

PARENT HANDBOOK

The Family School Child Development Center

Bernal Gateway

3101 MISSION STREET SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94110

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Welcome to The Family School Child Development Center, Bernal Gateway. Through this Parent Handbook, we will acquaint you with our policies as you and your child begin a long and positive experience with us.

Program Description

The **philosophy** at The Family School's Infant/Toddler and Preschool Center is to provide a warm, nurturing and enriched environment that stimulates the growth and development of each child. Well-trained and experienced staff at The Family School provides a developmentally appropriate curriculum and environment that enables children to actively explore and discover the world around them.

The **activities** of the program are chosen to acknowledge the importance of attachment, play, individual needs and culturally appropriate practice. The environment promotes cognitive, sensory-motor and brain development through careful attention to these areas. The responsive environment provides children with many sensory-motor based experiences that are stimulating, challenging, open-ended, child initiated and child directed.

We believe that children learn through their senses and by doing. They need to manipulate and actively explore their environment. Children acquire knowledge about the world through sensory motor experiences, otherwise known as play.

The Family School responds attentively to each child's individual needs. The caregivers connect with and understand each child. The **goal** is for parents and staff to support each other to enhance the physical, emotional and cognitive development of each child. The program is designed for bonding, playing, learning and growing.

Some Information About the Center

- Hours of operation are 7:30 am. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, year round
- Holiday schedules for the year are distributed each September
- The teacher/child ratio is 1 adult for 4 infants, 1 adult for 6 toddlers, and 1 adult for 8 preschoolers
- Group size is 8 infants, 8 toddlers and 16 preschoolers

Programs

INFANT/TODDLER ROOMS

The nursery staff consists of an Infant/Toddler Lead Teacher, Teachers and Assistants. The infant/toddler staff provides a warm, safe and nurturing environment for the children. The environment incorporates a variety of touch and movement experiences.

PRESCHOOL

The Preschool staff includes a Lead Preschool Teacher, Teachers and Assistants. The Preschool Teachers are responsible for the learning experiences and curriculum planning, including developmental assessments and daily activities to meet the needs of each individual child. An outdoor/indoor program offers interrelated experiences in language, art, dramatic play, music, gross motor development, field trips and movement. The children are placed in small groups based upon their age and developmental level.

FAMILY SUPPORT

The family support component of The Family School includes case management support, information and referrals. Counselors who specialize in child and family counseling are available to talk with parents about questions or concerns they may have relating to themselves or their children.

Admission Policy

The Family School Child Development Center is a community-based program, which provides infant, toddler and preschool care to children from four months through five years of age. The Family School is operated on a non-discriminatory basis, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, handicap, religion or national origin.

Eligibility

Children are admitted on first come, first served basis with priority given to children of low income San Francisco families who are eligible for CalWORKS or other subsidized programs and siblings of enrolled children.

Enrollment

One or more personal interviews with the parent and child is conducted to determine that the child meets The Family School's admission criteria and to provide the parent with information about the center, including admission policies, basic services offered, the child abuse prevention packet and the parents' rights form. Parents are informed of their rights and their child's rights. An **admission packet** contains

- Forms required by Community Care Licensing
- Identification and Emergency Information
- Physician's Report
- Updated immunizations and TB Test

All forms must be completed, returned to the center and reviewed by the Director prior to the child's enrollment.

Before the child begins participating in the program the family meets with a member of the program staff for an intake meeting to talk about the child's history, individual needs and what the family hopes to gain through participation in the program.

At this time, staff and parents agree upon an Infant Needs and Services Plan for all children in the Infant/Toddler program. This plan includes individual provisions for eating, sleeping and diapering/toileting. It is updated every three months or more often if necessary.

Decisions to move children from one age group to another will be based on chronological age and developmental readiness as determined by staff and parents together.

Parent Involvement

The Family School values ongoing communication between parents and teachers. A **parent bulletin board** is located outside of the classroom. Notices to individual families are often posted by the sign-in sheets. Parents are encouraged to share ideas, interests and special skills with staff. Parents are welcome to be more involved through classroom participation based on their own time and availability.

Parent meetings are held regularly to discuss topics of interest. Parents are encouraged to attend in order to stay informed, to discuss important issues and to enjoy spending time with other families.

The Food Program

All enrolled children are eligible to participate in the Child Care Food Program.

The Family School provides the following meals:

- breakfast is served between 9:00 and 9:30 a.m.
- a hot lunch is served between 11:45 p.m. and 12:30 p.m.
- an afternoon snack is served at approximately 3:30 p.m.

Infant mealtimes fluctuate according to individual Needs and Services Plans

An outside vendor caters the food and delivers the meals each day to the center for the teachers to serve the children. For those children who arrive very early, a morning snack is offered.

Variety

The menu provides a nutritious balance of familiar foods from the various cultures represented in the center.

Food Allergies

Please inform the staff immediately of any allergies that your child may have. A list will be posted in each classroom. Staff will make sure that children are not served these foods, and will discuss possible alternatives with parents.

Family Food Restrictions

Parents whose children are restricted in their diet for religious or other personal reasons should discuss this with the Director.

Special Occasions

Parents who would like to bring food to celebrate their child's birthday or special events in their family's culture should plan this with the teachers and director.

Food From Home

Please do not send your child with food from home, or with food purchased on the way to the center. This causes many problems among the children and will not be allowed.

Infant Diets

- If your child is an infant and requires baby food and/or formula or breast milk this should be brought from home.
- All bottles and baby food must be prepared at home and labeled before bringing it to the center.
- Bottles must be unbreakable.
- Babies are given their bottles only in designated places. They are not allowed to roam with them, as this makes it difficult to prevent sharing bottles.
- All special instructions for feeding plans will be discussed with the child's teacher before enrollment and filled out on a Needs and Services Plan. These plans are updated every three months or as needed.

Napping

- Cribs for young infants are located in a separate sleeping area that can be used whenever individual schedules demand.
- For older infants, toddlers and preschoolers there is a regularly scheduled group nap time.
- Every child is expected to at least rest at nap time. Many children have a very long day in child care and need time to rest and to have quiet time.
- Families may send a special blanket, pillow or soft toy for nap time. Children are not expected to share these items, and use them only during nap
- No child is forced to sleep or to stay awake.

Sign In-Sign Out

A parent, guardian or other authorized representative must sign in and out daily, and must use their full signature. No one other than individuals listed on the child's Identification and Emergency Information (LIC 700) form will gain access to a child for release from the center. Anyone other than the enrolling parent will be asked to present picture identification. No one under fourteen years of age may sign a child out of the center.

Compliance with drop-off and pick-up times, and regular attendance are required. Each family must keep to their contracted hours.

Children who arrive at the center after 9:30 will not be admitted. However, if medical or dental appointments must be made during a child's regular hours, it is possible to make prior arrangements with the lead teacher.

Attendance

In order for our program to be most beneficial for a child, it is important that he/she attend every day. When attendance records show an absence of three (3) or more consecutive days, the family's need for the program will be questioned. Absences due to serious illness or vacation are not included.

When a child is absent for more than three (3) consecutive days, the adult must present a signed note stating the specific reason following the days absent. A physician's note is required for absences due to illness.

Health and Safety

A child's good health plays a very significant role in his/her ability to enjoy the benefits of our program. The Family School follows the regulations of Community Care Licensing to assure that the facility and the policies protect children from hazards and disease.

- Staff members are trained in **First Aid and CPR** and will be able to deal with minor accidents.
- A **first aid kit** is kept in each classroom.
- An additional kit and parents' emergency contact information is taken on any off site trip.
- **Accident reports** are kept in each child's file.
- Parents will be notified immediately of any usual or more serious incident.
- Specific procedures for **emergency evacuation** are posted in each classroom and emergency numbers are listed near the telephone.
- Fire and earthquake drills are held regularly.
- Staff follow **universal precautions**, that is they use hand washing, gloving and disposal of waste procedures, as though all contacts were potential sources of disease or infection.
- Children are taught about hand washing and are supervised as they prepare for meal times and after toileting.

Illness

Although The Family School makes every attempt to support working parents, it is not possible for sick children to remain in care. There are many reasons for this policy.

- Children who are feeling ill have problems interacting with other children and participating in activities.
- Children who are ill need much more adult attention than is possible in a group care situation.
- Contagion is a concern for all the families and staff.
- And finally, a sick child, or one who has not fully recovered, is much more susceptible to other diseases.

Therefore, please make other arrangements for when your child becomes ill. It is particularly important to be alert for signs of contagious illness —fever, cough, excessive nasal discharge, diarrhea and vomiting. Please inform us if your child shows any of these symptoms.

All families will be notified when any child in the program is diagnosed with a communicable disease or infestation such as head lice or ringworm. (This does not apply to certain diseases for which confidentiality is mandated, such as HIV/AIDS.)

If a child becomes ill while at school, the parent or guardian will be contacted to pick up the child. Teachers will notify parents if a child shows signs of **illness or injury**. If parents cannot be reached for special instructions, instructions on the child's emergency medical form will be

Health and Safety

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followed. Parents are expected to make arrangements for their child to be picked up as soon as possible after being called by the center. A sick child will be moved to a quarantine area in the center's office until someone arrives to take them home.

Note: As of January 1, 2000 California employers are obliged to allow all employees to use up to 50% of their allotted sick time to care for a dependent, including a sick child.

Exclusion Policy

The following guidelines for exclusion from group care are widely accepted among specialists in child development and pediatrics. If all families abide by these policies, the overall number of sick days and severity of illnesses can be greatly reduced.

A child may return to care with some symptoms if a physician has determined that the condition is not contagious. In general, the following symptoms are grounds for exclusion:

- **"Fever"**, defined at 101 or higher, by rectum for infants 0-4 months old; and 102 F for children 4-24 months; 101 F axillary for 4-24 months; for children 24 months or older 102 F by mouth or axillary
 - **"Diarrhea"**, defined as an increased number of uncontrolled stools with an increased amount of water and/or lack of form (The concern here is contagion, especially through leaking diapers, and dehydration.)
 - Discolored **discharge** from eyes, ears, and/or nose
 - Mouth **sores** accompanied by drooling
 - **Rash** with fever or change in behavior
 - Conjunctivitis or **"pink eye"** with discharge and/or matted lids after sleep, soreness, or red lids
 - **Coughing** that is severe, especially if it interferes with sleep
 - **Wheezing** or any difficulty in breathing
 - **"Vomiting"**, defined as two or more episodes in the previous 24 hours
 - unless determined to be the result of a non-communicable condition and the child is not dehydrated
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- Children must be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school.
 - After starting a course of **antibiotics** a child must remain home for 24-48 hours, depending on the nature of the illness, before returning to school.
 - **Infestation** such as ring worm, pin worm, impetigo until 24 hours after treatment has begun.
 - **Head lice** until treatment is documented and child is nit free.

The following diseases are also grounds for exclusion. Information on each of the diseases and guidelines for return to care are available from center staff. Information will also be posted whenever a case is diagnosed at the center.

Tuberculosis, Strep throat, Chicken Pox, Mumps, Measles, Rubella, Hepatitis A, Pertussis

Medication

Medications, both prescription and non-prescription can be administered by prior arrangement with the parent. They are stored in a safe place, under refrigeration and away from children. Staff log times and amounts of medication administered. The following conditions must be met.

- They must be labeled with child's name and date, physician's name and instructions.
- Parental instructions and approval are to be included in the child's permanent file. A physician's note must accompany any non-prescription medicine (decongestant, cough medicine, etc.).
- Medication will be returned to the parent when it is no longer needed or when the child leaves the program.

Field Trips

Children may be taking field trips and excursions to neighboring parks, libraries and other places of interest under the proper staff supervision.

The Field Trip Permission Form will give consent for routine neighborhood walks and outings. Special consent forms will be sent home for larger planned trips to destinations such as the zoo.

They will either walk to destinations that are nearby or take public transportation. Staff will not transport children in any vehicle other than public transportation, without prior notification to the parent and parental written consent.

Parents are welcome to join in field trips.

Clothing

Play is a child's work and it often involves materials such as sand, paint, water and paste, which can end up on a child's clothing. This is a natural part of your child's day. Many children who have been toilet trained for sometimes have accidents when they are particularly involved in an activity, or for various temporary health reasons.

- Each child must have a complete change of clothes in their cubby at all times
- A change of clothes includes a shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and diapers if necessary.
- It is the parent's responsibility to replace the clothes as needed and to bring enough clothes.
- Occasionally a child will be sent home in the center's emergency clothes. If this happens, parents are asked to wash and return those items as soon as possible.
- Clothing should be marked with the child's name.
- Children should be dressed in comfortable, casual clothing, which they can easily manage.
- Shoes should be sturdy and allow active play without slipping.

Behavioral Issues

Physical punishment and verbal abuse are never permitted. Children whose behavior is unacceptable will first be redirected, and staff will encourage age-appropriate problem solving. Parents will be contacted and asked to participate in a plan for intervention. If problems persist and the child continues to present a danger to other children, staff, or him/herself, The Family School reserves the right to terminate services. Every attempt will be made to avoid this last resort.

Any incident of violent behavior by a child, parent, guardian or authorized adult will be regarded as serious and will jeopardize the child's enrollment in our program. Should a child, parent, guardian or authorized adult behave in a physically or verbally abusive manner toward any child or staff member, the incident will be subject to review by the Administrative and Child Development Center staff for further action.

Licensing Agency

The Department of Social Services/Community Care Licensing has the authority to interview children or staff and to inspect and audit child or facility records without prior consent.

They can be reached at:

Department of Social Services
Community Care Licensing Division
801 Traeger Avenue
San Bruno, CA 94066
(650) 266-8843

Withdrawal Procedures

The Child Development Center Director be informed thirty (30) days in advance, and through written notification of a family's intention to withdraw a child from the program. This will allow time to adjust enrollment as well as to assist in preparing the child for the transition.

Fees and Payments

The monthly fee for the Infant Center is \$1,710.00 Toddler Center is \$1,470.00. The monthly fee for the preschool is \$1,200.00. Discounts are given to families with siblings. The agreed upon monthly fee should be paid by check or money order made payable to The Family School. All fees must be given to the child's teacher or the Child Development Center Director. The monthly fee is due on the first day of the month with a five-day grace period. A late fee of \$10.00 per week will be charged after the fifth of the month. Children will be terminated from the program if the remaining balance is not paid within two weeks unless prior arrangements are made with the Child Development Center Director. The Family School will notify parents thirty (30) days before any rate change is to take effect. Due to the fact that a slot is reserved for a child during vacation periods the full rate is charged for any month during which a child is enrolled. Absences due to illness or vacation are not reimbursed. The fees will be prorated if a child's first day is after the first of the month.