



**School Age Programs**

# Family Handbook

Updated August 2021

This Family Handbook is intended to provide all new and existing families with Great Bay Kids' Company's current standards and policies. A hard copy will be given to each new family upon enrollment. Any current families at the time of any handbook revisions will be notified per our changes to policies procedure which can be found within the handbook. Updates will be posted on our website at [www.greatbaykids.org](http://www.greatbaykids.org). An email notice will be sent to families to inform of the policy change.

Welcome to  
Great Bay Kids'  
Company!

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## Welcome Note

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Dear Great Bay Kids' Company Family,

We want to officially welcome you to our Great Bay Kids' Company family. Early childhood education in the first five years is the foundation for all future learning and we thank you for choosing us as your child's educators. Here at Great Bay Kids' Company you will find knowledgeable and accessible staff; think of us as your partners in your child's development and success in education.

With a variety of coursework and degrees in the field of early childhood education you can be sure our teachers are providing the environment and curriculum that is perfect for your child's continuing growth and development in all areas. Our administrators have a variety of backgrounds in education and experiences in early childhood that bring expertise in the management of our program.

Great Bay Kids' Company is licensed by the State of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing Unit and we also hold Licensed Plus standing. We guarantee a safe and welcoming environment to you and your child/children.

As a part of the Great Bay Kids' Company family you are welcome any time. Research has proven that you and your family play an incredible role in your child's education. We have an open door policy to parents and encourage family involvement at our center through visits or volunteering in your child's classroom.

This handbook outlines many systems we've put in place to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment that works for the families, children, and staff. Please utilize this handbook as a reference of our policies and procedures. After reviewing this handbook at your enrollment appointment, please sign the Signature Page in the back of this handbook and return it to your program director along with any other remaining paperwork at least one full week before your start date. A copy of the handbook can also be found on our website at [www.greatbaykids.org](http://www.greatbaykids.org).

On behalf of all GBKC families, staff and Board of Directors, we value your family, input, and involvement in Great Bay Kids' Company.

*Katelyn Dennis*

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Executive Director

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Table of Contents	4-5
<hr/>	
Welcome Note	3
<hr/>	
About Great Bay Kids' Company	6-9
Mission Statement	6
Statement of Non-Discrimination	6
Program Philosophy	6
Our History	6
Board of Directors	7
Fundraising	7
Enrollment	7
Attendance	8
Snow Days & Emergency Closings	8
Program Closings and Holidays	8
Teacher In Service Days/Full Day Program	8
Early Release Days	8
School Vacation Weeks	9
Summer Program	9
<hr/>	
Billing and Tuition	10-11
Fees/ Payments	10
Payment Policies	10
Overdue Payment Procedures	10
Withdrawal	10
Late Pick-Up Fee	11
Drop-In Care	11
<hr/>	
Program Orientation	12-18
Great Bay Kids' Company Staff	12
Who we are & what we do	12-13
Employing Students as Staff	13
Professional Development	13
Current Programs Offered	13
Center Ratios/ Group Sizes	14
Arrivals/ Departures	14
Classroom Plans and Schedules	14
Curriculum	14-15
Outdoor Gross Motor Play	15
Rest Time	15
Communication	15-16
Social Media	16
Inclusion	16
Custody, Visitation, Support, Care and Related Issues	16-17
Reporting Suspected Abuse and Neglect	17
Discipline Philosophy	17
Challenging Behavior	17-18
Field Trips	18

Table of Contents continued	4-5
<hr/>	
Health/ Safety & Nutrition/ Wellness	19-22
<hr/>	
Child Immunizations/Physicals	19
Illness	19
Medication Policy	19-20
Injured Child/ First Aid	20
Emergency Transportation	21
Emergencies & Drills	21
Emergency Operations Plan	21
Wellness Policy	21-22
Meals & Nutrition	22
Parent Partnerships	23
<hr/>	
Communication	
Parent Groups/Parent Involvement	
Family Handbook Statement	
Parent Handbook Signature Page	25
<hr/>	

## About Great Bay Kids' Company

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### **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.

### **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.

### **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

“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 upon enrollment.

### **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 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. In 1980 the name of the agency changed to The Newmarket/ Exeter Child Care Center Inc. to reflect the additional programs provided. We changed names again in 1997 to reflect who we are today, Great Bay Kids' Company.

The Newmarket Child Care Center was opened on October 2, 1967 for 40 children. It was relocated to 3 Simons Lane in Newmarket in 1977 where it still stands. In 1983 the building was expanded to serve 64 children. Newmarket's program has changed to meet the needs of the community, with their most recent addition including an infant program, starting in 2016.

Due to the growing need for child care in the Exeter area, a center was opened in January of 1975 in that community to hold 50 children. The Exeter location outgrew its original facility and moved to 13 School Street in Exeter in 1992. This property also incorporated the SAU#16 Developmental Preschool operated by the school district. In the fall of 2008 the program expanded to include a Toddler Program for children ages 2-3 years. With an increasing demand for infant and one- year old care, GBKC built a new facility in 2015 and opened the doors in September of that year to its current building at 64 Epping Road.

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, some holidays and snow days. In the fall of 2008 we opened an after-school program at the Newfield's Elementary School for children in Kindergarten through 5th grade.

Due to a need for more quality child care in the Portsmouth area, we opened a center at the Pease Tradeport in January of 2010. This center is located at 81 New Hampshire Avenue and was our first center to provide care for infants. This is also the location of our agency's business office.

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 600 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 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**

In order to support the monetary needs of our Not-for-Profit agency, fundraising occurs throughout the year. We work towards diversifying the income of our funds to keep the cost of tuition as reasonable as possible for our families. The agency holds one larger fundraising event each year. This event is an adult only evening with food, dancing and silent auction. Community 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 for families. Other fundraisers include our Logo Shop, Dot Dot Smile dresses, Yankee Candle, Coin Wars & other family events. Please talk with your center's Program Director to find out information concerning our fundraising efforts or to join our fundraising committee.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Children are eligible for enrollment on a first come/first serve basis. 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.

If we are unable to enroll your child immediately, we ask that you fill out a wait list form and submit it electronically on our website. The wait list is time and date stamped to offer care on a first come/first served basis. The wait list form can be held by our office for no more than 30 days, without a wait list deposit. Your family's wait list fee can be paid by check or cash at any location, or mailed into the business office. Upon enrollment, your wait list fee becomes the registration fee. This fee is non-refundable.

During the enrollment process, all necessary forms will be completed, policies and procedures reviewed and tuition agreements will be signed. Enrollment will begin on a Monday with payment prior to enrollment. The enrollment deposit consists of a registration fee (waived if you have paid the wait list fee, prior), activity fee, and one week's tuition. If you choose to start your child in the middle of a week, the full week's tuition payment is still required.

All children are required to have an up to date immunization record 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 Licensing Rules, every child must have an up to date physical 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 which will require a notary signature and stamp.

A child enrolled part-time (2-3 days/week), but interested in changing to a different schedule will be put on a Waiting List if space is unavailable immediately. Please see your child's Program Director for more information.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Agency hours are Monday-Friday 3:00-5:30 pm. We are also open 7:30am-5:00pm during school vacations and no school days. Please notify the Action Club when your child will be absent so we can plan accordingly.

### **SNOW DAYS & EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

In the unlikely event that our agency is closed or has a delayed opening due to a bad storm, lack of electricity, etc. the Executive Director will notify WMUR (Channel 9) to announce closings. The closing will also be posted on the WMUR web site at [wmur.com](http://wmur.com). Please like our Facebook, as we have found WMUR & Facebook to be the most reliable and fastest source for closing and delay information. We may also initiate a "Call Blast" to announce a closing or delay when possible. Please do not rely 100% on this system as it can only be initiated if internet, electricity and computer systems are all operating. When public school is closed due to weather we offer full day care. If your child is not scheduled to attend, you may drop in if space is available. Daily drop-in rate for care will be charged for these days.

### **PROGRAM CLOSINGS & HOLIDAYS NOT IN SESSION**

As a quality early education program, we offer professional development days to our staff. 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 holidays listed below. Every year the Agency closes for our winter break, which is approximately one week between Christmas and New Year's Day. The dates of the shutdown will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors and will be voted on each year at the Agency meeting in June. The families are billed their regular tuition for all weeks that include professional development days, and holidays. Our agency's dedicated staff work year-round with your children and deserve to be compensated for holidays and professional development days.

#### *HOLIDAYS NOT IN SESSION:*

\*New Year's Day \*Martin Luther King, Jr. Day \*Memorial Day \*Independence Day \*Labor Day  
\*Thanksgiving Day \*Day after Thanksgiving \*Christmas Eve \*Christmas Day \*

### **TEACHER IN SERVICE DAYS/FULL DAY PROGRAM**

All students will be required to sign up for the full day program; students that are currently enrolled for the day are first priority. If you are not enrolled for the day and need care, please sign up with the site director or speak with the program director. Additional fees do apply; please reference the tuition rates sheet.

### **EARLY RELEASE DAYS**

All students that currently enrolled on days that there is an early release have first priority for attendance; please let the site director know if your children will not be attending the program that day. If your children are not enrolled and need care please check with the site director to see if there is availability for the day. Additional rate do apply, please reference tuition rates sheet.



### **SCHOOL VACATION WEEKS**

The agency provides care during the February and April school vacation weeks. You must sign up in advance for care for these weeks. You may sign up for two, three or five days and you will be charged the current daily rate **regardless of attendance**. If you do not sign up for care during school vacation weeks, no fee will be charged. During these weeks we request you provide your child a healthy lunch, rest items, and spare clothes. Great Bay Kids' will provide breakfast, and afternoon snack.

### **SUMMER PROGRAM**

Each spring families are offered the opportunity to sign up for the School Age Summer Camp Program. You may sign your child up for two, three or five days per week and you sign up only for the days/weeks you need. The summer program participates in local events and activities i.e., Exeter Library, Farmers Market, Bowling at Exeter Lanes, etc. The summer program also travels to other locations to participate in events and activities.

**Any changes to this schedule may be made up to thirty days before the start of the summer program. After that date, you will be charged for any days you have signed up for regardless of child attendance. Enrollment in our Summer Program does not guarantee enrollment in our Fall Program. Current families & children that enroll in our summer programs will have first priority in our fall programming.**

## Billing & Tuition

### **FEES/PAYMENTS**

Upon enrollment, you will be required to complete a Tuition Agreement for each child. A non-refundable registration fee, activity fee and one week's tuition are required at the time of enrollment. The Registration fee is waived if you have paid a wait list fee prior to enrollment. Activity fees are charged each year in the week of 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 and Electronic Funds Transfer. Please see your Director to complete an agreement for Electronic Funds Transfer. Credit cards are accepted with an additional processing fee.
- 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. Your balance must be current to increase days that your child attends.
- Tuition is charged regardless of child's attendance. This includes illness, snow days, holidays, and professional development days.
- Tuition Agreement revisions must be communicated to the Program Director in writing at least two weeks in advance.
- For every schedule change, a re-registration fee will be assessed.
- 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 Directors can give you more information.
- A fee of \$30.00 will be charged for a 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 \$25.00 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 tuition falls behind more than 3 weeks we will need to withdraw your family from the program. 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 Program Director 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 the week will be in addition to the required two-week notice. Though our policy permits 2 weeks-notice, please provide as much time as possible so that we may transition your child appropriately.

## **LATE PICK-UP FEE**

As our programs end at 5:30 PM, all children must be picked up by then. This rule is strictly enforced as we respect the time that our staff spend at school. If you are aware that you will be arriving late due to unavoidable circumstances, please call the center to inform them so they may plan accordingly.

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. A Late Pick-Up form will need to be signed by the guardian upon arrival.

## **DROP-IN CARE**

For enrolled families: Drop-in care is granted for families who are currently enrolled 2-3 days a week, but occasionally need care for additional times. Your family's account must be paid in full to utilize drop-in care. Fees are charged at the hourly rate for drop-in care use and the hours are rounded up. Drop-in care is granted if space is available in your child's program. A 24-hour notice is requested. Contact the Site Director at your children's site for availability and authorization.

For Outside Parents/Guardians: Drop-in care is available for parents of children 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 families 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 or Site Director (School Age) for availability and necessary paperwork. Payment is required prior to care being provided.

## Program Orientation

### GREAT BAY KIDS' COMPANY STAFF

Our Agency is committed to providing a quality and enriching environment for our staff as well as the children and families. As a non-profit organization, we do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, gender, disability, or age. We find it is important to employ teachers of varying abilities to assist in meeting this creed. For teacher qualification requirements, please see the following chart in accordance with NH State Child Care Licensing Regulations:

GBKC Title:	Qualifications:
Program Director	Minimum of an Associate's Degree in ECE or Elementary Education PLUS, 2 or more years of experience as a supervisor and 3 credits in Early Childhood Program Administration, Management coursework preferred
Site Director	Minimum of Associates Degree in child development, education, recreation
Lead Teacher	Minimum 18 college credits in Early Childhood Education
Associate Teacher (Group Leader)	Minimum 3 college credits in Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education
Child Care Assistant (Assistant Group Leader)	Must be at least 16 years of age and must be under direct supervision of an Associate Teacher, Lead Teacher, or Educational Lead.

### WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Great Bay Kids' Company is governed by a Board of Directors, to whom the Executive Director reports. The **Executive Director** is responsible for agency wide fundraising, budgeting, administrative functions and duties, programs compliance with laws, upholding licensing rules and regulations and overseeing all of the GBKC programs.

**Our Financial Administrators** and **Executive Assistant** are charged with all billing and tuition, record keeping, data collection for our CACFP Food Program, as well as operating expense accounting.

**The Program Directors** are responsible for day to day management of their site; compliance with NH Child Care Licensing Unit Rules, enrollments, child transitions, family relations, and all aspects of policy and personnel.

We have full-time **Cooks** at each site to provide nutritionally sound meals daily that are in accordance with CACFP as well as our wellness policies.

**The Educational Lead Teachers** support and strengthen the teacher's instructional practices in curriculum planning, classroom management, and scheduling. They are often in classrooms directly supervising children and mentoring teachers.

Our **Teaching Staff** are responsible for all classroom operations, planning curriculum that provides developmentally appropriate learning experiences, completing Ages & Stages screenings in collaboration

with parents to ensure all developmental areas are being met and strengthened, conduct daily communications between teachers and parents and so much more.

### **EMPLOYING STUDENTS AS STAFF**

Employing high school and college students along with our classroom Lead teachers, allows us to mentor and train future teachers in our field. In addition to teaching students real-world skills, employing high school and college students gives them exposure to fields they hope to enter as adults. A job as a Child Care Assistant (CCA) will enable these students to understand the many career demands of each teacher. Furthermore, working in the field helps these students build job-related skills and ensure that their interest in the field is fostered. By employing high school and college students, we are investing in the future of Early Childhood Education. Many of our tenured teachers started at GBKC as teenagers.

At Great Bay Kids, we are proud to partner with local programs, such as the Seacoast School of Technology that offers programs such as Careers in Education to their students. Vocational programs, like SST, are able to offer students the ability to learn the profession of education by working with advanced classroom instruction alongside teachers in the Wright Start Preschool. Its goal is for the student to gain real-world experience with internships or job shadows, partnered with the study of theories of development, foundations of education, classroom management, methods of instruction and more. As these teachers are just students themselves, CCA's are never left alone with children in our agency. Our partnership with these students works because they are closely monitored and mentored throughout their time in classrooms.

Often these students go on to study Early Education at a college or University. Our children and staff are excited to see the same teachers come back year after year, when their schedules allow. Having consistent college students return during the winter and summer break gives our regular teaching staff time to take their hard-earned vacation time with the confidence that the classrooms are managed well in their absence. Many of our college students are qualified to take the lead in a classroom for a lesson or two, and do so with the guidance of our lead teachers.

### **ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Regardless of age, qualification and classroom assignment, all early childhood teachers are required to complete ongoing professional development in line with NH State Licensing Guidelines. These include a specialized set of 11 trainings on topics such as emergency responses, specialized infant care, allergic reactions, etc. The NH State Licensing Regulations also require all full time teachers to complete no less than 18 hours of professional development per year; Teachers who work 25 hours or less are required to obtain no less than 12 hours of professional development per year; And teachers who are attending high school or college full time are mandated to complete no less than 3 hours of professional development per year.

All staff are required to maintain current first aid and CPR certifications. GBKC provides two Professional Development days as well as some evening opportunities for trainings to be completed.

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

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

#### **Our School Age Program offers:**

- \* An Action Club at Main Street School in Exeter for Kindergarten, First and Second Grade.
- \* An Action Club at Lincoln Street School in Exeter for Third, Fourth and Fifth Grade.
- \* An Action Club at Newfields Elementary School for Kindergarten through Fifth Grade.
- \*A Summer Camp Program for children in First grade through Fifth Grade.

## **CLASSROOM RATIOS & GROUP SIZES**

We regularly maintain teacher-child ratios in accordance with NH Child Care Licensing Rules and Regulations. Please take note that ages are listed as ranges rather than absolute ages because we are sensitive to the developmental needs of children as well as space available in all classrooms.

In the chart below you will find detailed classroom age ranges and ratios.

<b>Ages Ranges **All ages are approximate as development varies**</b>	<b>Classroom Ratios</b>	<b>GBKC Maximum Group Size</b>
School- Age (56 Months or older)	1:15	45

## **ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

When children are dropped off they must be brought into the program by the parent/guardian and their presence must be made known to the staff. Staff will sign your child in upon arrival 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 picture identification to agency personnel upon request or have prior director approval and parent consent. If a parent calls the site to make alternate 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 pickup, agency personnel will immediately call the family 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 pickup 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.

## **CLASSROOM PLANS AND SCHEDULES**

Program plans are intentionally planned with the specific children of each classroom, in mind. These plans are prepared at least one month 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 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 is The Creative Curriculum. We have found that The Creative Curriculum not only matches our agency philosophy of "the child comes first," 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. If you were to go into any one

of our child care centers you would find that each age group is working towards the same goals. The activities may be different but the objectives would be the same. Planning revolves around the needs and interests of each child. Instruction is based on observing and documenting what children do and say. The Creative Curriculum is a model for all staff to help develop and implement a program that is rich in diversity of learning in core areas. Teachers offer activities that meet objectives beyond each child's present level of mastery. The before and after school enrichment program offers a variety of activities around Math, Science (STEM and STEAM), outdoor/physical play, Art, structured and free choice.

All of our early childhood teachers have received training on The Creative Curriculum and will continue to train through workshops and literature. Please visit our website or your child's classroom for more information about Creative Curriculum Goals and Objectives. We welcome your questions and comments and are confident that our children are learning the best way possible.

### **OUTDOOR GROSS MOTOR PLAY**

At Great Bay Kids' Company we value the great outdoors and encourage children's sense of wonderment and exploration. There is much to be learned in the natural world during all seasons throughout the year. We ask that you please dress children appropriately as we will more than likely get messy and even possibly muddy during play. Please send children with numerous changes of clothing and provide weather appropriate footwear such as winter or rain boots, sneakers, and summer shoes must have toes covered and a back strap so feet cannot slip out easily while running.

In the event we are unable to go outside (i.e. extreme weather conditions) we offer play spaces indoors so that children are still able to participate in gross motor play. These spaces may also be used when teachers deem it necessary for big-body play. Your child must be well enough to participate in all indoor and outdoor activities to attend school. For children with ongoing medical concerns that are affected by outside play, teachers and families will work together to create a plan for care in these circumstances.

### **REST TIME**

Our agency follows the NH Licensing Rules concerning nap and rest requirements. During February, April, Summer Vacation and other full day programs, Great Bay Kids' provide 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.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Our agency realizes the importance of good communication. The lines between family 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. You will also find that agency updates will be emailed to you via constant contact. Please be sure that you have a working email on file to receive information from your child's location and the agency. Good communication facilitates the team effort between staff and families that is necessary for the care of your child(ren).

The early childhood teaching staff, administration and families feel very strongly about the community that Great Bay Kids has created over the years and the communication that is utilized. If you have a grievance to

air, we encourage you to contact a Director or the Executive Director to have a conversation. The administration is happy to hear any comment, discuss any concern and listen to what you have to say.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Upon enrollment you will be asked to fill out a Media Matrix Form. This form gives us your permission to post pictures, art work, and other classroom materials your child made. There is a section that allows us to use pictures and pieces of art work on our agency website, agency Facebook page, as well as grant writing or newsletters. If you are uncomfortable with any of these avenues please do not check off those boxes on the Media Matrix Form.

Pictures or art work will not be shared with others by teachers or administrators without prior parental approval and we ask the same respect from parents. Please do not take pictures of other children that are not your own and share them on social media sources. We want to uphold our confidentiality practices. Thank you for your cooperation in the area. Also, approach your Program Director if you see something inappropriate related to social media so that the matter may be dealt with hastily and appropriately.

## **INCLUSION**

Great Bay Kid's Company complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. GBKC will not discriminate against any child or deny any child access to the center's programs or services on the basis of disability.

If a child is identified as having a disability, either before, during or after enrollment, GBKC early childhood teachers will work with the parents to seek appropriate referrals, and will make appropriate modifications in the environment whenever and wherever possible. Great Bay Kids' Company will work with families and children requiring special services or medical needs, including training for staff when necessary and facilitating outside service providers such as physical or occupational therapists. Suggestions made by therapists or physicians will be integrated into the classroom whenever possible.

Great Bay Kids' Company staff will also make any accommodations we possibly can for food allergies. Please see our administrative staff for a Special Meals Prescription that will need to be completed and signed by your child's physician.

## **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 a deposition or in court, during normal business hours, a subpoena shall be required in accordance with New Hampshire State 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 parents 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 page 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.

### **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.

We feel that an open line of communication between families and early childhood teaching staff regarding their child's experiences within the program is very important. 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. Our Challenging Behavior policy below outlines this procedure.

### **CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR**

GBKC has plans in place to assist in persistent behavior that is negatively interfering with the functioning of the program or the safety of the teachers or children. As we believe that discipline is not punishment but rather teaching, we strive to help children learn to behave in an acceptable way and learn self-regulation. We will work cooperatively with the family to develop and implement strategies to assist with the child's challenging behaviors. Teachers will look for identifying triggers and support the child with corrective action that allows them to begin to recognize what the appropriate steps are when the child is getting to an elevated state.

Should a child act aggressively towards their peers or teachers the following steps shall be taken:

**Step 1-** teacher will remove the child from the area into a calmer area or remove the group from the area when necessary, to allow for self-regulation. Staff will attend to the child who was hurt.

**Step 2-** Teacher will direct their attention to the child to assist in behavior regulation, and review with the child what happened. An Incident Report Form will be completed by the teacher and shared with the family at pick up.

**Step 3-**Should the child repeat an aggressive act upon a peer or teachers, administration should be notified immediately to assist in a “reset” for the child. At this time an administrator will notify the parent by phone of the child’s day.

**Step 4-** Administration will call the parent if a third aggressive act happens. At this time the parents may be asked to pick up their child for the day. When the parent arrives on location they may have a meeting with administration regarding the day and develop new strategies to assist the child.

The above protocol must be followed to ensure we have met the needs of the child to the best of our ability. If a child needs to be sent home due to extreme challenging behavior, an administrator will notify you.

It is important to note that while we do our best to change our program to fit the child, and guide the child’s behavior, our program is not designed for all behaviors. As each child requires different techniques and strategies to be successful, we will work with outside services to create an effective Corrective Action Plan. If all suggested strategies have been unsuccessful, the parent/guardian may be asked to withdraw the child from program in order to preserve a safe environment for all children enrolled. Should you have any questions regarding the policy on Extenuation Circumstance, Disciplinary Protocol, please see your director.

### **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 year 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 teacher 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.

### **CHILD IMMUNIZATIONS & PHYSICALS**

In order to adhere to state health regulations, we are required to have a current physical on file at the time of enrollment, and for children eight weeks to five years, this must be updated annually. For children ages 6 and older, an updated physical is required every two years. We cannot provide childcare without a current physical that is updated annually. We are committed to providing as healthy and germ free of an environment as possible for children and adults. All staff practice communicable disease control procedures. This includes using rubber gloves and a solution for disinfecting when necessary. Our staff is first aid and CPR certified.

### **ILLNESS**

As State regulations require that children be excluded from the program when they are ill and our agency is not set up for the care of sick children, we are unable to care for 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 required treatment has been administered in accordance with New Hampshire State Regulations.

*Please see our specific illness policy for more detail.*

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 information updated. In the best interest of your child, please make every effort to pick your child up within the hour that you have been contacted. You will be called if:

- Your child has 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**

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.

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.

## **Medications:**

The following are regulations from the “New Hampshire Child Care Agency Licensing Guidelines” regarding dispensing medication to children in care, which applies to all programs and all age groups. In addition to these guidelines, please note The School policy regarding non-prescription medications in Paragraph (2).

Medication shall be stored and administered in accordance with the following:

1. Child day care agencies shall not administer prescription medication to a child unless the medication is accompanied by written authorization from the parent and written order of a licensed health practitioner.
2. Child day care agencies may administer non-prescription medication to a child only when the medication is accompanied by written authorization from parents. (NOTE: Great Bay Kids ALSO REQUIRES WRITTEN ORDERS FROM A LICENSED HEALTH PRACTITIONER FOR ALL NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**)
3. Non-prescription medication shall be administered in accordance with the instructions printed by the manufacturer, or in accordance with the written order of a licensed practitioner.
4. Medication shall not be administered unless it is in the original container and labeled with the name of the medication, dosage, name of the child and if prescription, the name of the physician.
5. Medication shall not be administered beyond the expiration date.
6. The agency director or designee shall supervise the administration, records and control of all medications.
7. Medication shall be stored in accordance with instructions for storage and in a location not accessible to children.
8. Each dose of medication administered shall be recorded by the staff person responsible for administering the medication.
9. Medication shall be administered from an infant feeding bottle only when instructed to do so by a licensed health care provider.
10. Proper dosing tools must be provided with medication.

These medication policies are intended to be applied for a maximum of 1 to 2 doses each day. When possible, Great Bay Kids encourages parents to give all medications at home before or after child care. Parents are welcome to come at midday to administer a needed dose.

## **INJURED CHILD & FIRST AID**

At Great Bay Kids’ Company, we understand how concerning any injury can be when it comes to the health and safety of your child. We provide numerous CPR/First Aid trainings throughout the year to ensure all of our staff are certified to provide your child/children with safest quality care possible. Minor injuries such as scrapes or small cuts are treated by First Aid certified early childhood teachers. 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.

## **EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION**

When injuries require medical treatment beyond basic first aid, families are notified immediately and an appropriate course of action is decided upon. When families cannot be reached, the director will notify the emergency contact person(s) listed in the child's file.

In the unlikely event that immediate medical attention is required the child will be taken to the closest regional hospital by ambulance and will be accompanied by an adult. The child's parents and pediatrician will be contacted immediately. Parents should meet the ambulance at the hospital.

Great Bay Kids' Company is not responsible for any medical charges incurred as a result of any medical attention. Safety is one of our top priorities.

## **EMERGENCIES & DRILLS**

We take emergencies very serious at Great Bay Kids' Company which is why we routinely practice fire drills as well as other drills including drop and cover, shelter in place, lock down, evacuation drills, reverse evacuation, and secure campus drills.

In the event that we need to close early due to inclement weather, no heat or hot water, no electricity, or other emergencies requiring GBKC close early we will contact each parent via voice blast if we have power to come and pick up their children within the hour. If we do not have power the Program Director and other designees will begin calling the parents on their emergency phone numbers and speak directly with the parent or emergency contact or leave a message. An email blast may also be sent out pending we have power to do so.

## **EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN**

Each location practices regular Emergency Preparedness training to maintain the safety of staff and children in accordance with NH State Licensing Guidelines. Upon enrollment each family will receive information regarding our safe-keeping practices, drills and procedures for the required responses for possible incidences. Information will include procedures for families in the event of an evacuation, on-site or off-site reunification of families and children and plans for Seabrook Power Plant Reactor, if applicable. Please see your Program Director for more information.

## **WELLNESS POLICY**

We feel strongly that children should be exposed to healthy eating habits from a young age. 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".

This policy includes other special days or celebrations being held as part of the classroom curriculum. Although we appreciate the fact that you all want to help out by bringing in a special treat or other goodies, we ask that you refrain from doing so. The activity fee that you pay to Great Bay Kids' Company helps to supply materials needed for all activities including parties and celebrations. As always, we welcome you to come into the classroom and help with an activity, celebration or just to visit for a while.

Part of the reason for this policy is to teach children that parties and celebrations do not have to revolve around food and especially not around high sugar snacks. By giving children healthy food options and non-

food options for celebrating birthdays and other special events, we hope to send a good message to children that we can have fun without high calorie foods involved.

## **MEALS 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 early childhood/school age education programs. 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 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 "Special Meals Prescription Form" signed by 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 food items. Please do not bring in any food for any reason unless prior arrangements have been made with the School Age Program Director.

Great Bay Kids' Company has a commitment to provide families and employees with a safe, healthy, and clean 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 the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or if all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). Persons with disabilities, who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

IF LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED FOR CIVIL RIGHTS PURPOSES, PLEASE CONTACT THE NH COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AT: 1-603-271-2767, DIAL "0", ASK FOR AN INTERPETER.

SI ASISTENCIA DE LENGUAJE ES NECESARIO PARA CIVILES DERECHOS PROPÓSITOS, POR FAVOR CONTACTO CON LA COMISIÓN NH LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS A: 1-603-271-2767, MARCAR "0", PEDIR UNA INTERPETER.

## Parent Partnerships

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### **COMMUNICATION**

Our agency realizes the importance of good communication. The lines between families and teachers should be open and effective. To better facilitate communication between early childhood teachers and families 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).

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Here at Great Bay Kids' Company we encourage family involvement within the before and after school setting. We offer an open-door policy to families and would love for you to join your child and teachers by visiting or volunteering in the classroom. There are a variety of ways you can support your classroom including but not limited to facilitating a group activity for the children in the class, attend a class trip as a chaperone, or offer to assist teachers in gearing up for the week's activities by cutting, copying, or organizing.

We also encourage family input for ideas on center specific or agency wide family days, fundraising ideas for our nonprofit agency, or suggestions on how to better our center. Families and early childhood teachers are a team in creating a great space for learning.

### **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

We are excited to partner with your family for your school age enrichment education. This family handbook is meant to be as comprehensive as possible, though not every possible scenario can be covered. At times we may find that some policies need to be revised or updated to reflect new research or guidelines. Great Bay Kids' Company policies can be changed by the board of directors with thirty (30) days written notice. We will notify families of changes by sending out an update via email and posting the change on the website. Please see your Program Director if you have any questions that have not been answered.

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# Great Bay Kids' Company, Inc.

## Parent Handbook Acknowledgment Form

These policies have been explained to me and I have retained a copy for my records. I have read, or have had read to me, the attached handbook and I understand that I am held accountable for these policies until my child is no longer enrolled or I am otherwise notified. I understand that the Agency reserves the right to change these policies and will notify me by sending out an updated handbook or written notice as soon as possible after any changes have been made.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Director's Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name (please print)

**My child is currently enrolled in the**

Main Street

Lincoln Street

Newfields

Summer Camp

*(Please circle one)*

**Please return this completed page to your Program Director  
and keep the Parent Handbook for future reference.**