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P: 603.772.4132  
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Newmarket Center  
3 Simons Lane  
Newmarket, NH 03857  
P: 603.659.2324  
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Pease Center  
81 New Hampshire Ave.  
Portsmouth, NH 03801  
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# **INFANT, TODDLER, PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN PARENT HANDBOOK**

**updated January 2012**

## **CURRENT PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS OFFERED THROUGHOUT THE AGENCY**

All programs are licensed by the New Hampshire Bureau of Child Care Standards and Licensing

### **Our Newmarket Location offers:**

- \* A Toddler Program for children ages 24 months - 3 years.
- \* Preschool Programs for children ages 3-4 and 4-5 years.
- \* A Kindergarten Program for children ages 5-6 years.

### **Our Exeter Location offers:**

- \*A Toddler Program for children ages 24 months – 3 years.
- \* Preschool Programs for children ages 3-4 and 4-5 years.
- \* A Kindergarten Program for children ages 5-6 years.

### **Our Pease Location offers:**

- \*An Infant Program for children ages 6 weeks-14 months.
- \*A Young Toddler Program for children ages 12 months – 24 months.
- \*A Toddler Program for children 24 months – 3 years.
- \*Preschool Programs for children ages 3-4 and 4-5 years.
- \*A Kindergarten Program for children ages 5-6 years.
- \*A Summer School Age Program for children ages 6-12 years.

## **STATEMENT OF NON DISCRIMINATION**

Our programs do not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, national origin, citizenship, religion, sex, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation or veteran status.

## **AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT**

Great Bay Kids' Company is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing quality early childhood education and school-age enrichment programs for children.

## **PROGRAM ORIENTATION**

“The Child Comes First” is the basic philosophy of the agency. We believe that the program must attempt to adjust to the child’s needs, rather than the child to the program. Planning and implementation revolve around the needs and cues from each child. By respecting and encouraging individual abilities, we hope to develop a strong feeling of self-esteem in each child.

Since children’s needs are diverse, we provide for all aspects of the child’s development: physical, intellectual, emotional and social. Our programs are designed to integrate all aspects of the child’s development. Our primary goal at Great Bay Kids’ Company is to help each child to become a well-rounded individual. Each program offers an environment filled with warmth and caring. At the same time, we strive to provide a safe environment for each child to learn, grow and be happy. You will be given an information sheet about your child’s specific program and daily schedule when you enroll.

## **OUR HISTORY**

The Newmarket Community Action Council for Day Care Centers, Inc. was incorporated in September of 1967 as a non-profit organization to administer quality child care programs for children. The Newmarket Child Care Center was opened on October 2, 1967. The Center’s funding came through local fundraising and a grant from the Spaulding-Potter Charitable Trust. In 1973, the agency applied for a 3 to 1 matching Federal Grant through the Division of Welfare. The Newmarket center is now located at 3 Simons Lane in Newmarket.

Due to the growing need for child care in the Exeter area, a center was opened in January of 1975 in that community. The Exeter location outgrew its original facility and is now housed at 13 School Street in Exeter. This property also incorporates the SAU # 16 developmental preschool operated by the school

district. In the Fall of 2008 we expanded our programming at the Exeter Center to include a Toddler Program for children ages 2-3 years.

We established before and after school programs in Exeter in 1990. Programs at both the Main Street and Lincoln Street schools offer care for elementary school children before and after regular school hours as well as during school vacations. In the Fall of 2008 we opened an after school program at Newfields Elementary School for children in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Due to a need for child care in the Portsmouth area, we opened a center at the Pease Tradeport in January of 2010. This center is located on 81 New Hampshire Avenue and is our first center to provide care for infants.

Fiscal support from the town, state, and county governments, the United Way of the Greater Seacoast, New Hampshire Division of Health and Human Services as well as fundraising and donations help the agency provide programs to serve over 450 families annually.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Agency is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who have the responsibility of hiring the Executive Director and Financial Administrator and guiding the administrative staff with general agency policy. Community members, staff and parents are encouraged to attend the open sessions of the board meetings and participate in committee meetings. If you would like more information about our Board of Directors please contact our Executive Director.

### **FUNDRAISING**

The agency holds one big fundraising event each year entitled *The Great Escape*. This event is an adult only evening with food, dancing and live and silent auctions. The event is usually held in October. Parent/Guardian participation is essential to the success of this event. The money raised from this event goes into our agency's general budget and helps to keep child care costs reasonable. Please talk with your center's Program Director to find out information concerning this event.

### **ENROLLMENT**

Clients are eligible for enrollment on a first come/first serve basis with preference given to full time enrollments. Priority is given to children at risk referred by the Division of Children, Youth and Families and to siblings of enrolled children in order to keep families together. Part-time and drop-in care is provided on a space available basis.

During the enrollment process, all necessary forms will be completed, policies and procedures reviewed and a tuition agreement will be signed. Enrollment will begin on a Monday with payment prior to enrollment. If you choose to start your child in the middle of a week, you will still be responsible for the full week's tuition payment.

All children are required to have an up to date immunization records on file prior to entering child care. All significant medical facts (allergies etc.) *must* be made clear during the enrollment process. In accordance with New Hampshire Child Care Program Licensing Rules, every child must have an up to date physical on file within 60 days of enrollment. Thereafter, physical records must be updated annually for children 5 years of age and under and every other year for children 6 years of age and older. Programs shall not be required to obtain physical examination records for children whose parents object thereto in writing, on the grounds that such physical examination is contrary to their religious beliefs. See your Program Director for the Physical Exempt form.

A child enrolled part-time (2-3 days/week), but interested in changing to full time care during a current program, will be put on a Waiting List if space is unavailable.

## **FEES / PAYMENTS**

Upon enrollment you will be required to complete a Tuition Agreement. A non-refundable registration fee, activity fee and one week's tuition are required at the time of enrollment. Activity fees are charged each year on January 1st and June 30th. The activity fee assists in covering special activities for the programs as well as general expenses and seasonal related expenses and is assessed per child.

## **PAYMENT POLICIES**

- Tuition is to be paid by Friday for the following week.
- The following forms of payment are accepted for tuition: Cash, Checks, Money Orders, Electronic Funds Transfer, Visa MasterCard and Discover. Electronic Funds Transfer is the preferred method of payment. Please see your Director to complete an agreement for Credit Card and Electronic Funds Transfer.
- Your balance must be current in order to utilize drop in care. Payment for drop in care is expected on the day you use drop in care.
- Tuition balance must be current in order to move from one site to another within our agency.
- Tuition is charged regardless of child's attendance. This includes illness, snow days, holidays, and professional development days. Tuition will not be charged for the days the agency is closed between Christmas and New Year.
- Families that are currently enrolled full time for four consecutive months or more will be granted one vacation week per calendar year (January-December) without charge. Your child may not attend program during your tuition free week. Full time care is defined as an average of 6 hours or more per day, 5 days per week. Notice in writing is required and forms are available in the office.
- Tuition Agreement revisions must be communicated to the Program Director in writing at least two weeks in advance.
- For every tuition change, a re-registration fee will be charged.
- The agency participates in the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Development Fund Scholarship Program which subsidizes tuition fees for eligible families. Our Executive Assistant or Program Director can give you more information.
- A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for a check or credit card payment returned for any reason.
- Tuition and fees are subject to change at the discretion of the Board of Directors with thirty (30) days written notice.

For current tuition rates, please refer to our current tuition rate sheets.

## **OVERDUE PAYMENT PROCEDURE**

If payment is not received by Monday of the following week, an overdue notice will be sent. Payment for the current week, as well as the overdue payment is expected by Friday. If payment is overdue, a late charge of \$15.00 per week may be assessed unless payment arrangements have been approved by the Administrative Office.

If payments become overdue, payment arrangements must be made with the Administrative office. If payment arrangements are not fulfilled, your child(ren) will be withdrawn from the agency. Unpaid client balances will be turned over to the New Hampshire Credit Bureau for collection.

### **WITHDRAWAL**

Parents/ Guardians who intend to withdraw their child(ren) are required to give the Administration two full weeks advance written notice or two weeks tuition. Last day of enrollment must end on a Friday; therefore, notice given in the middle of a week will be in addition to the required two-week notice.

### **LATE PICK-UP FEE**

All children must be picked up by 6:00 PM. This rule is strictly enforced. A fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes you are late will be added to your bill for the week. This late fee charge is assessed on a per child basis.

### **DROP-IN CARE**

For Contracted Parents/Guardians: Drop In care is granted for parents who are currently enrolled 2–3 days a week, but occasionally need care for additional times. Fees are charged at the hourly rate for drop in care use and the hours are rounded up. If your child attends the center for a full day (6 or more hours), the daily rate will be charged. Drop In care is granted if space is available in your child's classroom. A 24-hour notice is requested. Parents may also utilize drop in care between centers if space is available. Contact the Program Director for availability and authorization.

For Outside Parents/Guardians: Drop-in care is available for parents who do not regularly attend a program. Our current registration and activity fee must be paid and all required paperwork must be present before your child attends. The registration fee expires every six months, and a maximum of 15 days within a six month period may be utilized for drop-in care. Outside parents are charged a daily rate for days used, regardless of the number of hours in attendance. A 48-hour notice is usually required in order to process all paperwork. Contact the Program Director for availability and necessary paperwork. Payment is required prior to care being provided.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Agency hours are Monday - Friday from 6:30am - 6:00pm. Parents are responsible for payment of any days your child is registered, with the exception of the days between Christmas and the New Year when our agency is closed. Please notify the center when your child will be absent so we can plan accordingly.

### **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT DAYS AND HOLIDAYS**

Two days per year (usually in May and August) are designated for agency personnel to prepare, set-up rooms, and receive agency-wide training. We will be closed for these two Program Development Days as well as the eight holidays listed below. The parents will pay for all development days and holidays if they are registered for those days. Our agency's dedicated staff work year round with your children and are entitled to compensation for holidays and development days.

CLOSED HOLIDAYS: \*New Year's Day \*Martin Luther King, Jr. Day \*Memorial Day \*Independence Day \*Labor Day \*Thanksgiving Day \*Day After Thanksgiving \*Christmas Day

### **SNOW AND EMERGENCY DAYS**

In the unlikely event that our agency is closed or has a delayed opening due to a bad snow storm, lack of electricity, etc. the Executive Director will notify local radio stations WERZ (107.1 FM) and local television station WMUR (Channel 9) to announce closings. The closing will also be posted on the WMUR web site at [www.wmur.com](http://www.wmur.com). We may also initiate a "Call Blast" to announce the closing. If we must close early, we will call you or your emergency contact person to pick up your child. You will be responsible for payment on these days, unless we are closed for more than two consecutive days.

## **ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

When children are dropped off they must be brought into the classroom by the parent/guardian and their presence must be made known to the staff. Staff will sign your child in upon arrive and will sign your child out upon departure each day. The parent/guardian is responsible for signing the form at the end of the week to verify the times of arrival and departure. Please notify the teachers when you are leaving with your child and make sure that your child does not go anywhere within the building or outside unattended.

Parents/Guardians must designate on appropriate forms any individual authorized to pick up their child from Great Bay Kids' Company, Inc. Persons authorized to pick up any child must be at least 18 years of age and provide a picture identification to agency personnel upon request. If a parent calls the center to make alternate pick up arrangements, the parent will receive a return phone call from agency personnel to verify the phone call and information. If any person arrives to pick up a child that is not listed on appropriate agency forms as an authorized pick up person, or we do not have written or verbal parental approval for the pick up, agency personnel will immediately call 911 for assistance. Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to leave the premises with anyone that has not been given prior parental approval.

If a parent/guardian or designated pick-up person is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol/drugs, the child's teacher and/or Program Director will call the individual aside to discuss the suspected condition and potential danger to the child. Agency personnel will offer to call a spouse, friend or taxi for the individual. If this is ineffective, agency personnel will notify the police to report their concerns about the welfare of the child and will assist the police as requested.

## **CUSTODY, VISITATION, SUPPORT, CARE AND RELATED ISSUES**

Great Bay Kids' Company recognizes that the parents or legal guardians of enrolled children may be subject to court orders, stipulations or other agreements which govern custody, visitation, support, care and related issues. Great Bay Kids' Company at all times desires to promote the parent-child relationship, to nurture child development, to minimize potential conflicts and problems, and to promote an environment best suited for the provision of high quality child care, enrichment and education. To promote these interests the Board of Directors for Great Bay Kids' Company has adopted the following policies.

Unless Great Bay Kids' Company is provided with a certified copy of an order from a court of competent jurisdiction which expressly states otherwise, either natural or adoptive parent or legal guardian may visit the enrolled child or children on an unrestricted basis during the normal hours of operation during the day. It shall be the parent or legal guardian's responsibility to provide Great Bay Kids' Company with the certified copy of the order. In the event that the certified copy of the order expressly states that either a natural or adoptive parent or legal guardian shall not have any contact with the child or children, and in the event that such person attempts to have contact with the child or children, Great Bay Kids' Company shall first notify the local police department, and only then attempt to notify the custodial parent or legal guardian.

Unless otherwise notified, Great Bay Kids' Company shall assume that all natural or adoptive parents or legal guardians of the enrolled child or children shall have equal access to the records kept by Great Bay Kids' Company regarding the enrolled child or children, subject to state law governing disclosure of such records.

In the event a parent seeks to have an administrator or staff member of Great Bay Kids' Company testify at deposition or in court, during normal business hours, a subpoena shall be required in accordance with New Hampshire law. Neither administrators nor staff of Great Bay Kids' Company shall be permitted, during working hours, to take time from their regular duties to provide testimony, affidavits or otherwise

act as witnesses on behalf of a natural or adoptive parent or legal guardian involving matters such as the custody, care, support, visitation or control of the enrolled child or children without service of a subpoena.

Parents/guardians may request copies of their child's portion of the sign in/out sheets for the past six months for child custody related issues. Requests must be made in writing to the Administrative Office. A cost of \$5.00 per copy will be charged and is to be paid prior to processing of documents.

### **REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

New Hampshire State Law, RSA 169-C, the Child Protection Act, states that any person who has reason to suspect that a child under the age of eighteen (18) has been abused and/or neglected must make a report to the Division of Children, Youth and Families.

### **HEALTH AND ILLNESS**

Our agency is not set up for the care of sick children; therefore we are unable to accept ill children. If your child is ill, please keep him/her home until (s)he is well enough to attend. Your child may return when (s)he is well enough to participate in the day's events, including outside play. In the case of a contagious condition for which antibiotics have been prescribed, the child may not return to the center until after the required treatment has been administered **in** accordance with New Hampshire State Regulations. Please see your Program Director with questions.

If your child becomes ill while at the center, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child immediately. For this reason, we ask that you keep your emergency card updated.

You will be called if:

- your child has an oral temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher or an under arm temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- your child has uncontrolled coughing or wheezing
- your child is vomiting while at the center
- your child has diarrhea while at the center
- your child has any other symptom that prevents him/her from participating in the program
- your child has an illness that may infect other children
- your child has head lice and/or nits

### **MEDICATION POLICY**

Absolutely no medication will be administered without a written authorization from the parent or guardian and the order of a licensed practitioner. (A pharmaceutical label is acceptable). Medication forms are available in each classroom and all medication must be in its original container and labeled with the child's name, medication name, dosage and the physician prescribing. There will be no medication administered past the expiration date.

According to the New Hampshire Child Care Program Licensing Rules, we are not obligated to administer medication at any time. We request that medication be given to your child at the centers only when necessary.

### **INJURED CHILD**

Minor injuries such as scrapes or small cuts are treated by First Aid certified staff. All injuries are then entered on an accident report form, with the child's name, time, location, type of injury, treatment given, etc. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to have the parent or pick up person review, sign and date each accident report. Parents receive a copy of the report. The master copy will be reviewed by the Program Director and then placed in the child's health folder.

If a child receives a head injury of any type, the parents or emergency contact person are notified by phone immediately. If a situation arises where immediate outside emergency care is needed, an ambulance will be

called. We will then attempt to contact the parent or emergency contact concerning the injury and give information as to where you can meet your child.

In the event that one child is injured by another child, no names will be used when describing the injury and the incident. This is a requirement of privacy laws, as well as agency policies of confidentiality.

### **DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY**

We at Great Bay Kids' Company believe that discipline is not punishment but rather teaching, guiding and redirecting. The word discipline comes from an old English word meaning "instruction" and this is the way we approach discipline. We help children learn to get along with adults and other children, teach them to behave in an acceptable way and help children learn self-control. The purpose of disciplining children is to raise responsible, confident children who grow up to care about others and themselves.

Great Bay Kids' Company keeps an open line of communication between parents and staff regarding their child's experiences within the program. If a behavior issue is interfering negatively with the functioning of the program or the safety of the staff or any of the children, we will notify the parent or guardian. We will work cooperatively with the family to develop and implement strategies to assist with the child's challenging behaviors. If all suggested strategies have been unsuccessful, the parent/guardian will be asked to withdraw the child from program in order to preserve a safe environment.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Our agency realizes the importance of good communication. The lines between parents and teachers should be open and effective. To better facilitate communication between staff and parents we provide a variety of ways in which to transfer information to one another, such as; mail pouches, daily reports, newsletters, memos, phone calls, suggestion boxes and letters. Please be sure to utilize these communication methods **daily** so that you are informed and up to date. Good communication facilitates the team effort between staff and parents that is necessary for the care of your child(ren).

We also schedule semi-annual parent and teacher conferences. Teachers prepare an evaluation on each child based on the goals of the Creative Curriculum. Parents or guardians are also encouraged to request a conference at anytime during the year to discuss questions or concerns. If a question or concern arises about your child, their care, or the program, please make a point to speak to your child's teacher. If the teacher has not provided an adequate answer, please seek the assistance of the Program Director. If you still have not received what you feel to be the proper attention to your question or concern, contact the Executive Director.

### **HEALTH AND NUTRITION**

As part of the USDA Food Program, Great Bay Kids' Company provides nutritious meals daily. A breakfast and afternoon snack are served in all of our child care programs. For those children who are with us for a full day or for kindergarten wrap around care, we also provide lunch. All of these meals meet USDA requirements and guidelines. The meals are served in the classrooms in a pleasant atmosphere in which the teacher sits with the children to encourage appropriate manners and conversation.

If your child has a food allergy or has special dietary needs, we must have a "Special Meals Prescription Form" on file in our office that has been signed by your child's physician. If your child has special dietary requirements due to religious or other philosophical beliefs, we will need a letter from the parent/guardian stating your requirements. When possible, we will make substitutions to the menu to meet the needs of your child. The Program Director and Cook will meet with the parent/guardian of a child with special dietary needs as requested in order to work out a plan concerning food substitutions and who will be responsible for providing the food items. Please do not bring in any food for any reason unless prior arrangements have been made with your center's Program Director.

As part of our agency Wellness policy and in consideration of those children with food allergies, we ask that you refrain from bringing in food items for your child's birthday. Your child's birthday celebration will be incorporated into the curriculum for that week. With input from your child, your child's classroom teachers will plan a special classroom project in celebration of your child's birthday. Examples may include decorating birthday hats, baking a healthy treat, painting paper balloons at the easel or scarf dancing to your child's favorite music.

Great Bay Kids' Company has a commitment to provide families and employees with a safe, healthy, and clean child care environment. Because of this commitment, tobacco use of any kind is not permitted on the grounds or within the buildings.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### **NAP TIME**

Our agency follows the New Hampshire Child Care Program Licensing Rules concerning nap and rest requirements. Our Child Care Agency provides an opportunity for at least 1 hour of rest, relaxation or sleep depending on the child's needs. Children who do not fall asleep after 30 minutes of quiet rest will be given a quiet activity to work on in their rest space. After one hour of quiet rest, children who are still awake will be given the opportunity to participate in quiet activities around the classroom. Children who are able to adjust to a scheduled nap or rest time shall have the flexibility to fall asleep and awaken at their own pace within a block of time set aside as nap/rest time. We provide individual mats and maintain constant supervision of sleeping areas.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

All field trips will be announced in advance either by memo or a notice from your child's teacher. We travel in insured parent/guardian cars as well as 12 passenger vans and school busses (for children 5 years and older) and follow the New Hampshire seat belt law. Children under four years of age must be in an approved child passenger safety seat or booster seat while being transported during field trips. If your schedule allows, we welcome your participation on such trips. On all of the trips, we maintain strict child to staff ratios. If we cannot provide this ratio, the trip will have to be canceled. Occasionally an extra fee may be charged for these trips. Field trip forms must be signed prior to the field trip in order for your child to attend.

If we have planned a field trip that you do not want your child to attend, please talk with your center's Program Director immediately. Your Program Director will make every effort to make arrangements for your child to participate in another group within the center during the scheduled field trip time.

### **CLASSROOM PLANS AND SCHEDULES**

The child care teachers prepare developmentally appropriate curriculum plans incorporating goals and objectives. These plans are prepared at least one week in advance and reviewed by the Program Director, as well as posted for parents. If you would like more detailed information about your child's classroom lesson plans, please feel free to speak to your child's teacher.

You will receive a program specific sheet for your child's room containing a detailed schedule as well as any additional information pertaining to that program.

## **CURRICULUM**

The curriculum utilized by our programs in *The Creative Curriculum*. We have found that *The Creative Curriculum* not only matches our agency philosophy but is based on the latest research in child development. *The Creative Curriculum* is the country's leading scientifically based, comprehensive curriculum for programs serving children from birth to age 5. Planning revolved around the needs and interests of each child. Instruction is based on observing and documenting what children do and say. Teachers offer activities that meet objectives beyond each child's present level of mastery. Core knowledge areas of Math, Literacy, Science and Social Studies are integrated into each interest area on the classroom, including: Art Area, Block Play, Cooking, Discovery Area, Dramatic Play, Library Area, Music and Movement, Outdoor Play, Sensory Table, Technology and Toys and Games.

## **PARENT GROUPS**

Each center has their own Parent Group. The purpose of the Parent Groups is to support the agency mission and philosophy while encouraging parent involvement and fostering a deeper level of communication and community within the agency. Each center has its own Parent Representative(s) whose role is to lead the Parent Group and to be the liaison between the Director and the Group. Each site has a Parent Group Bulletin Board with information regarding meeting times, meeting minutes, parent projects, etc. You will have the option to complete a Parent Group survey and will be given more information regarding your center's Parent Group upon enrollment. Participation in the Parent Group is completely voluntary.

