



Northland

EARLY  
EDUCATION  
CENTER

# Family

# Handbook

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Page	3	Mission, Philosophy and Vision
	3	Commitment to Children and Families
	3	-We commit ourselves to...
	3	-Family commitment to NEEC is...
Page	4	Children's Rights
	4	Program Operation
	4	-Hours of Operation
	4	-Arrival and Departure
Page	5	-Fees
	5	-Vacation Policy
	5	-Eligibility Criteria
Page	6	-Nondiscrimination Pledge
	6	-Intake Process
Page	7	-Enrollment Process
Page	8	-Annual Re-Enrollment
	8	-Communication and Addressing Concerns
	8	-Confidentiality
	8	-Risks
Page	9	-Validating and Reporting Suspected Abuse/Neglect
Page	10	Preschool Services
	10	-Teaching Model & Integration
	10	-Infant/Toddler Program
	10	-2-year old Program
Page	11	-Multi-age (3-5 year old Program)
	11	-Transitioning
	11	-Meals and Snacks
	12	-Outdoor Play
	12	-Television
	12	-Transportation
Page	12	-Field Trips
	13	-Visitation Policy
Page	13	-Responsibility
	13	-Communicable Disease
	14	-Medications
Page	14	-School Closings
	15	-Tube Feeding Policy
	15	-Inclement Weather Closure Policy
	15	-Clothing and Personal Items
	15	-Parking
	15	-Behavior Management
Page	15	-Evaluating Services
	16	-Terminating Enrollment
	16	Therapy Services
	16	-Services Offered
Page	17	-Therapists Credentials
	17	-Individual Service Planning
	17	-Records
Page	17	-Access to Records
	18	-Documentation
Page	18	Accreditation

## *Mission*

NEEC's mission is to shape the future of children through quality early education and therapeutic intervention while teaching compassion for diversity.

## *Program Philosophy*

All children belong.

All children are treated with respect and as unique individuals.

All children have special needs and special strengths and in an appropriate environment learn from each other as well as from the teaching staff.

A qualified staff and a nurturing environment are critical to a child's development.

In order to meet the needs of the children, we must also meet the needs of their families.

Children learn alongside their chronologically-aged peers.

## *Vision*

NEEC provides young children (whether typically developing or children with special needs) the opportunity to learn and to develop to their maximum potential. We work to maximize each child's cognitive skills, social skills, communication skills, and daily living skills to enhance their quality of life. These goals are reached through a dedicated staff and board members, improved financial condition, a qualified and cross-trained staff, state-of-the-art equipment and facility, a cutting-edge education and speech, physical, and occupational therapy services.

*"Shaping the future of children"*

## **Our Commitment to Children & Families**

### *We commit ourselves to:*

- ❖ Providing a nurturing, stimulating environment for your child,
- ❖ Maintaining state licensures, medication certification, NAEYC, CARF accreditation, and participating in the QRS pilot program.
- ❖ Cooperating with you in designing a program to meet your child's individual needs,
- ❖ Welcoming your involvement in our program, and
- ❖ Respecting your child's individuality.

### *Family Commitment to NEEC*

As a NEEC family, your involvement is essential in creating a positive learning environment for all children. Parents must

- ❖ Communicate daily,
- ❖ Give any pertinent information regarding your child to his/her teacher as you are the expert on your child,
- ❖ Attend parent/teacher conferences when scheduled and request additional conferences whenever you desire.

## *Children's Rights*

Each child shall be entitled to the following rights, without limitations:

- ❖ To respect and caring
- ❖ To humane care and treatment
- ❖ To a safe and sanitary environment, where weapons, of any kind, are prohibited on the premises of Northland Early Education Center
- ❖ To not participate in non-therapeutic labor
- ❖ To receive prompt evaluation and individualized programming in the least restrictive environment
- ❖ To be treated with dignity as a human being
- ❖ To not be the subject of experimental research, unnecessary drugs, or unnecessary restraint
- ❖ To not be subject to any hazardous treatment
- ❖ To a nourishing, well-balanced and varied diet
- ❖ To be free from verbal, physical, and psychological abuse or neglect
- ❖ To confidential records and information
- ❖ To culturally sensitive interactions
- ❖ To an impartial review of alleged violations of rights
- ❖ To the right of privacy;
- ❖ Freedom from financial or other exploitation, retaliation and humiliation.

## **Program Operation**

### *Hours of Operation*

Northland Early Education Center is open from 6:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday throughout the calendar year, with the exceptions of the holidays noted for each enrollment year and for emergency closures.

Please remember that NEEC provide staffing according to your child's scheduled hours.

Requests for deviations will be met if possible but not guaranteed. Submit your request for deviation to the classroom teacher.

### *Arrival/Departure*

Parents or authorized persons must sign children in and out at the time of arrival and departure each day. Information on authorized persons must remain current in the event of an emergency. Families must follow NEEC's procedures for checking children in and out. This is important in an emergency as it is the primary way administration has to ensure the safety and presence of all children.

Parents will be charged \$10.00 for every 5 minutes after 6:00 P.M. that their child is not picked up.

## *Fees*

Effective 01/05/09, rates for early care & education services for full-time enrollment are:

- Birth to two years: \$190/week
- 2 year olds: \$160/week
- 3-5 year olds \$145/week
- Before & After School Only \$115/week
- Before & After School Full Day \$140/week
- Community Inclusion \$125/month

Families must remit \$50 to register for NEEC's waiting list. This fee is nonrefundable. If the child enrolls within 12 months, the first year's initial enrollment fee is waived.

A \$30.00 nonrefundable fee is due at the time of initial enrollment.

Every August, each family will pay \$30.00 administrative fee to continue enrollment for their child(ren) for the next school year unless the child was enrolled after June 1<sup>st</sup> of that year.

Payment for each child's tuition is due on Monday of each week. A \$20 late fee will be added to accounts not paid by Thursday of that week. Days missed, sick days, holidays and closure due to weather or power/water outages will not be deducted from the tuition as NEEC's expenses remain constant throughout the year. Children will not be accepted for services if payment is one week overdue.

Families incur a \$30 charge for any returned checks.

## *Vacation (free days) Policy*

Because our costs are the same whether you child attends or is absent, it is our policy to charge families for all absences, with the exception of up to 5 free vacation days a year:

- ❖ Children enrolled full-time as of January 1<sup>st</sup> receive 5 full days of vacation time for that calendar year.
- ❖ Children enrolled full-time January 2<sup>nd</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> receive 2 full days of vacation time for that calendar year.
- ❖ Children enrolled part-time receive no vacation days.

## *Eligibility Criteria*

Any child, birth to five years of age, is eligible for Northland Early Education Center (NEEC) services, with two exceptions:

- 1) NEEC is unable to serve medically fragile children, which includes but is not limited to those on oxygen support, IV administered medications, breathing tubes, heart monitors; those in hospice care, and those who need absolute one-on-one attention. We do not have medical professionals on staff. Information on alternative services is available.

2) We cannot accept children whose parents are unable to pay our fees, and don't qualify for full subsidies. Information on subsidies is available.

In the unlikely event that the Program Director decides that the preschool's services are not a good match for the child, he/she would inform the family and any referral agency involved as to the reasons Northland Early Education Center cannot serve the child, and provide the family with information on alternate resources.

In a waiting list situation, a child with special needs receives preferential enrollment. NEEC also offers preferential enrollment, secondary to children with special needs, for siblings of children currently enrolled. Children of full time employees are third priority for placement. Other enrollment criteria include the date the child was placed on the waiting list, our ability to meet the scheduling needs of the family and our ability to meet the specific needs of the child. The Program Director makes final enrollment decisions.

### *Nondiscrimination Pledge*

The Northland Early Education Center does not discriminate against and will not refuse services on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, or national or ethnic origin.

### *Intake Process*

#### *Early Intervention Services, ages Birth-3:*

Infants and children from birth to age three, who have delayed development or diagnosed conditions that are associated with developmental disabilities, are referred through First Steps, a state program that funds provision of early intervention services. The authorization for services and funding are administered through First Steps' Northwest Region SPOE.

Parents first contact the NW SPOE (Daulton Group), which arranges an evaluation of the child's needs. The SPOE arranges the assessment by a peer review team. Following the initial assessment, the family and infant/child are referred to a Service Coordinator (SC) for the duration of the child's participation in the First Steps program. At that time, the family can choose who and where the qualifying services will be delivered. If NEEC therapists are the chosen provider, the SC invites participation by NEEC staff as well as family members in creating goals/objectives for each service and develops an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). After the planning meeting, the SC writes up the plan and sends copies to the service provider (NEEC) and the family.

#### *Early Intervention Services, ages 3+:*

Children over the age of three that have special needs are referred by parents or local school districts for the early education program. At this time, children are eligible to receive their preschool and therapy through the school district if they qualify, but parents may request that the child receive services at NEEC in certain instances. In that case, the school district contracts with NEEC and funds the services. More commonly, the children receive a half-day of services through the school district, and then come to NEEC for early education for the rest of the day.

### *Early Education Services:*

Children who are typically developing, ages Birth to five, are referred directly to NEEC. The Program Director handles all such contacts, arranges family tours, and maintains the waiting list. Family tours consist of explanations of our philosophy, introduction to all rooms, and possible risks of contagious illnesses. When the child reaches the top of the waiting list, the Program Director arranges an enrollment meeting with the family.

Referrals from the SPOE usually come directly to the Therapist; referrals of older children come to the Program Director. The Program Director arranges a tour with the family. When the assessment and the IFSP have been completed, the Program Director meets with the family for enrollment.

### *Enrollment Process*

When the Program Director (PD) meets with the family for enrollment, she provides them with a Family Handbook. The Family Handbook also states that Health and Safety Policies are available in full upon request. If the family is unable to afford NEEC fees, the PD provides them with information about funding available through the Division of Family Services.

She also provides the family with a packet of enrollment forms, which includes:

1. Child Enrollment Form
2. Individual Information Sheet
3. Transportation Agreement
4. Attendance Contract
5. Photograph/Print Release Form
6. Parent Policy and Procedure Review
7. Food Program Enrollment Form
8. Food Program Income Eligibility Form
9. Release of Information specific for agencies
10. Birth History
11. Medical Examination Report

Families of infants and toddlers also fill out a form of Special Instructions for Infants and Toddlers.

Families of children with special needs also fill out/make available to NEEC:

1. School District Transportation Form (if applicable)
2. Individualized Child Care Plan (if applicable)
3. Release of Information
4. Doctor's Prescription for Physical Therapy (if applicable)
5. Current IEP/IFSP
6. Assistive Feeding Instructions (if applicable)

If the IFSP/IEP has not yet been received from the family or Service Coordinator, the Office Manager contacts him/her to request the form—immediately.

## *Annual Re-Enrollment*

Each August, families must attend annual re-enrollment to ensure placement for their child. . A \$30 enrollment fee per family is required at this time. They receive the same packet of forms to fill out, and the staff makes a brief presentation on policies and procedures in the Family Handbook, drawing attention to any changes

## *Communication and Addressing Concerns*

The philosophy of Northland Early Education Center revolves around open communication. All persons served have the right to address concerns or complaints without retaliation or barriers of services. Concerns or complaints should be first addressed with the classroom lead teacher. If the issue is not resolved within 10 days of the incident, please contact the Program Director. And if the issue is still unresolved 10 days later, arrange a meeting with the Executive Director.

The Board Quality Improvement Committee will review complaints at every meeting, and also conduct an annual review to determine any trends, any necessary changes in policies or procedures, or any areas where NEEC could improve its performance. The Quality Improvement Committee will provide written notification regarding the actions that were taken to address the complaint when found necessary. NEEC holds a non-reprisal approach for reporting grievances.

MO Department of Health, Bureau of Child Care can be contacted to report violations with licensing standards by calling 816-350-5459.

## *Confidentiality*

Northland Early Education Center considers all information regarding all children as confidential. Northland Early Education Center staff will not discuss a child with anyone other than pertinent staff, regulating bodies, accrediting bodies, legal guardians, custodial parents, or with those persons or agencies authorized by the family with a signed, written release of information. Northland Early Education Center adheres to federal and state statutes concerning a child's information.

No information requested by someone outside NEEC, other than parents/guardian, will be given over the telephone unless NEEC has a written release signed by the parents.

## *Risks*

Growing up has its risks—learn to walk and you may fall, play with other children and you may get hit or bit. We do our best to protect your child's health and safety, but there are some risks. For example, if your child's immune system is weak, playing with other children may increase illnesses. To learn more about the precautions we take, please read our Health & Safety Policies and Procedures. To learn more about the program's ethical practices please refer to the Code of Ethics located in all Policy and Procedure Manuals. If you have any questions, please talk with your child's Lead Teacher or the Program Director.

## *Validating and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse*

If a staff member suspects outside child abuse or neglect, he/she should follow these procedures:

1. Immediately notify the Lead Teacher and the Program Director. Together, they will evaluate and document the evidence. The documentation should include specific observations of injuries, behavior, parent's and child's attitudes, and photographs of physical evidence.
2. The child should be interviewed by the staff member with whom the child feels the most comfortable. This interview should be conducted in a private and comfortable place. Questions should be open-ended, not leading. When listening to the child, the interviewer should avoid expressing feelings of shock, anger, sadness or disapproval of parents. The interviewer should not press a child who is unwilling to talk, and the child should be assured that he/she is not "in trouble" or at fault. Art, dolls, and dramatic play may be used to allow the child to express his/her feelings and describe the situation.
3. The Program Director then reviews the evidence and makes the decision about whether there is sufficient reason to suspect abuse or neglect. If there is, the PD will contact the Division of Family Services hotline. This phone call should be documented. Any instructions from DFS should be followed.

If a parent or a staff member suspects that a staff member may be abusing or neglecting a child, those suspicions should be immediately reported to the Program Director. The Program Director will follow the above procedures for interviewing the person who reports the possible abuse and the child and documenting those interviews. The PD will then review the situation with the Executive Director, who will decide whether there is sufficient reason to request a formal investigation. If there is, the staff member will be suspended without pay until a determination by the appropriate authorities has been made. The incident must be reported to DFS and the Department of Health's Bureau of Childcare. They will decide whether the situation should be reported to the police.

No staff member should discuss the situation with anyone outside the agency.

If a determination is made that a staff member is not at fault, the staff member will be immediately reinstated and will receive back-pay for the time of the suspension. If the abuse is substantiated, the staff member's employment with NEEC will be immediately terminated.

1. These allegations are reviewed at the Board Quality Improvement Committee meeting.
2. Documentation is kept in a locked, confidential file in the Program Director's office.

# Preschool Services

## *Teaching Model and Integration*

NEEC believes that all children have special needs and special strengths, and that in an appropriate learning environment, can learn from their peers as well as from instructors. Children are grouped according to their chronological age. All children, regardless of their developmental level, can interact with each other through gestures, body language, speaking, sign language, and other inventive means of communication.

All NEEC classrooms follow a constructivist model of curriculum in which children construct their own knowledge and values as a result of interactions with the physical and social world.

Twice a year, NEEC Lead Teachers conduct conferences with parents in which development is discussed and individual goals are set. These goals are recorded on the conference summary. The classroom teachers use anecdotal records, observations, and photographs to assess each child's developmental level in the areas of cognition, language, and fine motor, gross motor, self-help and social/emotional skills.

NEEC provides additional staff in each classroom to facilitate each child's development. Staffing levels within the agency exceed state requirements as well as staffing ratios at similar agencies. Desired staffing ratios are as follows:

	NEEC Desired Ratios	State Required Ratios
Children 2 and younger	1:4	1:4
Children 24-36 months	1:6	1:8
3-5 year olds	1:7/ 1:8	1:10

For average fees, we provide exceptional services. Teachers with experience and a minimum of a CDA (Child Development Associates) lead all classrooms. All teaching staff participates in professional development activities and are encouraged to continue their education beyond high school

## *Infant/Toddler Program*

NEEC has two infant rooms and two toddler rooms. Each room can have up to eight children with a 1:4 teacher to child ratio. In the infant programs, daily routines are initiated by families and maintained by staff throughout the day. For example, Northland Early Education Center staff will follow the family's lead for eating table food once initiated within the home environment. In the toddler programs, the daily routine is designed and implemented by the classroom teachers, with each child's needs taken into consideration. In all Infant and Toddler rooms, teachers supervise children by sight and sound at all times.

## *Two-year-old Program*

NEEC has two classrooms that educate two-year-old children. Teachers in these rooms supervise children by sight and sound at all times. These classrooms can have up to 12 children with a 1:6 teacher-child ratio. Teachers create weekly lesson plans that are fully inclusive for all children.

## *Multi-age, 3-5 year olds program*

NEEC has two classrooms that provide education for 3-5 year-olds, serving up to 20 children with a teacher-child ratio of 1:7 / 1:8. The lead teacher creates weekly lesson plans through which all the children grow and develop skills. Teachers create an environment where all children are challenged and functioning at their fullest potential. Children are supervised primarily by sight but supervision by sound is permitted for short intervals. Classrooms are organized with learning centers in which the children can explore during 'work times'.

## *Transitioning*

Children transition to new classrooms according to their chronological age, or the safest environment for the individual. The Program Director schedules the transition of children into new classrooms. During the transition period, new teachers will be informed of child's routine and families will have an opportunity to ask questions. The child will be placed in the new room for small amounts of time and the time will be increased according to the child's adaptability level. The family will also be given a transition survey to complete after the transition has taken place.

## *Meals & Snacks*

All meals and snacks provided by NEEC meet or exceed nutritional recommendations of the Missouri Department of Health. NEEC is a participant in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Northland Early Education Center provides a morning snack (equivalent to breakfast), an afternoon snack, and lunch for children 12 months and older. Staff do not offer children whole hot dogs, whole grapes, popcorn or raw carrots. Peanut butter and other nut products are not allowed in the building. Teaching staff in all classrooms provide an opportunity for toothbrushing at least once daily.

For infants, parents have the option of using infant formula and baby food offered by NEEC. If parents opt out of this option, they will provide the necessary food until their children are able to eat meals provided by NEEC. The Preschool supports breastfeeding by accepting, storing and serving breastmilk. Mothers that wish to breastfeed at the facility may do so in the classroom or other designated location of their choice. NEEC will not introduce any new foods to infants. Families must first introduce foods to the children. Any food or drink brought by the family must be labeled and dated. No milk or infant food is warmed by use of a microwave oven.

Mealtime should be a pleasant experience. NEEC supports family style meal service in the classrooms. The family style dining is introduced in the toddler rooms and carried

through into the 2 year old as well as the 3-5 year old classrooms. Meals served family style can give the child a sense of routine and promote development of fine and gross motor skills, table manners and promote healthy eating habits.

Parents may bring a child to the school and prepare their breakfast for them. Northland Early Education Center staff will supervise the child while eating, but will not prepare the child's breakfast. Children may eat breakfast brought from home until 8:00 a.m.

If a child requires a special diet due to medical restrictions, a doctor's order must be provided. An alternative snack from NEEC's snack supply may be provided to the child for morning and afternoon snack. Parents may bring one prepared meal as a lunch substitute for their child each day. NEEC strongly encourages families to meet nutritional recommendations of the Missouri Department of Health.

### *Outdoor Play*

All children are given the opportunity to play outdoors at least twice daily for 30 minutes (infants once daily). If for medical reasons, a child is not permitted to attend the gross motor time outside for longer than 2 consecutive days a written order is required by a licensed physician. Families are encouraged to provide clothing that is appropriate for weather conditions. During summer hours, children have the opportunity to engage in water play twice weekly. Families provide swimwear, towels, and sunscreen with a signed permission form for application of the sunscreen.

### *Television*

Television is not a component of a positive learning environment. Northland Early Education Center limits viewing to periodic specific shows or programs directly related to classroom lesson plans. Occasional special programs may prove acceptable at the discretion of the lead teacher, but must prove educational in nature.

### *Transportation*

Families are responsible for transporting their child(ren) to and from NEEC. Families must notify NEEC of any transportation changes for their child, and all individuals must be prepared to present photo identification upon entering the facility.

### *Field Trips*

The 2 year old and 3-5 year old classrooms take approximately two field trips per year. The toddler rooms also take field trips at the teacher's discretion. Classroom teachers plan the trips and the families transport. Every child must have a completed field trip release form before departure and the following procedures must apply:

1. Signed permission slips must be obtained from every child prior to the date of the field trip (even if the parents do not give permission to attend).

2. Whoever transports the child to the event must also transport back to the school.
3. Field trips are educational for the children and teachers must act accordingly.
4. Everyone attending represents NEEC and should stay together as a group. Teachers should maintain contact with all children regardless of whether or not a parent attends.
5. The transportation arrangements should be made in advance. The Program Director must be notified of arrangements and sign off on them prior to departure.
6. Plans for children NOT attending the field trip should be made and approved by Program Director.
7. The Caterer should be notified 1-2 weeks in advance. Sack lunches will be provided for children only. Any extras may be eaten by the teachers.
8. The schedule of the day should be discussed with group prior to departure.
9. Staff transporting children or parents transporting children, other than their own are required to have the following:
  - a. Cell Phone
  - b. Transportation checklist (Attachment 'A')
  - c. First Aid kit
  - d. Blanket
  - e. Flash Light
10. Anyone transporting children must have a valid driver's license and current auto insurance card.
11. A list of the driver's passengers must be left at the front desk with cell phone numbers.

### *Visitation Policy*

In order to provide a positive and safe learning environment for all children, Northland Early Education Center will identify each individual entering the agency. Only those individuals noted on each child's transportation form will be allowed to visit or pick up a child unless otherwise authorized. In addition, Northland Early Education Center is not an appropriate location for custodial visits or Family Services' visitations. All visits conducted by Family Services or the courts must identify another location or receive prior approval from Administration.

Regardless, families are highly encouraged to visit their child anytime. We welcome your involvement in your child's education.

### *Responsibility*

Families retain complete responsibility for their children when under the supervision of parent(s) or parental designee(s) on Northland Early Education Center property.

### *Communicable Diseases*

According to the Dept. of Health licensing regulations, all children with any symptoms listed below will be sent home. Children must be symptom free for 24 hours or have written consent from a doctor stating that the child's symptoms are not contagious before returning to school.

### Indications of Illnesses:

- Fever of 100.0 or more, or a very low temperature
- Vomiting more than once
- Severe coughing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Pinkeye
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Unusually dark, tea-colored urine
- Grey or white stool
- Headache and stiff neck
- Labored or rapid breathing
- Diarrhea
- Changes in skin color
- Severe itching of the body or scalp

Lice are considered an infectious disease, and the child will be sent home with treatment information, and not allowed to return until the infestation is gone.

## *Medications*

All prescription drugs administered at NEEC must arrive in the original pharmacy-dispensed containers. Medications must arrive labeled with the child's name, instructions, and the prescribing physician's name as required by law. All non-prescription medication must arrive labeled with the child's name.

All medication administered at NEEC require a Parent Medication Authorization (valid for 30 days) and Doctor's Authorization (valid for 90 days) forms to be completed prior to administering.

Non-prescription topical applications require a parents' written authorization, but do not require a written order from a licensed physician unless the topical application stated "medicated".

Standing orders for the entire facility shall not be allowed.

In an emergency, the physician may change a prescription via fax or telephone.

NEEC will not administer any P.R.N. medications.

## *School Closings*

NEEC will issue an annual school calendar including all dates when the school closes, but the following is a general list of closures:

New Year's Day  
Memorial Day  
Thanksgiving  
Christmas Day

President's Day  
Independence Day  
Day after Thanksgiving  
Columbus Day

Labor Day  
Christmas Eve

Families may choose to use a vacation day for these closing.

### *Tube Feeding Policy*

Northland Early Education Center staff will administer tube feedings when written consent from the doctor in the form of: Individualized Child Care Plan or Medication Authorization form. Classroom staff will be given specific verbal and written instructions by the parent/legal guardian as outlined in the “Assistive Feeding Instruction” form. Any amendments to the feeding process must be documented. Documentation may be made by the family or through verbal communication with and recorded by the staff in the classroom.

### *Inclement Weather Closure Policy*

Northland Early Education Center may close, dismiss early or schedule a late arrival due to weather, water or power outages, or other serious events. Families will receive notification through the media &/or email. NEEC uses St. Pius as a guide for closure in inclement weather situations, but will post closings individually on local television stations (Channels 4, 5, 9, 29 and 41). These days will be very limited. Weekly tuition for these emergencies will not be waived, although families may choose to use one of their allotted vacation days if available

### *Clothing & Personal Items*

Parents must provide the necessary diapers and wipes for their child(ren).

Parents should provide a complete change of weather appropriate clothing for their child. The “job” of a preschooler is to experience many new things. This often leads to messy fun that stains and spots clothing. Please remember this when dressing your child for their day at school. NEEC will not be responsible for replacement of damaged clothing.

Children may bring a small toy or blanket for naptime. Please label all personal items.

### *Parking*

NEEC designated the area adjacent to the front of the building parking for families.

Only those vehicles with state-approved placards or licenses may use the handicapped places in the front.

Please refrain from using the fire lane for quick drop-off or pick-up. In the event of an emergency, it is essential for emergency equipment to use this area.

### *Behavior Management*

Northland Early Education Center uses positive redirection and positive reinforcement as the primary methods of behavior management. Timeout is used if redirection does not work. Restraints are used only if the child has a written behavior plan from a team including the family, teachers, and behavior therapist.

Timeout guidelines: Northland Early Education Center uses timeout on occasion when children demonstrate potential dangerous behaviors, behaviors that might injure others, destroy property or the environment; socially unacceptable behaviors (spitting, biting, pulling hair and throwing objects); or non-compliant behavior to a structured developmentally appropriate activity.

Classrooms are arranged so that there is a Safe Place for children to spend time for calming down. This area is not secluded from supervision and is used as a learning tool to teach self-calming skills.

### *Evaluating Services*

In every classroom, parents may obtain feedback or suggestion forms to submit at the front desk. The Program Director reviews these forms, and all Child Injury & Illness Reports, on a weekly basis and the Board's Quality Improvement Committee reviews the complaints and incident reports at monthly meetings as reported by the Program Director.

Once a year, NEEC distributes surveys to families to assess satisfaction with the agency's services. Additional surveys are also given when a child moves up to the next classroom and when he/she leaves the program. NEEC appreciates your constructive comments and participation in these evaluations.

### *Terminating Enrollment*

Parents may terminate enrollment at any time, but must give two weeks written notice to teachers and administration. Please remember to retrieve all your child's belongings. Northland Early Education Center will assume that all articles left are donations.

Parents must notify NEEC within 24 hours of an absence, or it will be assumed the family no longer desires NEEC services.

Northland Early Education Center may terminate a child's enrollment under the following conditions:

- ❖ If NEEC proves unable to provide the most appropriate learning environment for your child, or is unable to meet specific needs of your child;
- ❖ If you do not comply with these policies & procedures;
- ❖ If you do not comply with payment policies; or
- ❖ If you do not submit required health information on your child in a timely manner.

After leaving the program, all families will receive a follow-up survey which should be completed and returned as soon as possible. This is a way to improve our agency and the services we provide.

## Therapy Services

### *Services offered*

The Northland Early Education Center offers Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Speech Therapy, as well as Special Instruction. Services are predominately provided through the MO First Steps program. Services can be provided through Medicaid,

or private pay in special circumstances. Therapy visits may take place at a child's home or preschool setting. If another site is desired, this must be agreed upon by the family, therapist and Northland Early Education Center's administration.

A parent or caregiver must always be present during home therapy visits to ensure the therapy techniques are integrated into the family's natural routines.

To provide physical therapy services, a doctor must submit a prescription. Without a current prescription, therapy cannot begin or continue until this document is received by NEEC administration. This will need to be updated yearly for therapy services to continue.

Only those therapy services with a confirmed source of payment are provided. Cancellations or reschedule requests need to be made to the therapist as soon as possible. If the therapist arrives at the visit site and the child is not present a "no-show" will be given. If two "no-shows" are accumulated, NEEC staff will notify the family by letter. If a third "no-show" occurs, the child will be discharged from therapy services. A copy of that letter will be sent to the child's service coordinator. If a family cancels within one hour of the scheduled therapy time, that visit will be billed according to the First Steps Policy..

A child may be brought to the therapy area for therapy services only. Visits will be scheduled at the mutual agreement of the therapist and the family.

Family members should not arrive early for their appointment time. If it is necessary to arrive early, family members should wait outside of the therapy room until their scheduled time.

If the family arrives late for an appointment, the therapy session will still end at the scheduled time.

As NEEC provides special instruction, speech therapy, physical therapy and occupational therapy, no other therapy providers may treat children at NEEC. However, if a child needs a service NEEC does not provide, we welcome community partners to work with us in meeting each child's need and invite them into the building as scheduled with the family and teaching staff. The family must receive prior approval from NEEC's Program Director for another agency to treat a child on-site.

### *Therapists Credentials*

All therapists carry current licensure and certification in their area of study. They must maintain current on trainings and complete 12 hours of training per year. The Special Instructor must hold a Bachelor's degree in Early Education or Early Childhood Special Education and maintain at least 12 training hours per year.

### *Individual Service Planning*

Individual Family Service Plans are developed by the external Service Coordinator, and NEEC staff participating, along with family and therapists. The family provides medical and other relevant information about the child's needs, the therapist who did the external assessment provides information and the child's functioning and therapy needs, and NEEC staff participate to share information on the child's progress in the program. The plan covers the child's abilities and strengths; family concerns, priorities and resources; family and child-centered outcomes; and all the goals, resources, supports and services that are

needed to help the child achieve his/her full potential. If the child needs services not provided at NEEC, this plan covers those needs and where they can be met. And if there are any risks to a child from participation in the preschool program, they will be discussed with the family during this planning process.

These plans are reviewed and revised annually, unless the family requests more frequent review.

Twice a year, NEEC Lead Teachers conduct conferences with parents in which development is discussed and individual goals are set. These goals are recorded on the conference summary. The classroom teachers use anecdotal records, observations, and photographs to assess each child's developmental level in the areas of cognition, language, and fine motor, gross motor, self-help and social/emotional skills.

## Records

### *Access to Records*

Northland Early Education Center provides all parents(s)/guardian(s) the opportunity to obtain full access to their child's records at any time. Parents may request and obtain copies of materials produced by Northland Early Education Center. Upon receiving a written request for records, Northland Early Education Center will submit said copies within 7 calendar days. A service fee of \$3.00 for the first page and .50 per page thereafter will be required upon delivery.

### *Documentation*

Teachers document events, behaviors and situations occurring during the day 1) to inform staff on other shifts of anything they need to know, 2) to inform families of anything unusual, 3) to document progress and report it to families and funding agencies as required, and 4) to ensure the safety and protection of employees, the children, and their families. When documenting events it is important to keep information factual, objective and non-judgmental. For example, documentation will not state how a child "appears", but describe their specific actions, statements or physical mannerisms.

Mandated documentation and the location where it is retained:

- Daily classroom communication log (any changes in child's abilities or behaviors, alerts from parents, phone calls about the child)—kept in the classroom
- Monthly summaries of child's progress written by therapists—given to parents and kept in child's file
- Continuous records of development located in each child's portfolio.
- Medication administration forms per Department of Mental Health regulations—kept in the child's file
- Seizures (seizure log, daily note or possible parent call)—Seizure logs are kept in the classroom, if applicable
- Injury/Illness reports—original to the Program Director and the copy home with the child
- Individual Family Service Plans—kept in the child's file and a teacher's file
- Suspected abuse/neglect—teacher's personal file and Program Director's file

- A Discharge summary on children with special needs is kept in their permanent file.

All information logged in a child's file may be accessed by parents, DFS and other related agencies.

## **Accreditation**

NEEC holds two national accreditations:

- ❖ The Commission for Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) recognizes the excellence of NEEC's Children and Youth Services.
- ❖ The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recognizes the school's educational services.

These two accreditations validate the preschool's exceptional services. From a national perspective, few organizations achieve accreditation from both entities. Northland Early Education Center demonstrates their commitment to quality by participating in CARF and NAEYC.