



## Policies and Procedures

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Teacher Responsibilities.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Cell Phone Usage.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Classroom Supervision.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Classroom Schedules.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Curriculum.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Discipline.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Play.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Sleep.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Meals.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Health and Hygeine.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Diaper Changes.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Toileting.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Handwashing/Gloves.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Communicating with Parents.....</b>	<b>6</b>

# Introduction

At Willow and Oak Early Learning Center, we pride ourselves on providing high-quality care to the children we serve. To ensure that we are consistently conducting ourselves in a manner that is in alignment with our core values and beliefs, the following policies and procedures will govern and guide our actions. They have been derived from Bulletin 137: Louisiana Early Learning Licensing Regulations, the NAEYC, and the latest industry research.

These policies cover expectations in regards to every aspect of our business and will keep us on track for our center's goal of NAEYC accreditation.

Failure to adhere to these policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

# Teacher Responsibilities

## Classroom Supervision

- No child should ever be left unsupervised for any amount of time.
- When preparing activities, cleaning, changing diapers, et cetera, teachers should position themselves so that they are able to scan the classroom as they work
- Care should be taken to ensure that all materials that are introduced to the children are age-appropriate and meet safety standards (ex: do not present a choking/strangulation hazard, etc)
- When children are engaged in an free play or an activity, the teacher(s) should be actively moving among the children, asking questions, making observations, gauging attention/interest, and monitoring behaviors
- TV usage should be limited to playing music (without video), except as an occasional treat. All media should be rated "E" or "G". Music should be specifically children's music or classical/instrumental.

## Cell Phone Usage

- Cell phone use in the classroom should be limited to using the Child Pilot app to log children's activities
- At naptime, cell phones may be used if
  - All children are sleeping, and
  - All other classroom duties have been completed

## Cleaning and Organization

- Before leaving for the day, each teacher is responsible for ensuring that toys are put away and the classroom is left organized and ready for the next day.
- Toys that are visible dirty or have been mouthed should be cleaned and disinfected before leaving for the day
- Before each classroom is closed for the day, hard surfaces such as cribs, bouncers, tables, chairs, etc should be cleaned, sprayed with bleach water, and then left to air dry
- Bleach water for each classroom should be refreshed daily and kept in a locked cabinet

## Lesson Planning/Curriculum

- Formal lesson plans are discouraged
- We are not a preschool, and our ultimate goal is NOT to get children ready for kindergarten. Our goal is to provide children with the environment and opportunities to meet them where they are and to allow them to meet age and developmentally appropriate milestones. We want to allow them to be the age that they are.

- We will use a play-based approach to curriculum. The children will have access to a wide variety of age and developmentally appropriate materials. Certain 'centers' or materials may be swapped out to match holidays or themes in which the children show interest.
- Children should not be taught using the methods or approaches that may be found in a typical kindergarten or pre-kindergarten classroom. Circle times, storytimes, worksheets are discouraged as whole-group activities. If they are offered to children, it should be set up in an appropriate area so that children can join or leave at will.
- We are not a 'school' and our goal is not to have children master academic skills. Instead, our focus is on:
  - Fostering social skills
  - Building emotional regulation skills
  - Building problem-solving skills
  - Fostering imagination and creativity
  - Promoting curiosity and knowledge-seeking
  - Fostering collaboration and cooperation
  - Building independence and confidence

## Classroom Schedules

Teachers should adhere to the same general schedule each day, so that children gain a sense of predictability and stability within their days. Because children (and other circumstances) may sometimes be unpredictable, it is important to be flexible and adaptable, but in general, the following schedule should be used as a framework for the day:

### **Infant room**

- Infants should be allowed to eat, sleep, and play within their own schedules.
- Breakfast, lunch, and snacks for those who are on solid foods will be served at the same time as for the other classrooms
- Care should be taken to understand and watch for sleep/hunger cues and to follow the general guidance on wake windows for each age range

### **Toddler Room and Preschool Room**

6:30 - 7:45 : intake  
 7:45 - 8:00 : transfer into individual classrooms, wash hands  
 8:00 - 8:30 : breakfast  
 8:30 - 9:00 : diapers and bathrooms while children are allowed to play  
 9:00 - 9:45 : outside play (weather permitting)  
 9:45 - 10:45 : indoor play  
 10:45 - 11:00 : diapers and bathrooms, handwashing  
 11:00 - 11:30 : lunch and clean up  
 11:30 - 11:45 : setting out mats and settling down (storytime encouraged)  
 11:45 - 2:00 : lights out/naptime  
 2:00 - 2:30 : waking up, picking up mats, diapers and bathrooms

2:30 - 3:00 : snack time

3:00 - 4:30 : indoor and/or outdoor play

\*from here, once numbers are low enough, we will begin consolidating classrooms

5:30 - closing procedures

## Discipline

- As a center, we are dedicated to following the principles of positive behavior guidance. We seek to use instances of 'misbehavior' to teach the skills that are needed in a given situation and to look for the root causes of behavior so that children's needs can be met in appropriate ways.
- Firm, but kind, is our guiding principle.
- We want children to get creative and to use their imagination, and we want to keep them safe. Climbing on top of tables, standing on chairs, and climbing shelves should be discouraged and children should be redirected to areas in which they can climb safely.
  - Most other uses of classroom materials - playing under the table or moving chairs away from the table (with the exception of at mealtimes), using materials in new or inventive ways, moving materials around the classrooms, etc should not be discouraged
  - Some measure of risky play is a necessary part of physical development for young children. Staying close, offering reminders to be sure their body feels steady (avoid saying be careful - that doesn't help them), ensuring there are soft mats, etc on the ground, can be used to help minimize injuries.
- Time-outs should not be used. If consistent redirection is not helping AND a child is at risk of harming themselves or others, they can be removed from the situation for one minute per year of age (for children two and older) WITH an adult to help them calm/co-regulate.
- Verbal abuse (yelling, derogatory remarks, negative or sarcastic remarks, etc) should never be used. This includes asking questions about a child's behavior that they are not equipped to answer (i.e. : "Why would you do that?" "What's wrong with you?" or "You always.../You never...")
  - Teachers and staff should be objective when addressing unwanted behaviors, and be clear about the boundaries and the available options.
    - For example, "You threw that block. That's not safe. You can stack the blocks, or we can go throw the snowballs instead. Which do you want to do?"
- When a child is in the middle of a tantrum or is visibly upset, the primary focus should first be on being a calm presence to help them regulate and calm down. Mid-tantrum is not the time for correction. Redirection, correction, or guidance should only happen AFTER the child has calmed and is able to be spoken to. Attempting to reason with or redirect a child who is in a heightened emotional state only makes things worse.
- A child should not be shamed or fussed for crying. Even if the reason seems as if it is insignificant or as if the behavior is attention-seeking, the child should be comforted. Children are not manipulative, and attention is a basic human need. Their needs for comfort, attention, and connection should always be met.

- Kindness and grace should always take the lead. No one knows the full story of what happens in a child's life when they are not in our care, and therefore, we strive to provide a consistent environment that is physically and emotionally safe for everyone.

\*\* Our goal is to keep the classrooms a calm, positive place, and this necessitates calm, positive teachers. If you feel that you are losing your calm, and need a few minutes to gather yourself, please reach out to the owner/director/other support staff. All reasonable efforts will be made to give a ten/fifteen minute break so that you can be there for the children in the way they deserve.

\*\*

## Play

- Play is vital to childhood. Children are hardwired to learn through play, and should have ample time everyday to play freely.
- Play should always be carefully supervised, but teachers should strive to create a balance between engaging with children in their play when invited and allowing them to play with minimal interruptions or interference.
- With the exceptions of meal times and naptimes, children should have free reign to play with all materials in the classroom that are meant for play. "Centers" may be used for storage purposes or to invite children into play, but materials should not be restricted to arbitrary areas of the classroom - children should be free to move and play freely.
- There should be no timers for using a specific toy or set of toys, nor should there be a limit on how many children is allowed to play in a given space. If the space does not allow for everyone to play comfortably, children should be engaged in the problem solving process to move the play to somewhere where all who want to play can be included
- Children should be encouraged to be creative, follow their ideas, and engage deeply in their play

## Sharing and Playing Together

- Sharing does not mean that a child has to give up a toy they are using simply because someone else wants a turn. If they are playing with something, they should be allowed to play until they are done.
- Not all children will always want to play with everyone. That's normal, and okay. Kindness and kind words should always be encouraged, but children should not be forced to play together.
- *I truly hate the "sharing is caring" phrase.* It places a priority on the child who wants what another has, and disregards the feelings of the child who is initially playing with what someone else wants.
  - The children we teach are not cognitively able to comprehend sharing as an adult would. We can't force this - it's a naturally developing skill that we can only model

- Patience is important, and it's a learned skill. So is not getting what we want. It's okay to be sympathetic and validate that it's hard to be patient and it's hard to not get what we want, but we don't have to fix that for the child.

## Sleep

### **For the Infant Room:**

- Infants will be allowed to sleep according to their own sleep schedules.
- Safe sleep practices must be followed at all times. This means that all naps must be taken in the cribs, with infants placed on their backs, with no loose blankets or other items. If infants fall asleep in a swing, bouncer, etc, they should be moved to a crib. Care should be taken to track each infant's sleep schedule and wake windows and watch for cues that they are getting sleepy, so that they can be offered a nap in their crib.
- Each child should have an assigned crib; cribs should not be shared. Nothing should be stored in cribs (bouncers, toys, etc)
- Crib sheets should be washed (or if in the case of sensitivities to our detergent) sent home to be washed no less than once a week. For all sheets that are to be washed on-site, please see the washing schedule.
  - Children who have sensitivities to our detergents should keep a spare crib sheet that has been washed in their home detergent in their cubbies, in case of soiling in between regular washes. Crib sheets should be sent home on Fridays for washing.
- Information about each child's sleep schedule will be gathered from parents. This information should be kept easily accessible for reference as needed.

### **For all other classrooms:**

- Children will be offered a nap on the provided cots/mats with a blanket that they bring from home. Naptime will begin after lunch, at approximately 12:00pm, and last until 2:00pm.
- Blankets will be washed no less than once per week. If a child has sensitivities to our detergent, their blanket may be sent home on Fridays for washing.
- When putting the class down for a nap, the teacher should remain standing and walking among the children until all are sleeping. The teacher may still occasionally bend down to offer comfort or rub a child's back, but the goal should be to gently encourage children to develop the skills needed to put themselves to sleep with minimal interference from the teacher.
  - If a child is especially hard to settle, and the rest of the class is sleeping/resting quietly, the teacher may then sit near the child to help them calm their bodies for sleep.
  - These guidelines are intended to help build independence around naptime. However, if a child is having a hard time, their comfort and feelings should always come before skill-building. If this is an ongoing issue, it should be brought up to



the owner/director so that a plan can be made that meets the needs of the classroom and the individual child.

- No threats should be made in order to get a child to sleep. This includes threatening to withhold snacks or play time, threats to call parents, etc.
- If a child wakes before the 2:00 pm, efforts should be made to soothe the child back to sleep or keep them resting quietly on their mats.
  - If they are not able to be soothed back to sleep or rest quietly, they may be given a quiet activity on their mats or in a quiet area of the room where they are able to be fully supervised.
  - If the child is not able to play quietly independently, the teacher should quietly and calmly engage the child to keep disturbances to a minimum.
- Children should be woken calmly, using a gently voice, at the end of naptime. They should be allowed to awaken slowly.
- Children should be encouraged to help put away their nap things, if they are able to do so.

## Meals

- Infants will eat according to their own schedules as provided by their parents/guardians.
- Meals for older children and infants on solid foods will be served at the following times:  
Breakfast - 8:00  
Lunch - 11:00  
Snack - 2:30
- Every classroom will have a notification of all children with allergies and their restricted foods posted in clear view near where the children eat. It is the responsibility of every adult to ensure that no restricted foods are served to the child with allergies or are served in reach of the child with allergies.
- Children should remain seated while eating, and foods and drinks should stay at the table.
- When children are finished eating, have been cleaned up, and (when appropriate) helped to put away their lunch things, they may be offered the option to stay at the table or play with a pre-arranged activity while everyone finishes. They should not be forced to sit still at the table once they have finished eating.
- Teachers should actively supervise all children as they eat.
- While we respect everyone's individual beliefs, we do not wish to assume anything about each family's spiritual or religious practices. Therefore, teachers are not to engage in whole-class prayer or grace. However, if a child (unprompted) says grace/prays on their own (before meals or otherwise), they do not need to be stopped or corrected.

- The children we care for are not able to consent to any practices, and the urge to be like their peers will almost always override what is taught at home. Therefore, saying grace as a class and just letting children volunteer to participate is also not allowed. We are not in the business of providing spiritual or religious guidance. That should be left strictly to their families.

## Health and Hygiene

### Teachers and Staff

- All teachers and staff should follow the handwashing guidelines established by Louisiana Department of Health.
- Teachers and staff should follow basic hygiene practices that prevent the spread of communicable disease.
- All surfaces that children come into contact with should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular schedule.
- All blankets, washable rugs, and soft, machine-washable surfaces should be washed no less than once per week.

### Children

- Children should wash their hands (with the assistance of an adult) upon arrival, before meals, after toileting, and when coming in from outside.
- Children's faces and hands should be cleaned thoroughly after meals and whenever soiled/dirty.
- Children who are not feeling well should have their symptoms closely monitored. The following will guide our illness policy:
  - If they are just not acting themselves, show signs of fatigue, are crying more than normal, but have no fever, parents may be told of their condition with the expressed note that they do not have to be picked up.
  - Children with a temperature of 100.4 or higher will necessitate a call to the parent or guardian to pick up the child immediately. If taken with a scanning thermometer, the temperature reading should be taken as is. An under the arm temperature with an regular thermometer should have 1 degree added to it.
  - If a child has diarrhea:
    - One out of the diaper necessitates a call home
    - Three contained in the diaper necessitates a call home
  - A single instance of vomiting (not spitting up) necessitates a call home
  - If a child is determined to need to go home, every effort should be made to reasonably separate the child from the rest of the group in a place where the child can rest until a parent or guardian arrives.

## Diaper Changes

- Diaper changes should only take place on the designated changing tables.

- Diapers should be changed at least every two hours. If a diaper is dry at a designated changing time, it should be logged as 'dry' in the Child Pilot app.
- Gloves should be worn for diaper changes and hands should be washed or sanitized between children and after diapering is finished.
- Diapers should be disposed of in a lidded, foot-operated, plastic-lined container

## Toileting

- All children must have an adult in the bathroom with them when going to the toilet.
- Children cannot be forced to use the bathroom, nor should the chance to use the toilet be denied.
- Children should be assisted with toileting as needed - including help with pull-ups or clothes.
- If a child has an accident, the changing table in the bathroom should be used to clean them up. Soiled clothes should be placed in a plastic bag, labeled with their name, and put with their things to be taken home at the end of the day.
- Children should wash hands in the bathroom before returning to the classroom.
- For students who are potty training:
  - Pull-ups are recommended until they can consistently communicate on their own when they need to go to the bathroom.
  - Timers should be set to ensure the child is brought to the bathroom approximately every 1.5 hours. The owner/director will help to bring them to the bathroom.

## Communicating with Parents

- All parent communication should take place via the Child Pilot App. This keeps communication on a neutral, trackable platform, helping to keep all communications clear and accurate.
- If a concern with a child arises that is causing undue disruption in the classroom, it should FIRST be discussed with the owner/director. They will decide if, when, and how a conversation should happen with the parent or guardian.
- Communication regarding concerns about a child's behavior should only occur with the child's parents or legal guardians. Grandparents, aunts/uncles, etc and emergency contacts are not entitled to information about the child. Divulging information to anyone other than parents or legal guardians could violate the child's privacy, which can leave the center vulnerable to legal action
  - Information regarding how well a child ate, what activities they did, etc may be communicated. This policy specifically relates to information such as behavior concerns, patterns of behavior, concerns about potential diagnoses, health information, etc.

- Communications at pick-up and drop-off should be kept brief. If a parent/guardian has questions or concerns that warrant a longer conversation, they should be encouraged to schedule a meeting with the director and the teacher.

end, we have established a set of policies and protocols to keep everyone on the same page regarding expectations. The following policies are derived from Bulletin 137 and the NAEYC.

- 
- Infants who are able to hold their own bottles may do so. They may be placed on a boppy pillow on the floor or in a bouncer, with proper supervision, for feedings. They should not be placed in a crib for feedings. Bottles may not be propped up on blankets, etc. If an infant cannot hold their own bottle, they must be held for feedings.
- Infants should spend no more than 30 consecutive minutes in any containment device. These include swings, bouncers, jumpers, seats, etc. They should have ample time to have freedom of movement/play in safe areas on the floor, outside (when possible), and should be held as needed.
- Babies should not be left to cry any longer than absolutely necessary, nor should they be refused comfort when they are upset. Infants are biologically wired to seek the comfort of closeness with caregivers, and this should be accommodated as often as needed. Contrary to popular belief, babies cannot be 'spoiled' by offering the comfort they need for appropriate development. In fact, having their needs met regularly and consistently helps them to become more confident and independent as they get older.
- Infants should be spoken to throughout the day. This includes the teacher narrating what they are doing during diaper changes, speaking to them in conversational patterns during play, and reading and singing.
- Infants should be offered lots of opportunities for developmentally appropriate free-play.
- Working with multiple infants while upholding these policies is going to be difficult. Help will be offered as it is needed/available.

#### **For the Toddler Room:**

- The toddler room will follow a schedule such as the one noted in Appendix A.
- There should be one or two structured activities for them to engage in each day, but most of their time should be spent in free play. A curriculum will be provided, and can be tailored to meet the needs of the children.
- The children should be engaged with at all times throughout the day. The teacher should circulate as children play, joining them as they pretend and explore. Reading and singing/music should also be part of every day.
- Toddlers need to move their bodies - they are hardwired to want to climb and explore. They should be given appropriate ways to do so. Weather permitting, children should be given outside time in the morning and in the afternoon.
- Discipline should follow the guidelines set out in Appendix C.

- Cell phone use should be limited to logging activities in Child Pilot or messaging/answering parents.
- Children should be strapped in to their seats properly for every meal/snack.
- All children should sleep on mats/cots for naptime. No cribs will be used in the toddler room.

For the Early Learning Room:

- The early learning room will follow a schedule such as the one laid out in appendix B.
- There should be one or two structured activities for them to engage in each day, but most of their time should be spend in free play. A curriculum will be provided, and can be tailored to meet the needs of the children.
- The children should be engaged with at all times throughout the day. The teacher should circulate as children play, joining them as they pretend and explore. Reading and singing/music should also be part of every day.
- Children need to move their bodies - they are hardwired to want to climb and explore. They should be given appropriate ways to do so. Weather permitting, children should be given outside time in the morning and in the afternoons.
- Discipline should follow the guidelines set out in Appendix C.
- Cell phone use should be limited to logging activities in Child Pilot or messaging/answering parents.
-