Mandated Reporting Policy and Procedure*
- *Medical Emergencies-Calling 911*
- *Safe Infant and Toddler Handling Procedure*