



Located at  
Denver Early Childhood Center  
401 E. Franklin Street  
Denver, IA 50622

## Parent Handbook

**Contact Numbers:**

**Discoveries Office: 319.406.0053**

**Discoveries Off-Site Cell Phone: 319.939.1605**

**Denver Elementary School Office: 319.984.5611**

**Discoveries Email:**

**[disc.extended.day@aol.com](mailto:disc.extended.day@aol.com)**

**Discoveries Website:**

**Denver-Cyclones.com**

**Early Childhood tab**

## **Welcome to Discoveries**

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## **Discoveries Learning Center, Inc. - Program Policies and Procedures**

### **I. WELCOME TO DISCOVERIES PRESCHOOL QPPS 10.1**

We are pleased that your family has chosen Discoveries Learning Center. Recent brain research tells us that over 90% of a child's brain is developed before entering Kindergarten. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of your child's early years. We truly look forward to partnering with you during this stage of very rapid growth and development.

While the program has been in existence since 2004, the program adopted the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards in 2010, which are administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The QPPS were developed to establish a standard of quality for preschool programs across the state. A copy of the standards is available for your review in the office at any time. Discoveries is also licensed by the Department of Human Services. A copy of these standards is available for you to review. It is the goal of Discoveries to offer you and your family a comprehensive, research based, and high quality care experience.

### **II. MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND GOALS QPPS 10.1**

#### **Mission:**

Our mission is to provide meaningful experiences which encourage caring, learning and personal well-being. This will be accomplished by recognizing the value of each individual and promoting academic and personal growth in a challenging and caring environment.

#### **Philosophy of Education:**

Children learn best through meaningful play experiences. The last decade has seen a dramatic increase in our understanding of what constitutes high quality early education and care. Discoveries Learning Center uses valid scientific research combined with parent support and participation to guide our practices. We also rely on widely accepted standards of high quality care, such as those described by the Quality Preschool Performance Standards (QPPS). Our center and extended care are carefully planned to be developmentally appropriate. We recognize each child's stage of development and develop curriculum according to your child's individual needs.

It is our intent to provide a homelike atmosphere that welcomes children and adults alike. As parents, you are your child's first and primary teacher. Thus, our approach includes a commitment to work with you in the best interest of your child. We invite you to visit the classroom, participate in activities, or contribute in ways which are comfortable for you.

#### **Goals for Children:**

- ♦ Children will show competency in social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development skills.
- ♦ Children will be enthusiastic and curious learners.
- ♦ Children will be safe and healthy.

#### **Goals for Families:**

- ♦ Families will feel welcome in the classroom and school.
- ♦ Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to help their children be better prepared to learn to read and write.

### **III. Enrollment**

#### **Eligibility QPPS 10.10**

A Registration open house occurs each year in March for the fall school year. Registration materials are available on the Early Childhood tab at [www.denver-cyclones.com](http://www.denver-cyclones.com) or from the Discoveries office. A back to school family night will occur in the fall before classes begin.

Necessary information needed to complete the enrollment process includes:

- Completed intake packet
- Updated Physical signed by the doctor- updated annually.
- Updated Immunization record signed by a nurse- updated annually.
- Paid Deposit

Admission is accepted subject to availability of space and accommodations. Families on a waiting list will be contacted as soon as space is available. Discoveries has the right of refusal.

DHS funding and Empowerment funding is available through Bremer County for qualifying families. These spots are limited, so Please talk to the director to see if you are eligible or if there are spots available.

Weekly tuition is still collected whether your child is here or not. This is necessary in order for us to maintain highly qualified staff and quality programming.

#### **Health Requirements QPPS 3.9, 5.1, 10.4**

Prior to starting the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. A physical form and immunization record must be turned in on or before the first day of school for your child to attend. It must then be updated annually. This is a state requirement for childcare programs.

#### **General Information**

For four year olds, the maximum class size is 20 and a teaching staff-child ratio of at least 1:10 will be maintained to encourage adult-child interactions and promote activity among children. For three year olds, the maximum class size is 16, and a teaching staff-child ratio of 1:8. For two year olds, the maximum class size is 12, and a teaching staff-child ratio of 1:6. The program will maintain a current list of available substitutes for both the teacher and teacher assistant so that ratios are maintained.

#### **Hours**

Please note the hours of your child's program. Any child dropped off more than five minutes prior to the start of the preschool session, or not picked up by the end of the daily preschool session will be moved into the extended day hours and charged accordingly. After 6PM a late pick up fee of \$5 for the first 5 minutes and \$5 for each minute thereafter will be added to your tuition.

#### **Equal Educational Opportunity**

It is the policy of Discoveries not to discriminate in its education programs or educational activities on the basis of sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, marital status or disability.

#### **Inclusion QPPS 9.10**

The preschool program makes every effort to serve all disabilities and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff are aware of the identified needs and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. The preschool facility meets those ADA accessibility requirements.

#### **IV. Fee and Vacation Policy & Procedures**

##### **Attendance**

Please call Discoveries with the reason for an absence no later than 8:30 A.M. For safety's sake, if a student is absent without notification, the teaching staff will attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school.

##### **Payment Schedule**

- The program is run on weekly tuition rates, which are billed every two weeks. These will be sent via email. Separate payment schedules will be provided.
- Payments may be sent directly from your banking institution for no fee. Payments should be mailed to Discoveries Learning Center, PO Box 680, Denver, IA 50622
- Following a late payment, a fee of \$10 will be assessed to all payments past Friday at 6PM. This will automatically be added to your next statement.
- A \$20 fee will be assessed to all returned checks or non-sufficient funds. After three returned checks/NSF, tuition will be payable in cash or money order only. Any payment more than two weeks past due can be grounds for discontinuing enrollment.

##### **Vacation Policy**

Tuition is due whether your child attends school or not as our fees remain the same. However, you are not paying for Christmas break or spring break when Denver schools are closed – unless you choose to attend at these times. This policy is necessary in order to maintain highly qualified staff and programming and meet the program goals for services.

##### **Tax Statements**

A statement of child care costs will be provided to families by January 31 each year for the previous calendar year.

##### **Inclement Weather and Childcare**

Discoveries will remain open for its regular schedule on late starts and early dismissals. When Denver Schools is cancelled, Discoveries is closed. Weekly tuition will not include snow days as these are added to the end of the year with no additional cost to families. If after a late start, school is then cancelled Discoveries will allow for one hour following the time of the cancellation for parents to return to pick up any children already at Discoveries.

#### **V. Discharge & Disclaimer Policy**

Discoveries has the right to terminate services at any time. Termination may occur for any of the following reasons, but are not limited to: failure to comply with the fee agreement and/or payment arrangements, unresolved behavior conflict by a child, or any type of hostile situation – decisions and communication to terminate will be handled by the director. Discoveries has the right to make an exception to a term, policy or procedure, and has the right to make decisions on a case by case basis. We are not responsible for lost, broken, stolen or stained items brought from home. Families will be responsible for replacing damaged equipment caused by the child.

#### **VI. Drop Off/Pick Up & Parking Policy**

Children may not arrive prior to 6:45am. Parents must accompany their child into the building upon arrival, sign their child in on the clipboard by their room, and then drop them off in their appropriate room. Children may not come into the building alone or sign themselves in. All children must be picked up and signed out by an adult. Anyone who is allowed to pick up the child must be listed on the PICK-UP PERMISSION FORM located in the registration intake packet. Anyone not recognized by sight will be asked for a picture ID. If any individual other than those listed on the pick-up permission form is needed to pick up a child, the parent must notify the office prior to that time, and that person must provide a photo ID. When dropping off and picking up your child/ren, you may park on either side of the street in front of the building. Cars must face the direction of travel. When picking your child up at the end of the day, please be sure not to park between the cones. They are set with the expectation a bus will be arriving soon.

## **VII. Parent Communication & Parental Access Policy**

The program will promote communication between families and staff primarily through email. Written notes as well as informal conversations may also be used. Families are encouraged to send emails with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs - email, in person, notes, or phone calls.

Families are always welcome to visit their child in the preschool classroom. As a safety feature, all visitors will check in at the Discoveries office. Photo identification will be required for any unknown visitor to the classroom. Court orders restricting policy must be on file with the office and the office will notify room staff.

### **Home/School Partnerships QPPS 7.6**

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for the program director.

As part of our program assessment, in the spring of each year, we also provide you with a family questionnaire to evaluate our program. This information helps us to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Discoveries values the time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. As the teacher learns from the families' expertise regarding their child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, goals for your child's growth and development can be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time. **QPPS 4.14**

Although in-person daily contact cannot be replaced, the staff rely on notes home, emails, phone calls, newsletters, and bulletin boards as alternatives means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

### **Home Visits QPPS 4.1, 7.1**

Home visits are made prior to the start of school year or within the first thirty days. This is an opportunity for the preschool teacher to get to know you, your child, and your family and for you to begin to create a partnership between home and school in order to best meet your child's needs. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the teacher understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you'd like addressed.

### **Family Teacher Conferences QPPS 4.1**

The preschool program will have formal family teacher conferences in the fall and spring. The teacher will send home a sheet before the conference asking you to consider what new or different goals you have for your child. During the conference the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Together you can make a plan to continue to encourage your child's growth and development.

### **Transitions QPPS 7.9, 7.10**

Home-school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program, such as special education. The child's family provides the consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child whether the transition is within the same building or in another location. Teaching staff will partner with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible by connecting family members with the next program's staff. Preschool staff will provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, program options, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible.

## **VIII. Program & Activities**

### **Who Works In the Preschool QPPS 10.2**

Program Director There is a designated program director that supervises the preschool program. She meets the qualifications described by Iowa DHS licensing standards.

Assistant Director There is a designed assistant director that works close with the Program Director. She meets the qualification describes by Iowa DHS licensing standards.

Teacher A full-time teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holding an early childhood endorsement (or working towards) is assigned to the four year old preschool classroom. Two and three year olds teaching staff may or may not be fully endorsed teachers, although have qualifications as identified by Iowa DHS.

### **QPPS 6.3**

#### **AM Teacher Assistant**

A full time teacher assistant in the classroom carries out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher assistant will have specialized training in early childhood education. **QPPS 6.4**

#### **PM Teacher Assistant**

A full time teacher assistant in the classroom carries out activities under the supervision of the teacher

#### **School Nurse**

The preschool will have access to two registered nurses during the day. One is employed by Denver Schools and one is an employee of Child Care Resource and Referral located in Allison. Both are current certified RN's. Both are available for parent consultation when necessary. **QPPS 10.10**

#### **Support Staff**

AEA 267 support staff provide resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist or others.

### **Daily Activities QPPS 2.10, 3. 10, 3.14**

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal. Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play.

Lesson plans for each week are posted in the classroom showing how these activities are incorporated into the daily schedule. Daily, weekly and monthly notes will be sent home to families in children's backpacks or electronically.

For the full day preschool, the children will spend a portion of the day resting or napping. For individuals who do not require more than a brief rest period of rest, the child will be given the opportunity to engage in quiet activities. Rest time will always be supervised by an adult. This period will be approximately one hour and fifteen minutes in length. Variations will be given based on an individual's need.

### **Curriculum QPPS 2.2, 2.3**

Curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. It is the vehicle we use to reach our goals. The preschool program uses *Creative Curriculum*. A research and evidence based comprehensive curriculum designed for preschoolers. It describes and demonstrates how to plan a developmentally appropriate program focusing on eleven well-organized interest areas. Its underlying philosophy draws from Jean Piaget's work on cognitive development, Erik Erikson's stages of socio-emotional development, and accepted theories of how children learn best.

As stated in The Creative Curriculum, the teacher's goals and objectives when implementing curriculum include:

- Meet the basic needs of the children (physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem)
- Create an atmosphere in which children are safe, feel emotionally secure, and have a sense of belonging
- Know and develop a positive relationship with each child
- Follow a consistent schedule
- Carry through on announced plans and promises

- Set up an environment where children can find and return materials on their own
- Provide appropriate play materials that support and challenge children's abilities
- Help children express their feelings in constructive ways
- Encourage children to see tasks through to completion
- Offer children opportunities to make choices
- Provide children with ample opportunities for creative expression
- Allow children freedom to explore the environment
- Permit children to get messy during play
- Encourage children to work independently
- Value children's ideas
- Promote problem solving and appropriate risk taking
- Observing and documenting what children do and say
- A place where learning takes place through positive relationships between and among children and adults-a community.

**Specific Interest Areas QPPS 2.2** Through our program, each child is given the tools needed to encourage the growth of all the skills necessary for kindergarten and beyond. The eleven interest areas at Discoveries consist of:

1. Sand and Water

- to explore with a variety of textures
- concepts of size, shape and volume; empty and full
- concepts of warm and cool, wet and damp, heavy and light
- how to play socially with others and solve problems
- to observe changes, *a science skill*

2. Table Toys and Games

- hand-eye coordination
- concepts of color, shape and location
- number concepts such as more, less, longer and shorter
- to create and reproduce patterns
- taking turns

3. Cooking

- learn about nutrition, tastes and food groups
- how heat and cold changes things
- concepts of volume and measure
- vocabulary
- whole-part relationships, *math concepts*

4. Blocks

- concepts of size, shape, length and location, *all reading and math skills*
- to create and repeat patterns, *math skill*
- exercise my imagination and express ideas
- to create hypothesis and test for results, *science skill*
- cooperate with others and solve problems
- about the properties of wood

5. Art

- exercise my imagination and creativity
- learn about how colors mix to create new colors, *science*
- learn about different textures
- concepts of size, shape, length and height.
- hand-eye coordination



- that my ideas and creations have meaning and value
6. Discovery
    - new vocabulary
    - concepts of how things grow
    - concepts of texture, weight, size and volume
    - to observe likenesses and differences
    - to appreciate nature and develop a sense of wonder
  7. Music/Movement Activities
    - balance and coordination
    - to be conscious of the moods and rhythms of music
    - to express myself physically
  8. Dramatic Play
    - to be flexible in my thinking and make decisions
    - to try on various adult roles
    - to improvise and use things in a symbolic way to represent something else, *abstract thinking*
    - to carry out ideas with the cooperation of others
    - to exercise creativity and imagination
  8. Library
    - that learning to read is important, relaxing and enjoyable
    - that letters on a page have meaning
    - to recognize certain words I see in print
    - to interpret pictures to represent words and ideas
    - to use more complex language patterns in my own speech
    - to follow the development of thought and ideas in the plot of a story
    - to express my own thoughts, ideas and feelings more clearly
  10. Outdoor Play
    - exploring the natural world
    - to further develop fine and gross motor skills
    - increase cardiovascular endurance resulting in better health
    - A minimum one hour per day outdoors is standard in our curriculum as long as weather permits
  11. Computer Play
    - collaborative play
    - creativity
    - review of basic concepts

Discoveries also implements short times of Circle Time Activities in which children learn:

- to listen, sit and understand spoken words
- that my ideas added to the discussion have value
- to wait while others are talking
- new vocabulary words
- to remember words to songs and poems I have heard
- to be cooperative and considerate of others

It is the policy of this district that the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and life styles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, and physical disability. **QPPS 1.7**

**Field Trips      QPPS 10.11**

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. Regular field trips by the older students will be in the form of walking field trips. This might include the post office, fire station, nursing home, library, grocery store or other local sites. Parents are always welcome to walk along!

**Water activities      QPPS 5.9, 9.15**

We have a water table in the classroom for children. During water play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. Staff supervise children by sight and sound around the water table. Children do not participate in swimming pool activities.

**Outside Play and Learning      QPPS 5.5, 9.5-9.7**

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather does not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. While at Discoveries, children's shoes need to allow safe participation in activities. During nice weather, tennis shoes with socks are the best choice for all children. Flat sandals with a secure heel strap are okay, but sandals with heels, thin straps or flip flops do not promote safe active play. Snow boots are needed during winter months to allow for play on the grass when there is snow. In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside it is important to dress him according to the weather. When it is cold outside he needs a warm coat, mittens or gloves and a hat (labeled with your child's name). For the warmer days dressing your child lightly is just as important.

We use the Child Care Weather Watch produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play. In cases when we cannot go outside, children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment.

**Child Assessment Opportunities      QPPS 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 4.2, 4.5, 7.3**

It is Discoveries belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. The results will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. All results will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and stored in a secure filing cabinet.

Children are assessed in the following ways:

- *Creative Curriculum Gold Assessment*
- Pre-Academic skills checklist
- Observation notes and anecdotal records
- Students will also be assessed in vision and hearing during the year.

The information from the above is used in the following ways:

- To provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for them;
- To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones in a development portfolio
- To indicate possible areas that requires additional assessment.

**GOLD Assessment Process- allowing for adaptations and modifications of curriculum      QPPS 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 7.3, 7.5**

Creative Curriculum Helps students used the classroom environment productively and see themselves as capable learners. A carefully organized and print-rich setting is the foundation of the curriculum. Creative Curriculum focuses on 36 objectives and dimensions, which define the learning objectives and growth goals for children. Teachers record written observations on children regularly and input observations into an assessment tool called the Creative Curriculum GOLD.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. The preschool teacher will communicate weekly regarding children's activities. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or information on the *Gold Assessment*, the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she/he will communicate this to the family during a conference, sharing documentation of the concern. Suggestions for next steps may include a request made to staff that work closely with Denver Schools for support and ideas or more formalized testing. **QPPS 4.5, 7.4**

### **Discoveries Program Evaluation**

Discoveries is evaluated through three processes:

1. Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. The evaluation process includes gathering evidence on all areas of program functioning, including policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction.
2. Iowa Department of Human Services: This evaluation process occurs annually and is a thorough review of the entire program.
3. QRS (Quality Rating System): This is a voluntary Iowa initiative intended to raise the quality of care in Iowa and educate families on what quality care looks like.

A report of the evaluation findings is available to be shared with families.

## **IX. Behavior Policy**

### **Child Guidance and Discipline QPPS 1.11**

Teaching staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, planning ahead to prevent problems. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-discipline. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect, property and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

### **Challenging Behavior QPPS 1.2, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10**

The teaching staff in the preschool is highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors teachers promote pro-social behavior by:

- interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
- modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child become physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

## Permissible Methods of Discipline:

*For acts of aggression and fighting* (biting, scratching, hitting) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident.; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is subsequent recurrence.

## *Prohibited Practices*

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

1. harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
2. physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
3. any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect.
4. withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

## **X. Health & Safety Policy**

### **Key Cards**

Your child's safety and security is very important to us. As a result, the building doors at Discoveries are locked during the day. Access may be granted by using a key-card or by ringing the doorbell. Each family will be issued up to two key-cards for access to the Discoveries building during normal operating hours. Loss of a key-card will result in a \$10 charge to Discoveries.

### **Sunscreen and Insect Repellent QPPS 5.6**

With written permission, parents may supply sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher to be applied to your child's exposed skin. You may also supply for your child an insect repellent containing DEET only, which will be given with your written permission, no more than once a day to protect your child from insect bites when the public health authorities recommend its use.

Discoveries Preschool is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

### **Health and Immunization Certificates QPPS 5.1**

Prior to beginning the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunization for which parents are using religious exemption.

### **Health and Safety Records QPPS 10.10**

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in a locked cabinet. Files are kept current by updating as needed. The content of the file is confidential, but available to administrators or teaching staff; the child's parent or legal guardian; and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include: **QPPS 5.1**

1. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
2. Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results;
3. Current emergency contact information for each child, that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year;
4. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;
5. Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes);
6. Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support; and **QPPS 10.14**
7. Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff implement a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

#### **Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children      QPPS 5.3, 5.4**

Children will be checked daily for health status. Signs of illness will constitute a formal evaluation by center staff and the director. Sick children are not to be brought to the center and shall not be allowed to remain at the center. Certain illnesses will necessitate the temporary removal of a child from the center.

#### **Child illness**

1. Teachers will observe each child's physical condition for symptoms of illness as he/she arrives at the center and periodically throughout the day.
2. If the child exhibits any of the symptoms of illness in the exclusionary policy section listed below, he/she will not be allowed to attend the center. If the child develops these symptoms during the day the child will be removed from the classroom and lay down in the office or somewhere supervised in the classroom away from the children and the parent will be contacted to pick up child.
  - a. Elevated temperature
    - If a child has a temperature of 99.0, the parent will be notified. If there are no other signs of illness, the parent may choose whether or not to remove the child.
    - If a child has a temperature of 99.0 along with other symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting, rash, sore throat, swollen glands, red and runny eyes, coughing, or sneezing, the parent will be asked to pick up the child.
    - If the child's temperature is 100.0, the child must be picked up from the center and not return until fever free for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or other fever reducing medication.
  - b. Vomiting
    - If a child vomits twice in 24 hours (with no other symptoms) or once in 24 hours when accompanied by any other symptoms, the parents will be notified.
  - c. Diarrhea
    - If the child has one loose or bloody bowel, the parents will be notified. If the child has diarrhea twice in one hour or three times in two hours, the parents will be asked to come and get the child.
    - If the child has one diarrhea with any other symptoms, the parents will be asked to come and get the child.
  - d. Sore throat and swollen glands (signs of strep)
  - e. Abdominal pain for more than two hours or intermittent pain associated with fever or other symptoms.
  - f. Red eyes with thick yellow drainage (signs of conjunctivitis).

3. Children must be able to participate comfortably in all center activities. If a child requires greater care than the staff determines they can provide without compromising their ability to care for other children, the family will be asked to take the child home.

B. Contagious disease notification

1. Parents will be notified of their child's exposure to a contagious disease through written notices that will be sent home.
2. Notification will include information about date of exposure and disease.
3. Parents should notify the center if their child contracts a contagious disease.

C. Return Policy

1. Return policies for specific illnesses are listed below.
2. If a child is on antibiotics, the child must have been on this medication for at least 24 hours before returning to the center.
3. When a child is removed from the center, the parent will be informed of the return policy based on the child's illness.
4. Any child who attends the Center must be well enough to participate in all program activities, both inside and outside.

D. Exclusionary policy

1. The following exclusionary policies will be enforced: (Please note: this is not a complete list. Illnesses not on this list will be handled on an individual basis)
  - Chicken Pox and Shingles-Child must not attend center. All parents will be notified of outbreak. Child may return one week from onset or when sores are dried and crusted
  - Conjunctivitis-If the child has thick yellow drainage from the eyes, the child may not attend the center. Child may return 24 hours after beginning treatment for bacterial conjunctivitis.
  - Diarrhea-Child must not attend center if diarrhea cannot be contained in a toilet or if diarrhea has occurred twice in one hour or three times in two hours. Diarrhea medication will not be administered at the center. Child may return 24 hours after last occurrence of diarrhea or when diagnosed as non-contagious by a physician.
  - Fever-Child must not attend the center if fever is 101.0 F or above orally or 100.0 F axillary. A child must not attend center if fever is 100.0 F and has other symptoms. Child may return when he/she has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
  - Head Lice-Child will be referred for treatment. Child may return after beginning treatment.
  - Hepatitis A-Child must not attend center. All parents will be notified of outbreak. Child may return seven days after onset of illness or as directed by the health dept.
  - Hepatitis B-Child must be excluded from the Center if: weeping sores that cannot be covered; biting or scratching behavior-or behavior changes with a fever; a bleeding problem; generalized dermatitis that may produce wounds or weepy tissue fluids.
  - Herpes-Child with open sores that cannot be covered must not attend center. Child may return when sores are dried and crusted.
  - Impetigo-Child must not attend center. Child may return 24 hours after beginning treatment and/or all lesions are crusted.
  - Strep-Child may not attend center. Child may return 24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment and no fever.
  - Measles/Rubella-Child must not attend center. All parents will be notified of outbreak. Child may return six days after the onset of the rash.
  - Meningitis-Child must not attend center. Physician must confirm type. Center must notify all parents. Child may return after disease prevention measures have been completed. Must have a written release from a physician.
  - Mumps-Child must not attend center. All parents must be notified of outbreak. Child may return five days after onset of swelling.

- Pertussis/Whooping Cough (All children attending the center must provide evidence of immunization against)- Child must not attend center. All parents must be notified by staff. Child may return five days after starting medication. Must have a written release from a physician.
- Pertussis Rash-Staff will notify parent if rash is observed. If rash spreads or is accompanied by another symptom, the child must leave the center. Child may return with a written physician's note stating rash has been diagnosed as non-contagious.
- Respiratory infection/Severe(uncontrolled cough, difficult breathing or wheezing)-Child must not attend center. Child may return with written note from a physician.
- Respiratory infection/Unspecified (common cold with no fever)-A child without fever who has mild to moderate symptoms may attend the center.
- Stomach ache-Child may not attend center if pain is severe or lasts more than two hours or is intermittent and child has other symptoms. Child may return when pain resolves.
- Vomiting-Child may not attend center if vomiting has occurred twice in 24 hours (with no other symptoms) or once in 24 hours when accompanied by fever or lethargy. Child may return 24 hours after last occurrence of vomiting or when diagnosed as non-contagious by a physician.
- Influenza A (H1N1)-Symptoms of the flu typically include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or above orally), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea. Children and staff with a flu-like illness should stay home for 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (without having to use fever-reducing medicines).

#### **Reporting Communicable Diseases      QPPS 5.4**

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur.

#### **Medication Policies and Procedures      QPPS 5.10**

**Policy:** The preschool will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. Medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside preschool hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

**Procedure:** Medication during school hours only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant. Those who will administer medications have specific training and a written performance evaluation, updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration: (1) verifying that the right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. Medication errors will be controlled by checking and recording these five right practices each time medication is given. Should a medication error occur, the Regional Poison Control Center and the child's parents will be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the school.

Medications are labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that wither the prescription was filled or the recommendations was obtained from the child's health care provider, the name of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the mane and strength of the medication, and the instructions on how to store it. It will remain locked.

A medication log will be maintained by the school staff to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount, the time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of medication.

### **Cleaning and Sanitization QPPS 9.11**

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately.

- Toys and surfaces will be disinfected using a non-toxic solution of one tablespoon household bleach to one quart of tap water made fresh daily. To disinfect, the surfaces will be sprayed until glossy. The bleach solution will be left on for 2 minutes before it is wiped off with a clean paper towel, or it may be allowed to air dry.
- Discoveries eating and cooking non-disposable items follow the required soap-water, rinse, bleach-water and air-dry method.
- Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be laundered before another child's use. **QPPS 5.24**

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials, and information required by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents.

Routine cleaning will be supervised by the preschool teacher and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table in the QPPS manual. Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure of the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Nontoxic substances will be used whenever possible.

### **First Aid Kit QPPS 9.13**

A first aid kit is located in the preschool classroom next to the door and readily available for adult use. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Healthy Child Care Iowa. Monthly, the contents are inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The first aid kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

### **Fire Safety QPPS 9.14**

A fire extinguisher is installed in the preschool classrooms with a tag indicating its annual service date. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. Fire drills are conducted monthly and recorded on a log.

### **Notification of Accidents or Incidents**

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, our teacher will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any incident or injuries will be documented on an "Injury and Illness" form and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

### **Emergency Contacts**

The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department and Poison Control is posted inside each door and on the parent board. Emergency contact information for each child will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers, and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

### **Substance Abuse**

As mandatory reporters, Discoveries will need to report to Iowa DHS and local police anyone leaving the site with a child that appears to be impaired by alcohol or drugs.

### **Smoke Free Facility QPPS 9.19**

In compliance with the Iowa Smoke free Air Act of 2008, Denver School buildings and grounds are smoke free. A "No Smoking" sign meeting the law's requirements is posted at all entrances. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children.



## **XI. Nutrition Policy QPPS 5.13, 5.14, 5.21**

Discoveries will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will teaching staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline. All meals and snacks are served a minimum of two hours apart and no more than three hours apart during the day.

Throughout the year, feel free to bring treats to celebrate a birthday or other special occasion. If there is a child with an allergy to nuts, Discoveries will implement a no peanut, nut and coconut policy. This means that anything brought from home for birthdays, special occasions or cold lunches, may not contain any traces of nuts. This includes bakery items, many snack cakes and chocolate, including m&m's. All items will need to be store bought and sent in their original containers. Please check the label. Call or ask if you have any questions.

### **Breakfast and Snacks QPPS 5.12**

These are provided by Discoveries on a two week rotating menu. These menus are posted in the kitchen and meet the CACFP food guidelines.

### **Lunches QPPS 5.12, 5.13, 5.14**

Lunch for the Two and Three year old all day students is provided by Discoveries and purchased from Denver Schools. It is included in the price of tuition. For the four year olds Voluntary Preschool Program Full Day children, School lunches can be purchased through Denver Schools. A school menu will be sent home each month so you know what the school will be serving for lunch. If you are interested in sending a sack lunch that is a choice you can make. *Please know we are required by the state to ensure all children under 5 have healthy meals and must require that the lunch include healthy choices and follow CACPF guidelines These are available on-line.* Meals need to be prepared and transported in a sanitary fashion. Food brought from home will be labeled with the child's name and date. Children will not be allowed to share food provided by family unless the food is intended for sharing with all of the children. Leftover sack lunch items will be discarded unless it is a commercially wrapped product that was never opened by your child. NO foods shall be served or delivered that are over 110 degrees. **QPPS 5.18**

## **XII. Biting Policy**

Biting is a common and a developmentally appropriate behavior in young children. Experts in the field of child development report that biting occurs chiefly as a result of a child's incapacity to communicate. Children may become upset by a new experience, and may bite as a response. While biting during the early childhood years is developmentally appropriate, it is upsetting to parents and caregivers when it occurs. The goal of our policy is to replace the child's undesirable behavior with more effective ways of communication and to ensure the health and safety of everyone in our program. The following is a plan of our preemptive strategies:

- When children bite out of frustration or anger, behavior will be redirected to some other activity and/or will be shown an alternate way to communicate what they want. We will encourage the use of language to express wants and needs.
- Parents will be notified if their child is bitten at school. However in order to protect the privacy of all our families, parents will not be informed of the biter.
- If a child bites frequently, staff will utilize a more intensive approach which involves carefully observing the child to determine precipitating events and maintaining a log to help track the behavior. Conferences with parents may also be utilized to discuss the child's actions at home, search for outside resources, etc.
- Biting incidents will be communicated to the parents of the biter to ensure staff and parents are working together to understand and prevent this behavior.

In order to ensure the safety of all children, if all attempts to stop chronic biting fail we reserve the right to remove the biting child from the program.

### **XIII. Additional Information**

#### **Ethics and Confidentiality QPPS 4.1**

Staff follow an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. No information about any particular child shall be shared with any other family. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults. All staff will receive the “Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment” handout annually and it will be reviewed each year in our Back to School Fall In-service. Please talk with the director of any questions or concerns.

#### **Children’s Records QPPS 10.10**

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. The files are kept updated by families. While the content of the file is confidential, it is immediately available to:

- Administrators or teaching staff who have legitimate need
- Parents and legal guardians
- Regulatory authorities

#### **Preschool Advisory Committee QPPS 7.2**

Discoveries Preschool has a preschool advisory committee composed of staff and parents. This group meets to provide feedback on services that meet children and family needs. They also serve as a sounding board for new ideas and services. Let us know if you are interested in serving on this committee.

#### **Volunteer Opportunities QPPS 7.1**

- Be a representative on our advisory committee
- Complete the annual survey
- Participate in our walking field trips
- Be a business partner
- Come in and read or present your occupation or special collection to the class

Discoveries believes that families should be supported in making decisions about services that their children may need. The teaching staff will provide information to families about available community resources and assist as requested in helping the family make connections

#### **Clothing**

Your child will be learning through active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing. You will be asked to send an extra set of clothing appropriate for the season. Please clearly label this clothing with your child’s name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

#### **Toilet Learning QPPS 5.7**

Toilet learning is an important time in a child’s development. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the following procedures are in place:

1. Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area which is a mat that will be placed in the bathroom.
2. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards: Standard 5, Criteria 7:
3. Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.
4. Families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an “accident”. Please clearly label the clothing with your child’s name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

#### **Objects From Home**

Please encourage your child not to bring special toys from home. We will pass around a Sharing Bag in which children will have the opportunity to share the special toys with the class. Student of the Week will also occur where students will have the opportunity to share many special items from home.

## **Classroom Animals and Pets QPPS 5.26**

No live animals are to be inside at any time. If a classroom desires, they may have a classroom fish to be responsible for.

## **Birthdays QPPS 5.13**

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. They afford the opportunity for children to be given special recognition. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Those who have summer birthdays are welcome to choose a school day to celebrate with their class. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include either the whole class, or all the boys or all the girls of the class, cannot be distributed at school.

## **XIV. Access Policy**

Centers are responsible for ensuring the safety of children at the center and preventing harm by being proactive and diligent in supervising not only the children, but other people present at the facility.

1. Any person in the center who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, or subcontracted staff or volunteer who has had a record check and approval to be involved with child care shall not have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian, or custodian, nor be counted in the staff to child ratio.  
\*\*It is imperative that centers not allow people who have not had a record check assume child care responsibilities or be alone with children. This directly relates both to child safety and liability to the center.
2. Persons who do not have unrestricted access will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any child care responsibilities.
3. Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is. If staff is unsure about the reason they will contact their site manager or another management staff to get approval for the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation staff will follow the "intruder in the center" procedures. Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc. will be monitored by paid staff and will not be allowed to interact with the children on premise.
4. A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian, or custodian) who is required to register with the Iowa sex offender registry (Iowa Code 692A):
  - a. Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at the child care center.
  - b. Shall not be on the property of the child care center without the written permission of the center director, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender's own minor child to and from the center.
    - (a) The center director is not obligated to provide written permission and must consult with their DHS licensing consultant first.
    - (b) If written permission is granted it shall include the conditions under which the sex offender may be present, including:
      - (i) The precise location in the center where the sex offender may be present.
      - (ii) The reason for the sex offender's presence at the facility.
      - (iii) The duration of the sex offender's presence.
      - (iv) Description of how the center staff will supervise the sex offender to ensure that the sex offender is not left alone with a child.
      - (v) The written permission shall be signed and dated by the director and sex offender and kept on file for review by the center licensing consultant.

## **XV. Emergency Procedures**

### **Medical Emergencies QPPS 10.13**

Discoveries Preschool has in place a “Safety Procedures Booklet” that describes the following situations and procedures to follow. In cases of evacuation, the staff will walk the students to the Denver Elementary School gym.

- Emergency phone numbers – these are in each classroom and are taken with them wherever they go.
- Evacuations – if the students are evacuated, they will walk to the Denver Elementary School gym as long as conditions allow. If needed, we will transport the students by bus to the gym.
- Fire & bomb threat procedures: We will activate the fire alarm, which will sound throughout the building and create flashing lights. Children will be evacuated according to the diagram posted in their room or as directed by the police. A head-count will be taken before and after the evacuation to ensure accountability. In case of inclement weather, the children will be transported to the evacuation site by school bus. First aid kits and emergency information will be taken with the staff and children.
- Utility Failures (electric power failure, water line break, gas line break): In case of a power outage, we will remain in the building as long as the conditions allow/or the power returns. If evacuation due to a utility failure is deemed necessary, the children will evacuate the building and walk to the Denver Elementary School gym. If the call is made to close Discoveries, parents should come as soon as possible. A head count will be taken before and after the evacuation to ensure accountability.
- Severe weather/Tornado procedures: We will activate the tornado siren, which will sound throughout the building. The children will be escorted to the tornado safe area according to the diagram posted in their room. A head-count will be taken before and after the evacuation to ensure accountability. In case of structural damage to the building, the children will be transported to the evacuation site by school bus.
- Physical Threats/Armed Intruder: In the case of an intruder entering the building and creating a hostile situation, a designated code will be put out to alert other team members of the situation and to alert them to phone the police. If possible, children will be taken to a designated safe area in the building. The center will then proceed as directed by the police.
- Intoxicated Parent or Visitor: If an intoxicated parent attempts to pick up his/her child, the on-site supervisor will contact an emergency contact and request that they pick up the child. The on-site supervisor will then inform the intoxicated parent of the pick-up plan. If we are unable to reach an emergency contact, the child must be allowed to leave with the parent. The on-site supervisor will then inform the parent that the police will be immediately contacted concerning the incident. An intoxicated visitor will be asked to leave the center immediately, and the parent of whom the visitor was here to see will be contacted.
- Crisis Intervention Plan, Crisis Intervention Steps, and Media Procedures
- Accidental Injury or Illness procedures for life threatening and non-life threatening situations

This booklet will be distributed to parents at the start of the school year, and can be found in the office at any time. The booklet will be reviewed by each staff member at the beginning of each school year and when changes are made to it.

#### **Closing remarks**

*We truly hope your family has a wonderful experience while at Discoveries.*

*It is our hope that we can exchange ideas to combine our efforts in providing a stimulating and discovery filled learning experience for the children and ourselves. Please feel free to call the center director with any questions about the content of this handbook or any other questions at 319.939.3368.*

*Sincerely,*

*Discoveries Staff*