

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PARENT INFORMATION HANDBOOK

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
LIST OF TABLES.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	v
BACKGROUND RESEARCH.....	1
QUESTIONNAIRE - PARENT INPUT.....	2
List of Topics Covered in PIH.....	10
THE MODEL PARENT INFORMATION HANDBOOK (PIH).....	11
Cover and Illustrations.....	11
Title.....	11
Contents and Letter to Parents.....	11
Philosophy.....	12
Enrollment, Attendance and Fees.....	14
Personal Needs.....	17
Program.....	19
Parents and Staff.....	23
Forms.....	26
PHONE SURVEY.....	27
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	29
CONCLUSIONS.....	31
FURTHER READINGS.....	32
APPENDIXES.....	36
Questionnaire for Parents.....	37
Model PIH.....	41
Forms for Enrollment.....	69

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Parents' Ratings of Stone House Handbook.....	5
2. Write-in Topics after Section 1.....	6
3. Parents' Ratings of Topic Importance.....	7
4. Write-in Topics after Section 2.....	8
5. Categories of Written Comments.....	9
6. Procedure for Phone Survey.....	27

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INTRODUCTION

This report details the rationale and content of a model parent information handbook for use by an early childhood care facility. The need for such a handbook is demonstrated by the number of families involved in child care. In 1979, 49.4%¹ of the married women of the U.S. population were employed. Of these, 43.2%² were mothers with children under six years of age. Each newborn increases the demand for quality child care if that child's mother, married or single, plans to return to the labor force. Children's involvement in any type of child care facility leads to two major interactions: the child-caregiver relationship and the parent-caregiver relationship. It is the second relationship, called the parent-teacher relationship in this paper, that stimulated the development of the parent information handbook (PIH). This paper deals specifically with a PIH for a hypothetical child care center called "A Kid's Place".

¹U.S. Dept. of Commerce, "Women in Labor Force with Children in Day Care", Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1981, 102d ed., Bureau of Census, 1981, p. 140.

²Ibid., p. 140

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Minnesota and Kansas child care licensing regulations require that parents receive a written explanation of policies governing a child care center. Minnesota regulations further stipulate that: "Admission policies and procedures must ensure initial and continuing communication between the family and the facility to assure compatibility in their mutual responsibility for the child's welfare."³ Communication and information exchange must be established and maintained in order that the child's needs will be better served by both parties responsible for his welfare. Much of the rationale for the development of this PIH is the result of the study of these regulations. Further justification comes from the fact that the limited contacts of parents and teachers are often at the most hurried moments of the day. There is often important information to be shared about the child and the center policies. Because of the rush, some of the information can be forgotten, omitted or misunderstood. Therefore, the parent-teacher relationship would be mutually developed if parents could be given an information handbook containing relevant center information. This information contained would be determined in part by the licensing regulations of the state and by each individual center's policies. Therefore, through the use of a PIH,

³MN DPW Rule 3, Standards for Group Day Care for Preschool and School Age Children, 1977, p. 9.

misunderstandings could be avoided and more time could be devoted to sharing an understanding of the child's progress.

This report presents a model for a PIH that parents would be given upon enrollment at a child care facility. The major areas requiring emphasis in this handbook were determined through discussion with parents and teachers, and a questionnaire given to the parents whose children were enrolled in the Stone House Child Care Center at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. Additional information was gathered in an informal telephone survey of ten child care centers in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Information and policies used within the PIH are based upon my personal experience at the Stone House Child Care Center, and upon the licensing regulations of Kansas and Minnesota. The philosophy and attitudes reflected within the handbook are the result of academic experience and study in the graduate program of the Department of Family and Child Development at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. Teaching experience at Lee's Preschool, Manhattan Day Care Center, and Stone House Child Care Center, all in Manhattan, Kansas, provided further influence for this project.

QUESTIONNAIRE-PARENT INPUT

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was developed and distributed in 1978 to determine how well informed parents felt they were and the relative importance of potential topics. This gave parents an opportunity for communicating

concerns, questions and suggestions concerning information they were to receive about the center and its policies. Section One of the survey asked parents how well informed they felt about the policies and procedures at the Stone House Child Care Center (hereafter referred to as the Stone House). They rated seventeen topics on a scale of 1 (inadequate) to 5 (extensive). The topics included were: general philosophy, attendance, fees, health and safety, illness, meals and snacks, clothing, program, field trips, research, observation, parent involvement, storm and fire plans, school closings, staff and administration, discipline, and child abuse and neglect (CA/N) policy. In Section Two the parents were asked to rate how important it was to include each of these topics in the PIH. They again used a scale of 1 (unimportant) to 5 (vital).

Fifty-one questionnaires were given to the parents of the 28 families with children enrolled at the Stone House. Five of the 28 families were headed by women. Of the 51 questionnaires distributed, seventy percent were returned representing 24 of the 28 families (86%). Both parents in twelve families returned the questionnaires, one parent in seven families returned the questionnaire and all five families headed by women returned the questionnaires. The results of the questionnaire are tabulated in Tables 1 and 3.

Table 1 shows the results of Section One of the questionnaire. The mean (M) of the scores for each topic were tabulated to determine which areas the parents felt least informed about. Any subject with a mean of less than three

(adequate) was considered an area of inadequate information. According to Table 1 there were five of these areas: research at the Stone House ($M=2.28$), observation by students ($M=2.36$), storm and fire policy ($M=2.06$), discipline ($M=2.56$), and the child abuse and neglect policy ($M=2.00$).

The standard deviation (SD) was also calculated for each topic. This value informs the examiner as to the distribution or uniformity of the responses. The larger the standard deviation the less the respondents agreed with each other. For example, Health and Safety has a standard deviation of 0.81. Examination of the data shows that the large majority (80%) of the parents marked their questionnaires either 3 or 4 for this topic. In contrast, for Research at the Stone House the standard deviation is 1.11. Therefore, the parents were in less agreement as to how well informed they felt they were on this topic. Other topics showing a standard deviation of more than 1.00 included: fees ($SD=1.00$), meals and snacks ($SD=1.00$), clothing ($SD=1.16$), program schedule ($SD=1.07$), observation by students ($SD=1.02$), parent involvement ($SD=1.00$), staff and administration ($SD=1.10$), discipline ($SD=1.11$), and the CA/N policy ($SD=1.17$).

Table 1
Parents' Ratings of Stone House Handbook*
1978

How adequate has the information been in meeting your needs?

Topic	inadequate 1	2	adequate 3	4	extensive 5	M	SD
<hr/>							
General Philosophy	2	4	13	15	2	3.31	0.95
Attendance	1	2	14	13	6	3.61	0.93
Fees	0	5	9	13	9	3.72	1.00
Health and Safety	0	4	15	14	3	3.44	0.81
Illness	0	3	19	10	4	3.42	0.81
Meals and Snacks	1	4	16	9	6	3.42	1.00
Clothing	0	9	7	10	10	3.58	1.16
Program Schedule	1	7	12	10	6	3.36	1.07
Field Trips	0	3	14	12	7	3.64	0.90
Research at the Stone House	11	10	10	4	1	2.28	1.11
Observations by Students	8	12	12	3	1	2.36	1.02
Parent Involvement	3	6	16	9	2	3.03	1.00
Storm and Fire	10	17	7	1	1	2.06	0.92
School Closings	2	7	16	8	2	3.03	0.95
Staffing and Administration	3	6	14	9	4	3.14	1.10
Discipline	6	12	13	2	3	2.56	1.11
Child Abuse and Neglect Policy	16	10	6	2	2	2.00	1.17

*Based on responses of 36 of the 51 parents.

In both sections of the questionnaire parents were given the opportunity to present topics not listed which they personally felt should be included. The topics written in are listed in Table 2:

Table 2

Write in topics after Section 1 - Additional topics about which parents felt they needed more information.

Topics	# of Respondents
Staff Background	1
Drop Off/Pick Up Policy	1
Supervision of Student Teachers	1
Nutrition	1
Birthdays	2
Visits by Parents/Relatives	2

Table 3 shows the results of the analysis of the second part of the questionnaire. This section asked the parents to rate how important it was to include each topic in the PIH. Again, the mean for each topic was tabulated as well as the standard deviation. A mean of at least 3 (important) was necessary for the topic to be included. Every listed topic was considered important with the lowest mean being 3.39.

Table 3
Parents' Rating of Topic Importance*
1978

Topic	unimportant 1	important 2	3	4	vital 5	M	SD
General Philosophy	0	0	9	8	19	4.28	0.85
Attendance	0	0	11	6	19	4.22	0.90
Fees	0	0	11	3	22	4.31	0.92
Health and Safety	0	0	4	8	24	4.56	0.69
Illness	0	0	8	3	25	4.47	0.84
Meals and Snacks	0	2	8	11	15	4.08	0.94
Clothing	0	3	13	8	12	3.81	1.01
Program Schedule	0	1	8	11	16	4.17	0.88
Field Trips	0	3	16	6	11	3.69	1.01
Research at the Stone House	1	2	10	14	9	3.78	0.99
Observations by Students	2	5	12	11	6	3.39	1.10
Parent Involvement	0	0	10	12	14	4.11	0.82
Storm and Fire	0	1	7	10	18	4.25	0.87
School Closing	0	0	10	9	17	4.19	0.98
Staffing and Administration	1	2	8	13	12	3.92	1.02
Discipline	0	0	3	9	24	4.58	0.65
Child Abuse and Neglect Policy	3	1	4	12	16	4.03	1.21

*Based on responses of 36 of the 51 parents.

The topics written in by parents in this section of the questionnaire are presented in Table 4:

Table 4

Write in topics after Section 2 - Additional topics that parents wanted included.

Topics	# of Respondents
Drop Off/Pick Up	1
Sharing Time	1
Phone Numbers of Children and Staff	1
List of all Children and Staff	1
Open Door Policy and Information Exchange	1
Nutrition	1
Student Teacher Policy - Qualifications, Experience and Supervision	1

Many parents also chose to write comments in the available space on their questionnaires. These comments were both valuable and helpful in determining the content of the PIH. Table 5 lists the major categories mentioned in these comments.

Table 5
Categories of Written Comments

Topics	
Posting of: Daily schedules Weekly menus Weekly activities	"way to share the day with my child." "helpful for dealing with situations at home and avoiding confusion."
Care and Program at the Stone House	"good care and excellent program." "need for financial records and prompt payment."
Policies and Handbook	"seeing policies in writing would make me feel more comfortable about participating in the program and opportunities available." "good idea, handy for referral." "one less channel for information to go through."
CA/N Policy	"what is it?"
Research/Observation	"to what extent?"
Discipline	approach, philosophy, and some situational examples requested.
Illness	realistic guidelines for attendance requested.
Student Teacher - Child Interactions	concern over excessive number of contacts necessary.
Video Tapes	appreciated
Outdoor Play	clarification

The completed list of topics to be included in the model PIH, based upon the information received from the questionnaire and information required to be given according to Minnesota and Kansas licensing regulations, is given below:

General Philosophy

Enrollment

Attendance - Hours
Drop off/pick up

Fees

Health and Safety - Illness
Emergencies - storm and fire
Insurance
Naps
Clothing

Meals and Snacks - Nutrition

School Closings

Discipline

Program - Schedules	Evaluations of children
Birthdays	Observation by parents
Sharing	
Field trips	
List of children and staff	
Phone numbers of children	

Parent Involvement

Staff and Administration - Training, experience, supervision

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy (CA/N)

Research and Observation by Students (optional)

THE MODEL PARENT INFORMATION HANDBOOK

The model parent information handbook (Appendix B) presented in this report is divided into six sections. The forms necessary for enrollment are included as an appendix. The six major sections are: 1.) Contents and Letter to Parents; 2.) Philosophy; 3.) Enrollment and Attendance; 4.) Personal Needs; 5.) Program and 6.) Parents and Staff. These divisions have been determined in as broad a sense as possible. More specific information concerning each topic is cited in the Contents section. A detailed discussion of each section as well as the cover design, illustrations and title follows.

Cover and Illustrations

The cover design and illustrations throughout the handbook are all original drawings. Their purpose is to provide a representation of the information included in each section. The drawings were kept simple and light to keep attention on the contents of the section while providing some humor and some aesthetic quality.

Title

The title "A Kid's Place" was chosen for its simplicity and the concept it represents. While it is a slang expression it does what it was intended to do, it calls attention to the fact that the center is a place for children. It suggests a place where children can feel secure as they work, play and grow. It represents a sense of security to the parents who

must leave their children at a center daily. The quality care and the development of each "kid" must be the primary concern of all at the center. Hopefully this title will encourage parents to investigate this center more closely.

Contents and Letter to the Parents

Since the general headings are very broad it is necessary to open the handbook with a Contents page. The parents can check here under each of the six major headings to find the section which will answer their questions. Under each major heading are listed the more specific topics covered in each section. The parents can easily spot the topic they need to read about and refer to it in the body of the handbook.

A look at the Letter to the Parents can give the parents general information about the center. The tone set by this letter gives the parents an idea of the atmosphere of the center. This introduction provides insight about the director, who has a major responsibility in setting the tone for the center. This in turn gives them an idea of the accessibility and receptivity of the staff. Personal experience has shown that parents are often hesitant about approaching a "professional." The tone of the letter should indicate warmth, openness and interest, as well as encouragement. Consequently, the parents can be assured of good care for their child.

Philosophy

"Day care center" is a very broad term used to cover many different types of child care facilities. Parents need to be aware of a center's philosophy of both child care and

development and its relationship to their own beliefs.

Parents believing in a strictly disciplined, highly structured system at home may have some problems dealing with the laissez-faire approaches of some centers. Therefore, parents who are looking for child care should study each center's philosophy. In order to effectively evaluate a center, time should also be spent observing both children and staff at the facility. Parents should spend enough time to get acquainted with the philosophy and sense the atmosphere of the center. Questions should be asked to gain more information upon which to base their final decision. They should be looking for a facility that meets their needs and expectations for their children while complementing their own child-rearing philosophy.

Table 1 indicated that a majority (78%) of the parents felt adequately informed about the Stone House philosophy by marking either 3 or above on the scale. The whole sample indicated that it is important to include the philosophy of the center in the PIH by marking 3, 4, or 5 ($M=4.28$) as shown on Table 3. It is in this section that the parents would be made aware of the purpose of the center, its staff and its goals.

The Philosophy section of this PIH states that "A Kid's Place" is a complement to the home environment, not a replacement. The determination of goals and objectives for the children is explained in this section. All of this information focuses on the importance of promoting a positive self concept and feeling of worth--the heart of the center's philosophy. Presentation of this information may generate further questions and discussions leading to a positive foundation for center-

family relations.

Also included in this section is a segment dealing with parent-child separation during the first days at the center. This segment would give further evidence of the center's concern with maintaining the parent-child relationship. In this case, the segment illustrates the awareness on the part of the center of the anxiety experienced by both parent and child when the child starts at a center. By addressing the issue and recognizing the anxieties, the center gives parents the opportunity to discuss their own fears and manner of dealing with their feelings as well as their children's feelings. Inclusion of this information was the result of discussions with two teachers--one a fellow classmate and one a participant in the phone survey. Both felt inclusion of the information had made the transition easier for the parents and children in their centers. This supports the writer's belief that helping both parents and children adjust and cope with a new situation is a very real responsibility of any child care facility.

Enrollment, Attendance and Fees

The parents felt adequately informed about the Attendance and Fees policies at the Stone House. Seventy-five percent of the respondents marked 3 or above for Attendance and 61% said the same for Fees. This demonstrates that the material had been presented adequately by the Stone House and parents had attended to it. Both of these topics were highly rated on importance for being included in the PIH. Arrivals/departures and insurance were not covered in the questionnaire. But

arrivals/departures was one of the write in topics as shown in both Tables 2 and 4 which indicates that this topic should be included. Minnesota and Kansas licensing regulations require that liability and accident insurance be carried on all children, the staff and center vehicles. Parents should be notified of this and it has been included in the PIH.

A major topic included in this section is the policy on enrollment. This subject was not covered in the questionnaire and was not one of the write in topics. But as an information source for the parents it is important that the parents be informed of and understand the enrollment procedure. This section lists all of the requirements to be completed in order for their child to attend the center. For example, it is in this section that the parents are informed that unless their child has a physical exam form and up-to-date immunization record at the center within 30 days of enrollment he or she would be excluded from the center. This is supported by Minnesota and Kansas state licensing regulations. Stating the policy and consequences of disregarding the policy in the handbook gives the center support if exclusion would be necessary.

The previously listed topics: enrollment, attendance, and payment of fees are all important to the smooth operation of a child care facility. Personal experience has shown these areas to be ones where misunderstandings can occur. It is best to have the information clearly stated at the beginning of the family's association with a child care facility.

While being supportive and meeting the needs of the families, it must be remembered that centers have needs also.

These needs may include volunteer parent time, discarded materials from home and financial support provided by tuition. To provide quality care, money for staff, materials, food, insurance, maintenance and an assortment of other necessities must be provided. There are only limited funds and grants available on local, state and federal levels, therefore the money provided by tuition is important. When parents enroll their children in a center they are acknowledging their responsibility to pay for the services provided by the center and the obligations assumed by the center. The parental responsibility is the obligation to pay for their children's care fully and promptly. If there is a problem then the parents and the center should reach a prior agreement which is satisfactory to all.

The needs of the staff must also be recognized. When enrolling their children, parents agree to certain conditions. One of these is the center's hours of operation. The staff puts in much additional time beyond the apparent hours when the children are actually in attendance. This time is used for preparation, evaluation and planning. Staff also have responsibilities and obligations to their own families. Parents must recognize this and not infringe upon staff time beyond announced center hours. An open statement of the center policy for dropping off and picking up children at the appropriate times and the consequence of consistently violating this policy would allow parents who have difficulties complying an opportunity to reach a suitable solution. The center can either provide additional care at a fair cost or refer the

parents to another agency or caregiver for supplemental care. In this sense the center is providing a valuable link to other community resources.

Personal Needs

The major concern of parents and center alike is the well-being and care of the children. In order for developmental needs to be met, certain basic physical needs such as: food, warmth, and rest must be met. It is vital for a child to learn the importance of caring for his own body. This can be learned by following examples set by parents and teachers, and by following a daily routine of personal hygiene and care which includes nutritious meals, resting and personal care. There are basic principles which can be taught and reinforced daily from infancy.

The Stone House handbook sections dealing with health and safety, illness, meals and snacks, and clothing each received mean scores of better than 3.00 (adequate). This indicates that parents felt adequately informed about these topics. Parental ratings of the importance of these items were among the highest which indicates that parents felt this information should definitely be included in the PIH.

This section includes an explanation of the center's health policy which is an area where misunderstanding can easily occur. One parent wrote of the need for "realistic guidelines for attendance" when a child is having an "off day". A section such as this would provide those guidelines. Not only would following these guidelines help prevent the

spreading of communicable diseases, but it would spare the child from being hurt and disappointed by being sent home. It is not pleasant for either the teacher or child for the child to be sent home after arriving at the center. This would also stress the importance of having a standby caregiver as there are occasions when a center could be unexpectedly closed or if the child does become ill at the center.

Another important aspect of the center health policy includes the procedure for giving medication. Giving a child medication is an important responsibility which must be taken very seriously. Minnesota licensing regulations stipulate that written instructions from the child's physician (or dentist) and written authorization from parents must be on file before any medication can be dispensed. All medications must be clearly labeled and safely stored. Minnesota and Kansas regulations also stipulate that one designated staff person shall administer the medication. As it is not always possible or necessary for the child receiving medication to be at home, it is important that parents and staff alike be aware of the procedures and responsibilities involved.

A short section explaining the procedure and importance of nutritious meals and snacks follows the general health policy. It is essential that a child's body be refueled and re-energized for that child to function at an optimum level. A hungry child will not be able to cope as well with the daily routine. By informing the parents of center policy and posting menus, the parents can carry practices into the

home and eliminate duplication of menus. In this way good eating habits can be reinforced to the benefit of all.

A list of personal belongings each child needs at the center introduces this section. Providing these belongings gives the children the opportunity to assume responsibility for their own personal belongings and care. This is reinforced by the daily routine of hand washing after toileting, and before and after lunch/snacks, and brushing teeth after meals. These behaviors are reinforced through repetition under the supervision of the staff. The importance of re-energizing is further supported through the daily nap time routine.

The final item on the list calls for the provision of a complete change of clothing, all labeled with the child's name. This again affords the child the opportunity to care for his personal belongings which are kept in his own cubby. This change of clothing also allows the child to freely explore the environment without worrying about clothing. Parents should take this into consideration when dressing their children for a day of work, play and exploring at a center.

Program

The topics covered in this section include: the general program, daily schedules, four developmental areas, sharing time, field trips, birthdays, emergency procedures and school closings.

Table 1 indicates that 78%, 91% and 72% of the Stone House parents felt adequately informed about the program

schedule, field trips and school closings respectively. This indicates that the information about these policies was well presented by the center and attended to by the parents. On the other hand, only 23% of the parents felt adequately informed about storm/fire procedures which should be covered in more detail. Sharing time and birthday celebrations were write in topics about which parents wanted more information, as shown in Tables 2 and 4.

It must be noted here that the model PIH drew most heavily from Stone House policies for this section. Personal experience revealed that the Stone House program was very effective in meeting the developmental needs of the children while providing excellent care. The Stone House daily schedules were used in the PIH as they provided an excellent structure of the daily routine for both groups of children. As the schedules are tentative and flexible, changes can be made when and if necessary to meet the needs of the individual centers. The main point is that children do need structure and these schedules and policies provide an excellent one to work from.

A brief paragraph to acquaint the parents with the children in the program opens this section. An explanation of how the activities are planned is given. This is followed by the schedules for each of the groups participating in the program. One parent commented on the questionnaire that knowing the daily schedule, menus, and weekly events gave his family a way to share the day with each other. Being aware of the child's daily activities makes it easier for parents and children to

handle the transition from a busy day to a quiet family evening.

Following the schedules is a segment about the four developmental areas: cognitive, physical, social, and emotional. Each area is introduced with examples of how the center promotes development and then with examples of activities the parent and child could do or already do at home. It was through discussion with a fellow student (and teacher) and the teachers in the phone survey that the benefits of including this topic were realized. This section explains to the parents the aim of the program: the development and growth of a confident, competent child. It explains that this is accomplished by planning a program to promote social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth. It stresses that the parents also do much to support and promote this development. Many people believe that only a teacher can teach. By including this segment the parents can become aware of what they can do or are already doing. This segment is designed to support and encourage parents.

There is a short segment dealing with sharing time, birthday celebrations and field trips. These were areas about which parents expressed an interest. Many times children want to bring toys to the center. Sharing time gives the child an opportunity to share a toy from home or an enjoyed experience with his friends. This gives the child the experience of expressing himself before a group of people. He must organize and clearly communicate his thoughts with others. This segment explains to parents that anything from home must be labeled and kept in the child's cubby until

sharing time. Birthdays are special times for all. A special procedure has been planned to ensure a happy day for each child with a minimum of fuss, sweets and disruption. The children learn that they can celebrate with friends by working and playing together and sharing the day. Preparation of a special birthday treat by the children as part of the daily activity is a special gift to their friend. It also ensures that all celebrations are similar to avoid hurt feelings by comparing celebrations. Field trips have been included in this section as a very important aspect of the center's program. Both Kansas and Minnesota regulations stipulate that the drivers must possess a valid driver's license, must provide restraints for the children and there must be adequate adult supervision in each car. There must also be liability and accident insurance covering all drivers, passengers and vehicles. These safeguards protect the staff, children, other drivers and pedestrians. It may on occasion be necessary to have parent volunteers drive. By stating the center policy and the need for help, parents can volunteer to help out and share their children's day. The PIH stresses that the requests for volunteers will not be unnecessary or numerous.

It is important that parents be aware of the emergency procedures the center has for the event of fire, threatening weather or school closings. This section has been included to provide peace of mind for the parent as well as following the licensing regulations of posting the procedures and drills. The high percentage of parents who did not feel adequately

informed (Table 1) and their desire for information (Table 3) further supports the inclusion of this information. As stated on numerous occasions, the center's and the parents' main concern is the welfare of the children. While the parents are at work they can be more productive and efficient knowing that there are plans for emergencies.

Parents and Staff

The primary purpose of the PIH is the formation of a communication link between the staff and the parents. This chapter lays down the framework for this parent-teacher communication by explaining home visits, conferences and parent-education sessions. These are very specific times that are established to discuss the child's development and experience at the center. Table 1 shows that 74% of the Stone House parents felt adequately informed about Parent Involvement, and they felt it is important to include this information. The inclusion of this information is further affected by a Minnesota licensing regulation that states that conferences will be scheduled twice a year for children two years and older, and every two-three months for children under two years of age. The reasoning is that the primary responsibility for the child lies with the parents. Therefore, the parents must be informed and it is the center's responsibility to establish and maintain the lines of communication to accomplish this.

Opportunities are made for the parents to observe their child to further support their awareness of their child's development. One parent wrote on the questionnaire; "If I

could see the policy in writing, I'd feel more comfortable about coming to observe." This also stresses the importance of helping the parents to feel comfortable and welcome enough to participate in as many aspects of the center as possible.

Table 1 indicates that a majority (75%) of the Stone House parents felt adequately informed about Staffing and Administration policies. However, many of the write in topics (Tables 2 and 4) indicate that more information would be appreciated, such as: staff experience and training, student teacher responsibilities, and the supervision of student teachers. Therefore, an explanation of each of the staff positions, qualifications, and responsibilities is included in this section. A hierarchal diagram with the staff members names would further qualify any questions. This section also stresses the importance of the center as a part of the network of community services available to all families. It describes the importance of the center's cooperation and interaction with other agencies.

Discipline, also included in this section, is a topic on which the Stone House parents were evenly divided as to how informed they were about the center's approach. One parent commented that situational examples would be helpful, informing them of the center's procedure and providing some guidance for them. It is important that the parents realize that at no time is their child embarrassed, humiliated or corporally punished for any misbehavior. The staff is trained to deal with alternative methods for dealing with any disciplinary problems that may arise. Depending upon the situation

a child may be removed physically from the group to a quiet area. This will give the child time to compose himself so a teacher can deal more effectively with the problem. Another child may be redirected from an area where he is having trouble dealing with the other children to a different activity. For example, if several children are playing in the housekeeping area and one child continues to tease and badger other children the teacher could take him to the clay table or woodworking area. There he could physically express his feelings and frustrations without disturbing or harming himself or other children. Depending upon the situation and the child, the teachers implement methods that will redirect a child. The aim is to help the children learn to cope with their feelings in a constructive manner. As a mature, socially competent adult each of us must deal with our emotions in an acceptable fashion and this is a skill that our children must be helped to develop.

A final segment is included in this handbook to inform the parents of the center's policy on Child Abuse and Neglect. A majority of the parents were unaware of this policy and felt that its inclusion was important. The center policy is based upon state law and professional ethics. It is the responsibility of every teacher to report any suspicions of child abuse or neglect. This is an important function of any community agency as part of a family support system. First concern is for the child, but to be effective the entire family must be treated. Notifying the parents of this policy informs them that the center is concerned for the welfare of the children. It may

also provide the support necessary for the parents to seek help. The center will provide referral for the parents.

Forms

In order to provide parents with a complete packet for enrollment, all the forms (Appendix C) required were included at the back of the handbook. The background information provided by these forms facilitate the planning for the individuals and the group. This information allows special arrangements for any special situation that may arise. With the exceptions of the Developmental Information form, all of the included forms were taken from Planning and Administering Early Childhood Programs by Decker and Decker, 1976.

PHONE SURVEY

An informal survey of 10 child care facilities in the Minneapolis area was included in this project. It was used to determine if any form of PIH was currently being used by any area centers. As it is a Minnesota licensing regulation that parents be given a written policy, every center contacted provided some sort of written information. The format and depth of information covered varied from center to center from a few typewritten pages to booklet form. The manner of production also varied from being reproduced within the center to being printed at an outside facility. Table 6 provides the format for the phone survey.

Table 6

Procedure for Phone Survey

-
1. Explanation and introduction of project.
 2. Are you currently using a booklet form to provide parents with your center's policies and procedures? (If no, see *)
 3. As a result of having this booklet do parents show a greater awareness of center policies, procedures and philosophy?
 4. Do you feel the booklet has an effect upon parent-teacher communication?
 5. Can you give an example of the type of information you include in your handbook?
 6. Can you estimate the cost of your handbook?
- * If no handbook: Do you feel that such a handbook would be useful to the teacher? the parents?
-

Seven of the ten centers contacted used a handbook format to provide information to the parents. Three did not use this format and had the feeling it would be of no help to parent-teacher communication. Therefore, they provided only the minimum required information. A general consensus was that the handbook is a valuable tool. It provides reference source for avoiding misunderstandings over the included information. It further serves to aid parent-teacher communication as a basis for generating questions and discussion.

One disappointment encountered was the feeling expressed by two center directors that the format was of little use, because parents wouldn't read it. This concern seemed to be dealt with by several of the other centers. The manner in which the handbook was presented to parents was the major difference between centers concerned over the parents reading the handbook and the five centers satisfied with their handbooks. These five satisfied centers made the reading of the handbook part of the enrollment process. One center required the reading of the information before the registration conference, to be discussed and signed at the time of the enrollment interview. Several others required signatures on the handbook guaranteeing that the parents had read, understood and accepted the policies. All of the centers acknowledged that parents are busy people, but felt that this guaranteed the information was read at least once. Considering that their child's welfare is a main concern of parents this was considered a reasonable request. This suggestion for the use of the handbook was the most valuable information gathered through the phone survey.

The centers were reluctant to give out copies of their handbook to anyone other than prospective patrons due to cost and time involved in preparing them. Most were ready to distribute their advertising brochures which generally contained the philosophy and goals of the center, the number and ages of children involved in the program, and occasionally the cost of the program. Very little literature was available pertaining to the development of informational handbooks for parents, most dealt with instructional or how-to handbooks rather than the informational format presented in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations from this project are twofold in nature: the first deals with the design of the Stone House parent questionnaire and the second deals with the use of the handbook. First, although the data from the questionnaire lent support to the development of the PIH, the questionnaire could yield more information with some minor changes. Section 1 would have the addition of a direct question after the scale. The parents would be asked how they received their information from the center; by handbook, single handout sheets, multiple handouts, posted bulletins, word of mouth, parent meetings, conferences, etc. They could also check the method they preferred.

The changes in Section 2 would include changing the five point scale to a yes-no choice. The more choices the parents are given the more difficult it is to make a choice. By providing only the two choices the parents would need to make a

decision based upon how important they felt it was to include each topic in the PIH. The yes-no scale eliminates the intermediate degrees and might provide more accurate data for this particular question. After completing the first part of Section 2 the parents would be asked if they felt a PIH would be helpful? needed? and used? The information from the questions added after Sections 1 and 2 would further determine the need for a PIH.

The second recommendation deals with a usage of the PIH. As a result of the informal phone survey it is believed that requiring the reading of the handbook for the first parent-teacher meeting is a reasonable request. Further, a signature indicating that they had read, understood and were willing to comply with all of the included policies is a justifiable prerequisite to their child's enrollment. This would indicate that the information had been read at least one time. The same request would be made of all the staff that has direct contact with parents. A copy would be located in each classroom and posted on the parent's bulletin board.

A third recommendation addresses the language and tone used when developing a PIH. These must be appropriate for the parents reading and using this reference tool. An alternative format using an outline form may be more appropriate for two reasons. First, it may make the information more accessible and easier to read. Secondly, this format would result in the removal of educational jargon. This jargon may offend, patronize or alienate prospective clientele who neither understand nor use this type of language. Therefore, the handbook must be

flexible and adaptable to the different groups it would serve.

CONCLUSION

As previously stated, the development of the model Parent Information Handbook was the result of discussion, a written questionnaire, telephone survey and personal experience. The need for a tool to avoid confusion concerning policies was also a major motivating factor. Presenting the center's information at one time in written form, as required by Minnesota and Kansas licensing regulations, could help eliminate misunderstandings and confusion while serving as a very important communication link between parents and teachers.

A positive parent-teacher relationship is imperative to providing an optimum environment for the children. By working together these people provide the positive support necessary for a child's development and sense of well being. I feel that tools such as the proposed Parent Information Handbook would support this relationship. The decision to provide the written policies in the form of a handbook is definitely up to the individual center. However, this report supports my belief that presenting parents with an interesting, attractive handbook that they are requested to read is a positive contribution to both the family and the center.

FURTHER READINGS

FURTHER READINGS

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Manhattan Headstart, Manhattan, Kansas.

Children's Hour, Topeka, Kansas.

Children's House, Manhattan, Kansas

Serendipity Nursery School, Wamego, Kansas.

Sunwheel, Manhattan, Kansas.

The Stone House Child Care Center, KSU, Manhattan, Kansas.

The Creative Kid's Corner, Spring Lake Park, Minnesota

APPENDIXES

Department of Family and Child Development
Justin Hall
Manhattan, Kansas 66506

July 17, 1978

Dear Parents:

You have been chosen to receive this questionnaire because you have had your child(ren) enrolled in the Stone House Child Care Facility within the past year. As a graduate student in Family and Child Development, I am interested in developing a Parent Handbook for this facility. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather important information from you concerning your knowledge of the philosophy, policies and procedures of the Stone House Child Care Facility. This input will provide your perspective which I would like to use to clarify and organize into the information to be included in the handbook.

Based upon an implied need for comprehensive information, this Parent Handbook would be an informative guide for parents and staff of the Stone House. It would serve to prevent potential confusion and concern over policies and procedures. You will be asked questions dealing with your knowledge of policies and the importance of including specific topics in the handbook. Your information will aid me in compiling an informative, concise handbook.

If each parent will complete the enclosed questionnaires and return them as quickly as possible it would be greatly appreciated. Your participation is voluntary. All information received will be treated confidentially with no names used. Results of the questionnaire will be available to everyone returning the questionnaire in the enclosed pre-paid envelope.

You can contact me at the Stone House Child Care Facility (532-6095) or at 539-0460 and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have concerning this.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

Janine Atwell
Graduate Assistant
Family and Child Development

July 17, 1978

Please complete the following questionnaire and return it as quickly as possible. You may drop it into a box provided at the Stone House or use the enclosed, stamped, addressed envelope. I would appreciate it if you could return this by August 4, 1978.

The following topics are to be included in the Stone House Parent Handbook. I would like to know how well informed you presently feel you are about each topic. Please circle the number which indicates how adequate the information has been in meeting your needs about each topic below:

	inadequate information		adequate information		extensive information
General Philosophy	1	2	3	4	5
Attendance Policy	1	2	3	4	5
Fees	1	2	3	4	5
Health and Safety	1	2	3	4	5
Illness	1	2	3	4	5
Meals and Snacks	1	2	3	4	5
Clothing	1	2	3	4	5
Program Schedule	1	2	3	4	5
Field Trips	1	2	3	4	5
Research at the Stone House	1	2	3	4	5
Observation by Students	1	2	3	4	5
Parent Involvement	1	2	3	4	5
Storm and Fire Procedures	1	2	3	4	5
School Closing	1	2	3	4	5
Staffing and Administration	1	2	3	4	5
Discipline Policy	1	2	3	4	5
Child Abuse and Neglect Policy	1	2	3	4	5

Other _____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5

I would like to know how important you feel it is for each topic below to be included in the handbook. Please indicate by circling the appropriate number how important it is to include these topics.

	unimportant		important		vital
General Philosophy	1	2	3	4	5
Attendance Policy	1	2	3	4	5
Fees	1	2	3	4	5
Health and Safety	1	2	3	4	5
Illness	1	2	3	4	5
Meals and Snacks	1	2	3	4	5
Clothing	1	2	3	4	5
Program Schedule	1	2	3	4	5
Field Trips	1	2	3	4	5
Research at the Stone House	1	2	3	4	5
Observation by Classes	1	2	3	4	5
Parent Involvement	1	2	3	4	5
Storm and Fire Procedures	1	2	3	4	5
School Closings	1	2	3	4	5
Staffing and Administration	1	2	3	4	5
Discipline	1	2	3	4	5
Child Abuse and Neglect Policy	1	2	3	4	5
Other _____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5

Please use the available space to make any further comments you would like.

It would be appreciated if you could complete the following information:

Relationship to Child: _____ Mother Parent's age _____
 _____ Father
 _____ Other (please specify)

Educational Background:

_____ years of formal education (high school = 12, college = 16, M.S. = 18,
Ph.D. = 22)

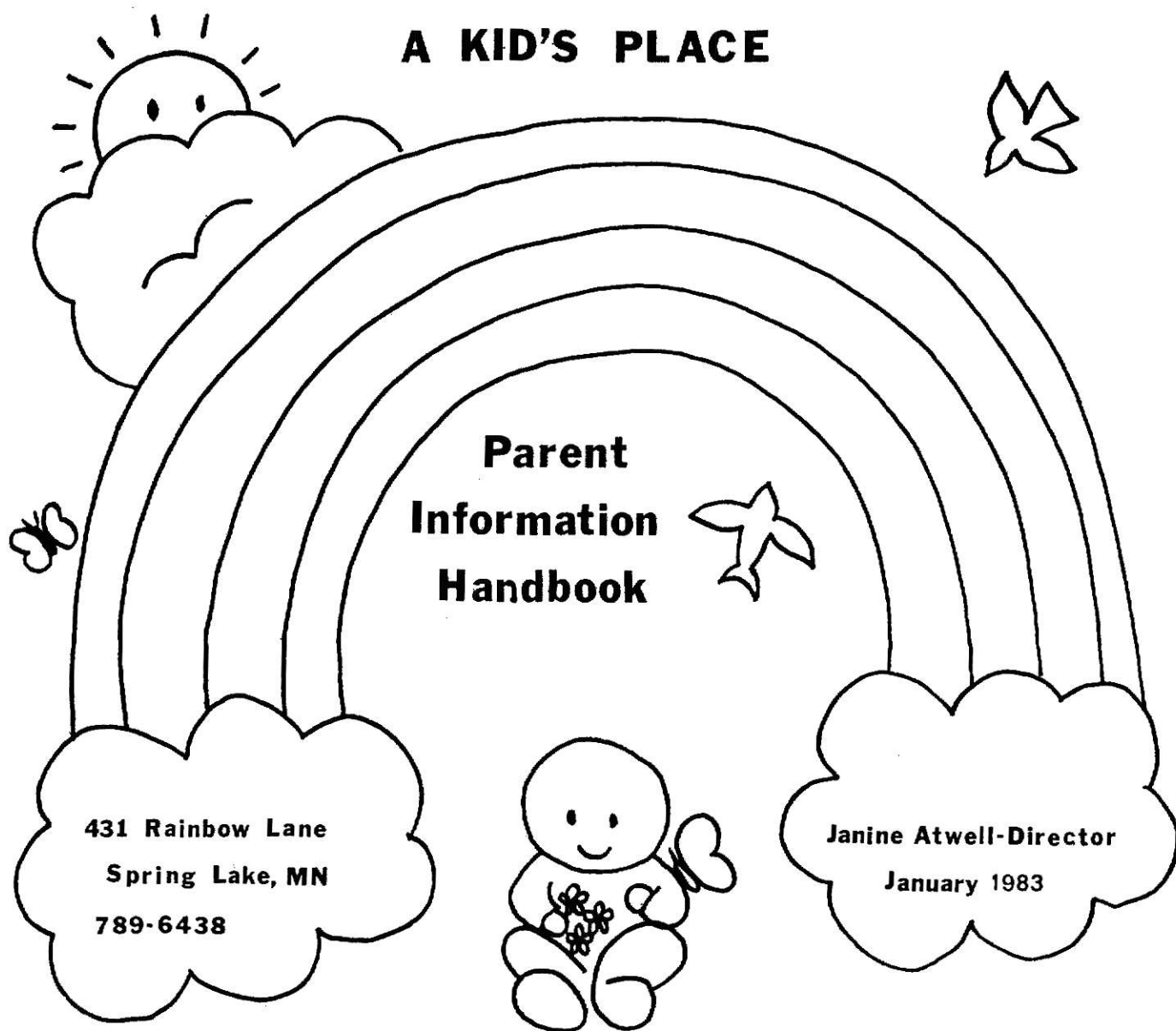
Major field

Occupation: _____

Signature indicates consent to participate in this effort:

_____ (date)

A KID'S PLACE



Parent Information Handbook

**431 Rainbow Lane
Spring Lake, MN
789-6438**

**Janine Atwell-Director
January 1983**

CONTENTS

Letter to the Parents

Philosophy

The First Day - Leaving Your Child

Enrollment and Attendance

Enrollment Requirements

Fees

Operation

Arrivals and Departures

Insurance

Personal Needs

Health - Attendance Guidelines

Medication

Meals and Snacks

Personal Hygiene and Naps

Clothing

Program

Program

Schedules

Four Developmental Areas

Discipline

Sharing Time

Field Trips

Birthdays

Emergencies - Closings

Storm/Fire

Parents and Staff

Staff

Home Visits

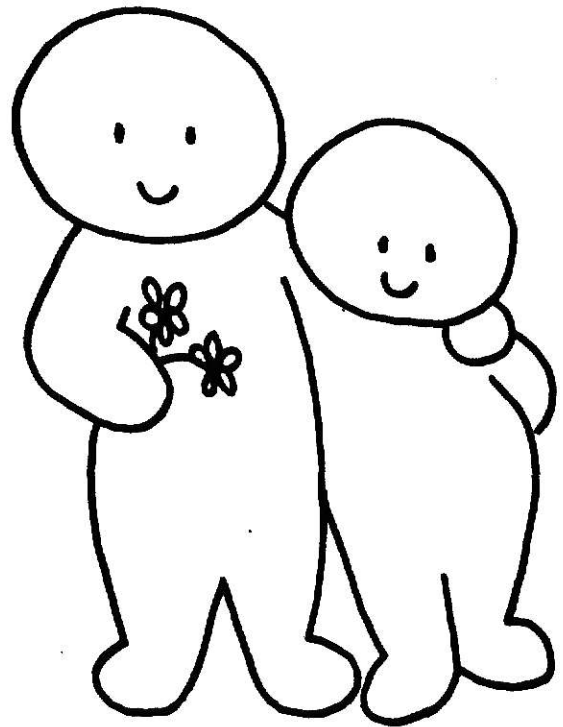
Conferences

Parent Education Sessions

Observing Your Child

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

Forms for Enrollment



Contents and Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

Welcome to A Kid's Place! We are looking forward to our experiences with you and your child. We hope that your experiences with our center will be rewarding and enriching for all of you. We also look forward to answering any of your questions and your continued interest in our center.

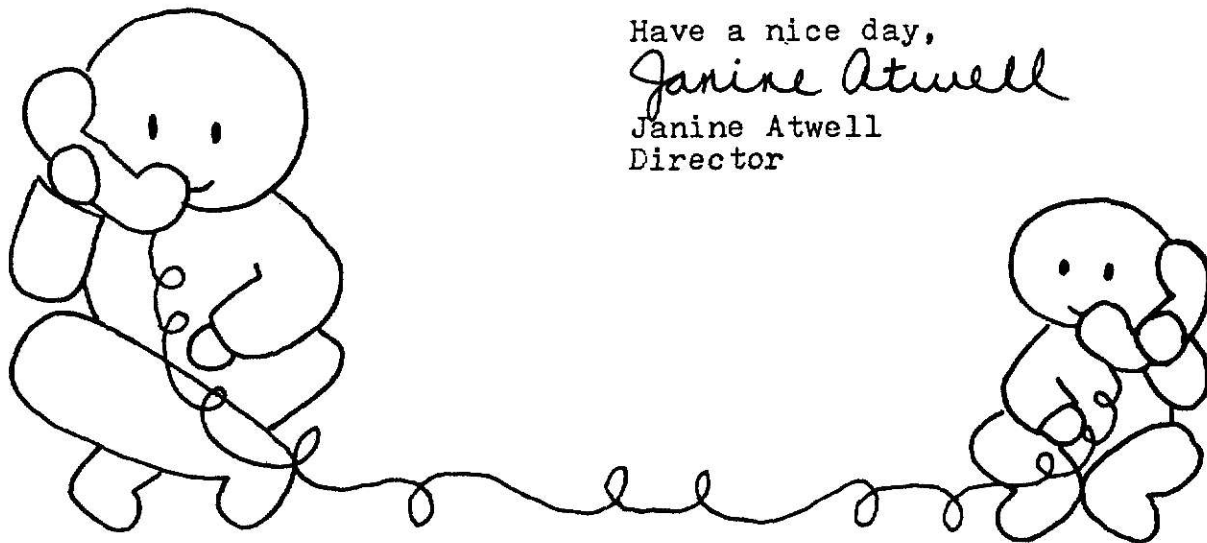
Whether your child is with us for part or all of the day, we would like to assure you that quality care will be provided by our well qualified staff. We take great pride in our facility and program. We have worked hard to insure that the individual child does not get lost in the group. Each child is treasured for the unique qualities that she brings to our group.

This booklet was developed especially for you - the parents. We have tried to include any information that you might need to know about our center. This is meant to be your resource guide and to avoid confusion over the policies of A Kid's Place. If you have any questions or suggestions, please discuss them with us. The value of the program for your family depends upon keeping our communication lines open.

Have a nice day,

Janine Atwell

Janine Atwell
Director





Philosophy

GENERAL PHILOSOPHY

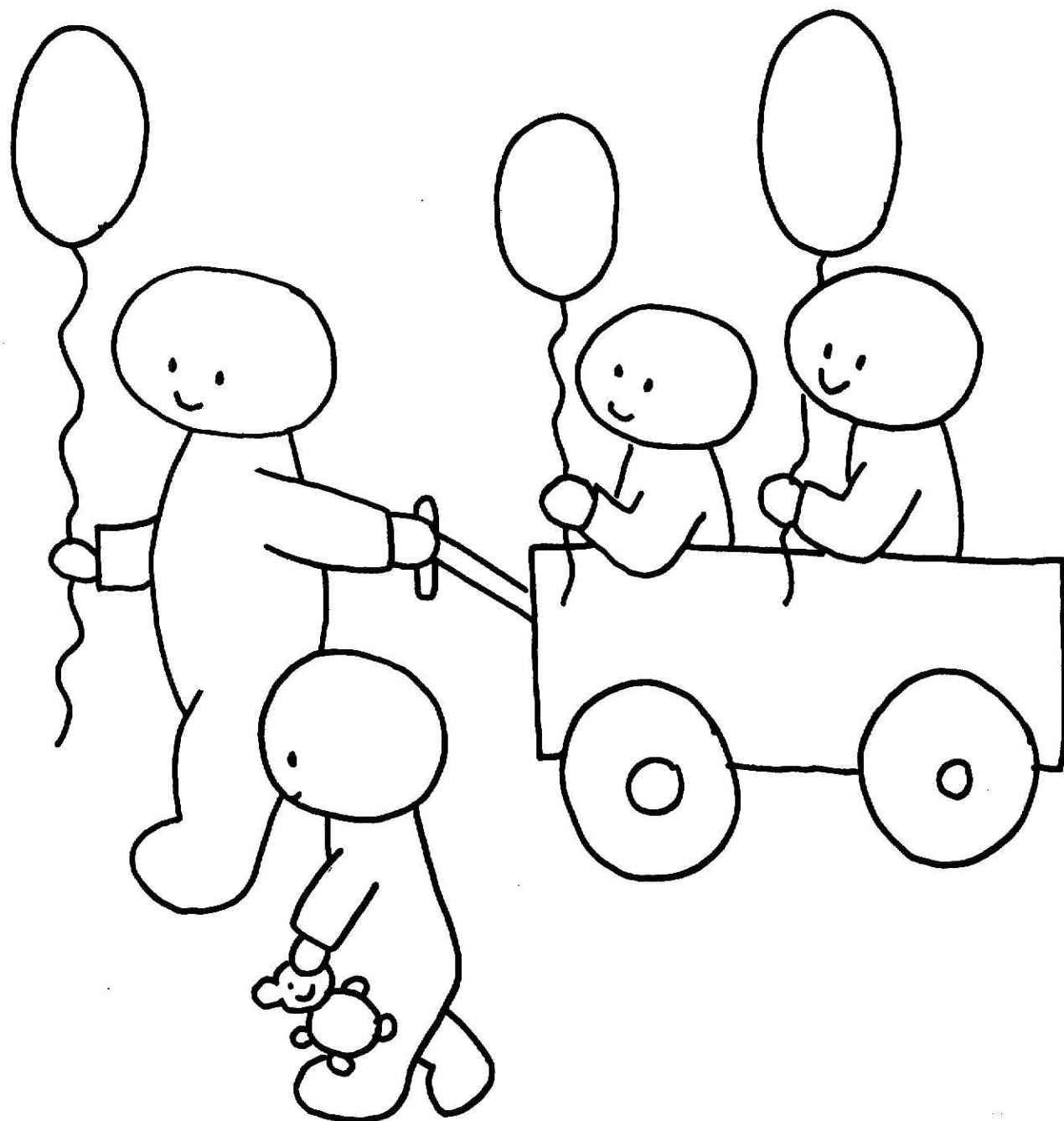
A Kid's Place does not replace your child's family or home - it complements them. It provides a secure environment of quality child care fostering physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of your child. We strive for optimal interaction between your child with the environment to develop your child's competence and confidence.

Goals and objectives for the development of each child are the result of careful evaluation and planning by our staff. The interests and abilities of each child influences our daily and long range plans. To provide an optimal interaction with the environment, the balance of activities and program flexibility are considered. Our staff develops a stimulating program designed to promote a positive self-concept and feeling of worth for all our children.

It is our philosophy to provide a program which incorporates the four developmental areas: cognitive, social, physical, and emotional. While activities are often planned to zero in on a particular area, for example social growth, they influence the other three areas also. This interrelation of the areas of growth results in a competent and confident child.

THE FIRST DAY - LEAVING YOUR CHILD

We hope that you and your child will be able to make an introductory visit to our center before your child's first day. This will acquaint your child with the new surroundings while you provide a feeling of security for his explorations. The first two or three days at the center we ask that you arrive early (if possible) with your child so he can ease into the routine. You may spend some extra time in the morning with your child, but we ask that you check with the teacher first. In this way we can determine if your presence is helping your child or hindering the transition. When it is time for you to leave, please tell your child that you are leaving. Let him know that you will return at the end of the day and then leave. Your child may cry, but please just continue out the door. Our staff is well prepared to handle this. Many times if you peeked in the room 5 minutes later, your child would be cheerfully involved in his "work". This is often a difficult time for parents, but we assure you that it works and your child will adjust more quickly and happily if the whole matter is treated very matter of factly.



Enrollment and Attendance

ENROLLMENT

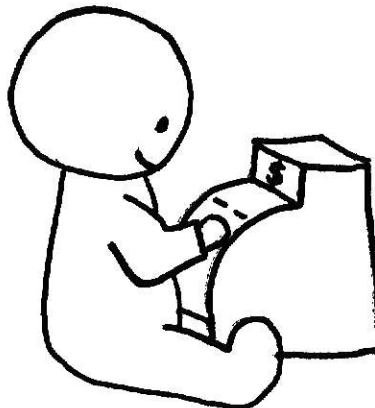
We accept boys and girls of all races, colors, creeds, religions and ethnic origins. What better way to learn about our world than sharing experiences with people who are different from us in one way or another? The unique characteristics of each person at our center contribute to the quality of our program.

Prior to enrollment you should receive this handbook with the forms necessary for enrollment attached. We will also set up an enrollment conference with you. At that time we can go over the materials and answer any questions that you might have.

All information is confidential and is used to know your child better. The forms include:

1. Enrollment Information
2. Developmental Information
3. Health History
- *4. Physical Examination (signed by your physician)
- *5. Immunization Record (signed by your physician)
6. Emergency Information

We use this information to aid in determining individual and group goals. Please note the (*) by Physical Examination and Immunization Record. According to state licensing regulations we must have both of these forms completed for your child in the center within 30 days of her enrollment. Failure to comply with this policy results in the discharge of your child from our program. The intent of this is to provide a safeguard to the health of our children and staff.



FEES

Payments are expected on the first Monday of each month. You will receive a bill one week before the due date. You may send in the payment to: A Kid's Place, 431 Rainbow Lane, Spring Lake, Minnesota 55432. If you prefer you may give the payment to the head teacher of your child's group.

Two weeks notification is required if it is necessary to withdraw your child from our program. You will be charged for the 2 week period following notification even if your child is not in attendance. This policy is designed to protect the financial status of our center by giving us time to arrange for the replacement of your child. There is no refund for absence due to illness, vacations, etc. However, you will not be charged for scheduled closings of the center.

OPERATION

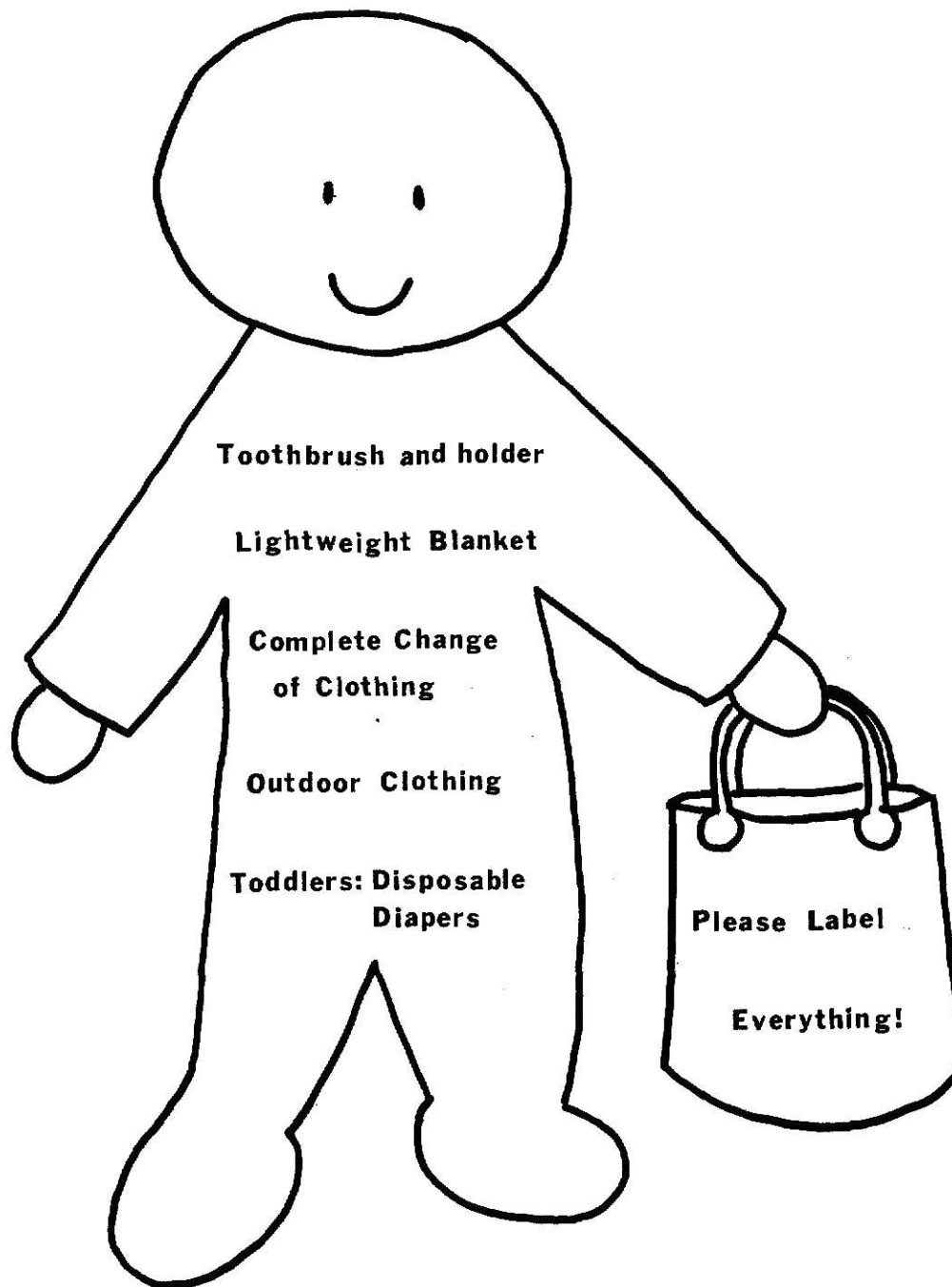
Our center is opened every day, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. We will be closed for one week at Christmas, one week in the Spring and one week in the Summer. You will be notified of the exact dates well ahead of time so you can make alternate arrangements.

ARRIVALS and DEPARTURES

We open our doors promptly at 7:30 a.m. Children are expected to arrive between 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Each child must be accompanied into the building to be checked in. Children must not be dropped off in front of the center. In order for a quality program and continuity to be maintained it is important that your child be present between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. They may leave any time after 3:00 p.m. It is also very important that departure from the center be no later than 5:30 p.m. It can be very upsetting to your child to be left after all the other children have departed.

If your child will be absent for any reason (e.g., a trip, visiting friends or relatives, or illness) please notify us. This will assist us in planning for activities and meals.

A list of all childrens names, their parents names and phone numbers will be distributed. This will give you the opportunity to arrange carpools.



Children's Personal Needs

INSURANCE

According to state licensing regulations we carry liability and accident coverage for all children and the staff. All vehicles that will be used to carry your child will also be covered by insurance.

HEALTH - Attendance Guidelines

Your child's health influences not only his daily performance and interaction but also influences other children and the staff as well. Certain policies are established so that you can be assured of your child's health and safety.

Your child must have: (1.) a health history form, (2.) a physical examination form signed by your family physician, and (3.) an up-to-date immunization record also signed by your physician. The physical examination and immunization record are effective for one year from the date of the physician's signature. Failure to provide these forms within 30 days of your child's enrollment will result in the discharge of your child from the center. This is a state licensing regulation.

If you could check your child each morning before leaving for the center, you can help prevent his being sent home from the center or of his spreading infection to others. It is impossible to protect children from all illnesses and your child may on occasion become ill this year. A few symptoms for you to check for are listed below:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. a temperature | 6. sore throat |
| 2. flushed skin | 7. spotted throat |
| 3. skin rashes | 8. any oozing sore |
| 4. congestion | 9. <u>Any symptoms that would</u> |
| 5. any unusual pains | <u>prevent total participation</u> |

If your child becomes ill at the center, you will be notified. Your child will be isolated until he can be picked up. The emergency card that we have you complete will provide the names of other individuals to contact if you can't be reached. Our policy on illness highlights the importance of an alternative caregiver since there may be an occasion when your child may become ill or that the center would close due to inclement weather and a caregiver would be needed.

HEALTH - Medication

If necessary, a designated staff member may administer an oral or surface medication prescribed by your family physician or dentist. According to the state licensing regulations the following procedures must be followed:

1. Written authorization to administer medication must be given by you.
2. The medication must be clearly labelled with the following information:
 - prescription number
 - name of the drug
 - strength and quantity of drug
 - expiration date of prescription
 - directions for use
 - child's name
 - physician's name
 - date of issue
 - name and address of pharmacy
3. A record of the times that the medication was administered will be kept for the parents.
4. No over the counter medication may be administered.

MEALS AND SNACKS

Your child's meals and snacks are given careful attention by our qualified cook. Meals are planned that are nutritious and tasty. Mealtime is intended as a happy and relaxed time. Children are encouraged, never forced, to taste everything. Small portions are first served by the teacher. Then under the teacher's supervision, the children may serve themselves seconds with the understanding that they will eat whatever they serve themselves. This is a time for your child to quietly talk with their teacher and friends.

Food is never used as a punishment or method of discipline. We are trying to impress upon children that all parts of the meal including dessert are important and of value. We will welcome any comments or suggestions concerning the menu which will be posted weekly on the parents' bulletin board. As all snacks as well as lunch are carefully planned we ask that you please do not send any food to the center.

PERSONAL HEALTH HABITS AND NAPS

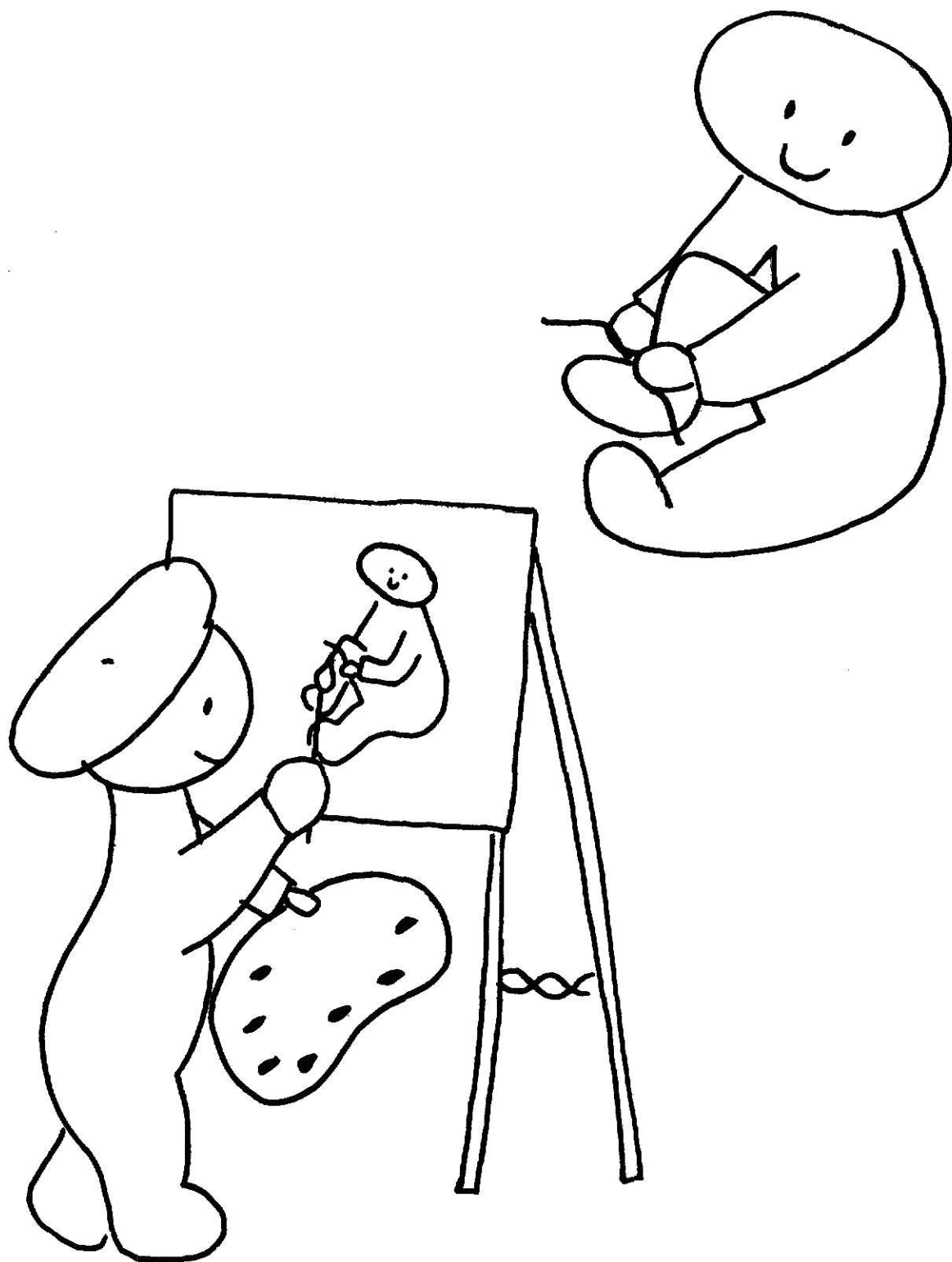
After lunch each child goes to the toilet area where after using the toilet he will wash up and brush his teeth in preparation for naptime. Each child should have a toothbrush and toothbrush case to bring to the center on his first day. Each child should also have a small, lightweight blanket for naptime. Some children will sleep during naptime while others will only rest quietly on their cots. Different children require various amounts of sleep to refresh themselves for the afternoon activities. Individual differences are taken into consideration by our staff.

CLOTHING

In our program your child will be exploring and manipulating his environment to the fullest, both inside and outside. This will necessitate the wearing of sturdy, comfortable and washable clothing. While aprons are provided for messy activities, your child should be free from excess concern over soiling, messing or tearing his clothing. Simple, durable clothing will encourage independence and self-help, including shoes suitable for running and climbing. Footwear which creates awkward posture such as high heeled boots, platform heels, etc. are discouraged.

We plan outdoor activities every day, except rainy or below zero weather. Therefore, appropriate clothing for wet and/or cold weather is necessary. This includes: boots, snowpants or a snowsuit, mittens and head covering for snowy, cold weather. (Note: baggies placed over your child's shoes help boots slip easily over shoes.) Rubbers and rainwear would be appropriate for a walk in a light spring rain.

Extra clothing is needed for those occasions when paint may be spilled or clothes are soiled or torn. Therefore your child will need to have an extra set of the following at the center: underwear, socks, slacks and a top. Toddlers who are not yet toilet trained will also need a supply of disposable diapers. Please label all belongings that your child brings to the center with his name.

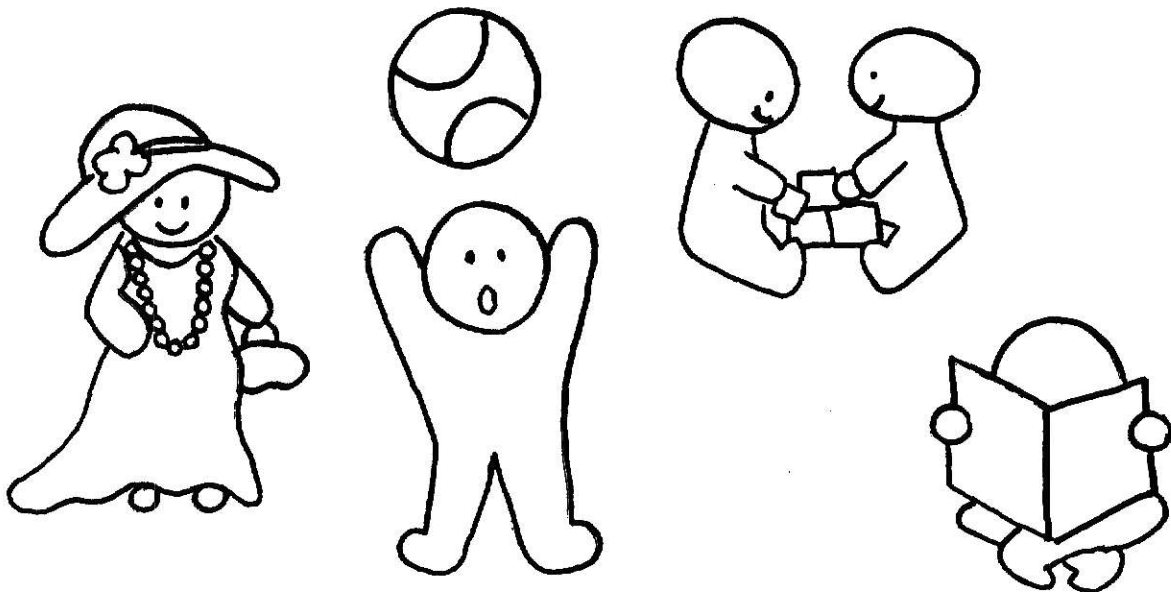


Program

PROGRAM

A Kid's Place is licensed to provide care for 30 children. There are 13 children in the Toddler group ranging in age from 18 months to 3 years. The Preschool enrolls 18 children ages 3 to 5 years. Each group meets in its own room. These two rooms have bathroom facilities, an area for meals, and a large space which can be subdivided for different activities. Our large playground has two areas, one for each group.

The daily program provides for growth in four developmental areas: cognitive, emotional, physical, and social. Long and short range goals are determined for each group as well as for the individual based on each child's abilities. The activities developed to facilitate meeting these goals are then distributed throughout our daily schedule. While it is important to meet individual needs, we feel that a pattern for the day is necessary to develop security in an environment away from home. The basic patterns for the day for both the Toddler and Preschool groups is presented in the following section. It must be stressed that these schedules are tentative and flexible. Special activities may necessitate a change in the schedule. An attempt will be made by the teachers to inform you of the highlights of your child's day. You should also feel free to ask questions about his day. This will give you and your child more to share.



SCHEDULES

Toddlers

7:30 - 9:00	Free choice activities (Table games, blocks, books, dramatic play)
9:00 - 9:20	Clean up time (Toileting and Wash up)
9:20 - 9:30	Group Time (Sharing, Special Activity)
9:30 - 9:45	Snack
9:45 - 10:45	Outdoor Play
10:45 - 11:45	Free choice activities (Teacher selected activities supporting goals - cognitive, art, etc.)
11:45 - 12:00	Clean up for Lunch
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch
12:30 - 12:45	Brush teeth - Relax
12:45 - 2:45	Nap
2:45 - 3:00	Toileting
3:00 - 3:15	Snack
3:15 - 4:15	Outdoor Play
4:15 - 4:30	Group Time (Fingerplays, songs, etc.)
4:30 - 5:15	Free Choice Activities
5:15 - 5:30	Clean up

Preschoolers

7:30 - 8:45	Arrival, Check-in, Free Play
8:45 - 9:00	Toileting, Clean up
9:00 - 9:30	Group Time (Fingerplays, songs, stories, etc.)
9:30 - 9:45	Snack
9:45 - 9:55	Group planning for Activity Work Period
9:55 - 10:50	Activity Work Period (Self-selection from Teacher planned Activities)
10:50 - 11:00	Toileting, Clean up
11:00 - 11:45	Outdoor Play
11:45 - 12:00	Preparation for Lunch
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch
12:30 - 12:45	Preparation for Nap
12:45 - 2:00	Nap or Rest
2:00 - 3:15	Outdoor Play
3:15 - 3:30	Toileting
3:30 - 3:50	Group Time
3:50 - 5:00	Activity Work Period (May complete unfinished morning activities.)
5:00 - 5:30	Free play indoors or outdoors, Clean up

FOUR DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS

Our program specifically aims for growth in four developmental areas for both the toddler and preschooler. These areas deal with cognitive, social, physical and emotional development. We feel that a carefully balanced program helps develop confident, competent children. We also provide some information for you about each of these areas and ways you can foster growth. You might be surprised to find how much you already do to help your own child learn. You are definitely your child's most important and best loved teacher.

Cognitive Development

Activities at the center which support cognitive development include: sorting objects by color, shape, size or another attribute; listening to stories, singing songs; and counting.

When you show to your child that you enjoy him and that his presence is wanted even everyday tasks become great learning experiences. Your child learns while performing routine household tasks. Enlist your helper the next time you sort laundry or when your sewing basket needs tidying up. Let your child help put the silverware away. He can even set the table if you provide placemats with the outline of table settings and silverware. You will have pleasant company while working and your child will gain practice in classification, matching colors, tactile and size discrimination. On your next walk or ride take advantage of your child's curiosity, imagination and eagerness to learn by playing simple games like: What do you see? What do you hear? What colors are on a traffic light? After your walk help your child recall the highlights of the outing. Increased vocabulary, memory, auditory, and visual perception will be a few of the cognitive benefits for your child. You may also find that by investigating your environment with your child you will reawaken your own senses and appreciation of the world.

Social Development

Activities at the center which support social development include: celebrating birthdays and holidays, dramatic play, and self-expression at Sharing Time.

Social development is an important aspect of a child's overall development. Much of a child's early socialization occurs within the family and lays the groundwork for later social relationships. Social development involves interacting with other people individually or as a group. This necessitates cooperating in group activities, using socially acceptable expression of emotions, leading and following peers, sharing toys, and getting along with teachers or parents. While we can set up the environment to encourage social development, you can also promote it at home through simple, everyday activities. Baking cookies or making play dough with another person is a mutually satisfying activity which encourages cooperation, sharing and following directions. Helping with routine tasks around the house, sweeping the floor, raking the leaves, painting the house with water and brushes or just picking up after the completion of an activity provides the child with an opportunity to observe and imitate people around him. Participating in family gatherings, tea parties or having a friend come to visit gives the child a chance to imitate and role play, as well as try out his manners and social graces. Any activity which you can share with your child will promote growth and development not only in the social area but in the other three areas as well.

Emotional Development

Activities at the center which promote emotional development include: dramatic play, role playing, expressing thoughts or feelings at Group time, Sharing time, puppetry and clay play.

The preschool years are very important for a child's development in terms of identifying who she is and building a positive self-image. Parents play a large role in enhancing their child's self-esteem by their approval and respect for their child's independence and individuality. A child with a high self-esteem is more capable of: exerting herself to explore and manipulate her environment; becoming a leader; and initiating successful interactions with peers and adults. These are key factors in learning and becoming a highly competent individual. Activities to enhance your child's self-image include: allowing the child to do as much as possible for herself, giving her responsibilities which she can accomplish with pride, allowing the child to help with simple household chores and providing situations that will allow the child to show pride in her accomplishments.

The preschool years are a time when the child begins to understand and control her emotions. Young children are not often able to identify and label their feelings; therefore, they may not know what emotions they are feeling and may express them in an inappropriate manner. The role of the parent can be to interpret the child's emotions and reflect them back to the child so that she can begin to understand herself as a person. This gives her an opportunity to express these emotions properly for the situation. During these years, young children need opportunities to release emotions, tensions, anxieties, and frustrations. Role playing is one means by which she can "play out" her feelings. Let her "play" at being mom, dad or baby sister. Activities such as pounding clay, punching a pillow, or kicking a ball permits the child to express negative feelings in an appropriate and acceptable manner. Water play, finger painting and play dough are good methods of release which can soothe an anxious or frustrated child.

Physical Development

Activities at the center which support fine and gross physical development include: playing with blocks, dancing with scarves or streamers, throwing balls, catching balls, skipping, and follow the leader.

Many simple activities at home can aid the physical development of your child. In particular, she can strengthen large and small motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Threading beads or buttons on a piece of yarn aids small motor development. You and your child can stuff a paper bag with newspaper and hang it as a punching bag. You can throw a nerf ball, a pair of balled up socks or bean bags into the laundry basket. Boxes and cans may become building blocks to construct a tower or fort. A bowling game can be made out of empty milk cartons and a plastic ball. Any activity that you can devise to involve your child in stretching, running, jumping, pinching, turning knobs, threading or stacking will help to refine her movements and improve her coordination. These activities can be as noisy or quiet as you choose. By changing the rules of the games you know, you can fit it to the surroundings and the mood of your child.

We are sure that you already do many things with your child which facilitate her development. We hope that we have given you a few more ideas to share with your child which will enrich both of you.

DISCIPLINE - Guidance

We feel that it is important to devote a section of this handbook to acquainting you with our approach to discipline. We do not feel that it is necessary to punish children, rather we try to guide them and provide them with opportunities for making appropriate decisions concerning their own behavior. However, even in the most ideal situation there are occasions when disciplinary action is called for. We choose methods of discipline which will encourage appropriate behavior while maintaining the child's feelings of self-worth. For example, Terry keeps driving his dump truck into the midst of a group of children playing in the housekeeping area. His disruptive behavior is causing anger and frustration in the group. Before the other children can gang up on Terry the teacher steps in and redirects his attention to a pile of blocks which needs to be hauled to the shelves at the opposite end of the room. Terry is now occupied making several trips with blocks and helping the teacher. The housekeeping group resumes their play.

In another group, Carol begins to throw puzzle pieces. When asked to stop she ignores the teacher. The teacher removes her from the table explaining that since Carol is not using the puzzles the way they are intended to be used she can leave the table until she can return and use the puzzles the way she knows they should be used. If she has trouble finding another activity the teacher will redirect her to one which fits her mood, for example, throwing nerf balls in a basket or fingerpainting.

It is pickup time in the block area and all of the children begin to put the blocks away. Peter and Sandy start arguing over who will put what blocks away. The teacher intervenes and divides a large pile into two smaller piles. Each child is asked to put a pile away. On the other hand, Carl refuses to help in any way. The teacher gives him a choice of helping to put away the blocks or straightening the library books on the shelves.

Finally it is group time and the children are listening to a story. Lisa begins to poke Beth. After being asked to stop several times Lisa is removed from the group to sit in the quiet corner until she can rejoin the group and behave appropriately.

In each one of the examples given the child, the situation, and the teacher determine what method of intervention is used. Attempts are made to help each child understand the situation and the feelings they are experiencing. Children learn quickly what behavior is expected of them and that while teachers do not like certain behaviors we continue to love them. Corporal punishment is prohibited in the center.

SHARING TIME

Sharing time is a time when your child may share an object brought from home or an experience with her peers. All items should be marked with her name. Upon arrival at the center the object will be put in the "sharing box". At sharing time the child will take her object from the box and share it with her friends. This time gives your child an opportunity to develop her vocabulary, speaking skills and listening skills. It encourages your child to express an idea and communicate with her peers. Arrangements should be made ahead of time with the teacher about the visits of small animals. Any other time that your child brings an object from home it will be kept in her cubby.

FIELD TRIPS

We plan many excursions into the community. This gives the children a chance to observe the world beyond home and center. Exposure to different people and experiences is an important part of your child's learning experience. We often need extra adult help for supervision. We will try not to make unnecessary or numerous demands upon your time, however, we do ask your cooperation and service. We hope you will enjoy the opportunity to join in an activity with us.

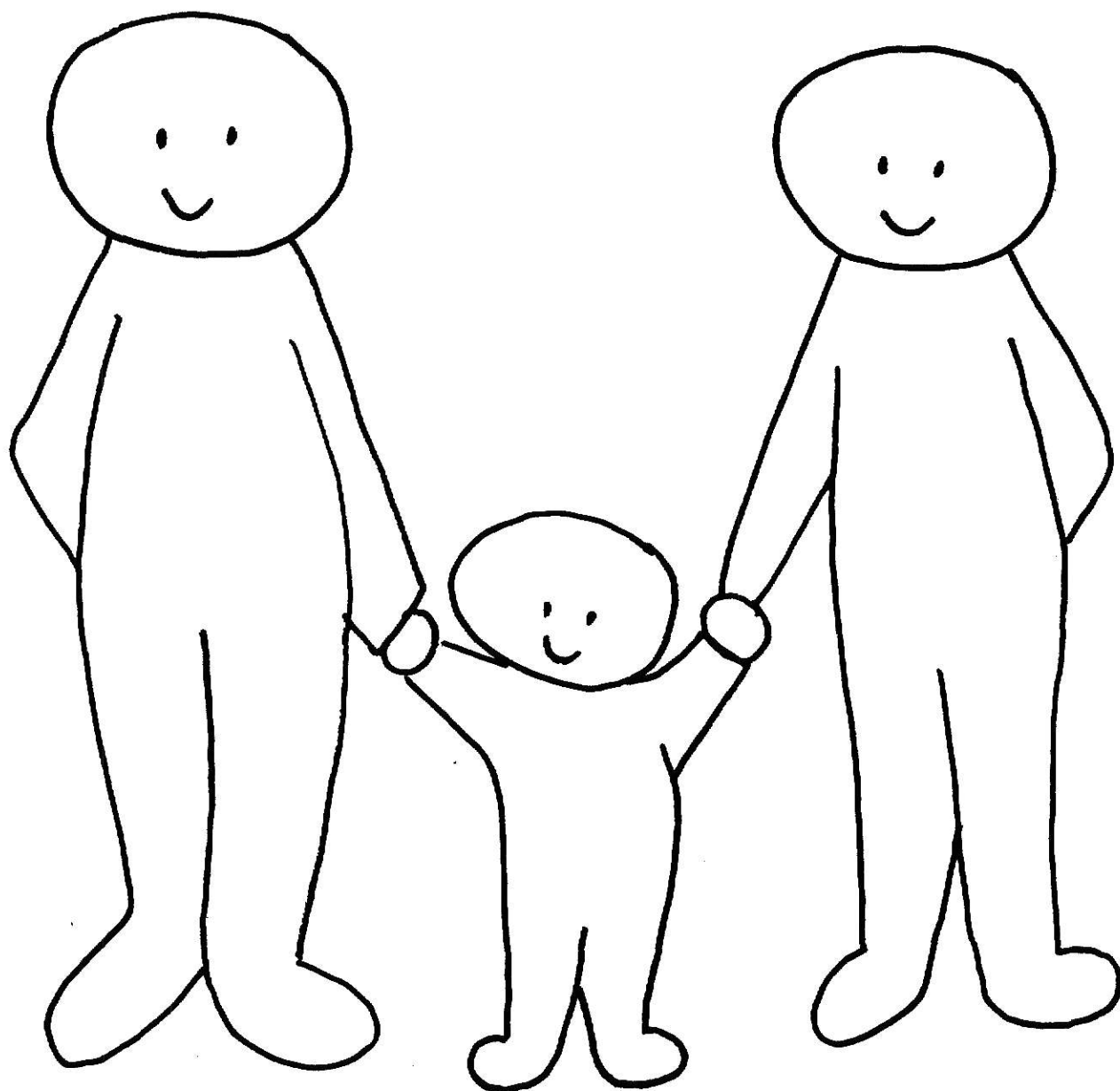
BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are very special times for all. We ask that you do not send any sort of treats to the center on your child's birthday. On her special day your child and her friends will prepare the birthday treats. Later in the day we will celebrate the happy event together. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

WEATHER and CENTER CLOSINGS

When the weather is threatening the center is prepared. Children and staff participate in severe weather drills as well as fire drills. Severe weather drills involve proceeding in an orderly fashion to the designated shelter area in the center basement. There we will wait for the all clear signal. This area is equipped with books, snacks, water, flashlights, blankets and first aid kits. Fire drills necessitate the rapid, orderly evacuation of the building. Plans for the drills have been worked out with the cooperation of the fire department and are posted on the parents bulletin board.

We may occasionally be closed due to the weather. We will phone all closings in to the local radio station WAKP 5432 AM. An attempt will be made to notify each family by phone before the time that the center would regularly open. Please do not call the center!



Parents and Staff

STAFF and THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Our primary function is to provide child care services for thirty children between the ages of 18 months and 5 years. To do this we look for enthusiastic, creative people with the skills and abilities to handle the responsibilities of caring for the children.

Our Staff

Director



Head Teachers



Toddler



Preschool

Assistant
Teachers



a.m.



p.m.



a.m.



p.m.

Student
Teachers



a.m.



p.m.



a.m.



p.m.

The Director

The director of the center has a Master's Degree or its equivalent in child development. Her major responsibilities are the overall management of the center and the supervision of the staff. While duties within the center are many, the director also has the responsibility of coordinating our services with the services offered by community agencies.

The Head Teachers

There are two head teachers at our center, one for the Toddler group and one for the Preschool group. These positions require B.S. or the equivalent in the study of child development. The head teachers supervise the assistant teachers and student teachers. They are responsible for the evaluation of the children and the development of short and long range goals for both the individuals and the group as well as for daily plans and activities.

The Assistant Teachers

There are four assistant teachers: one for each group in the morning and one for each group in the afternoon. They are selected for their interest in and their ability to guide young children. These teachers assist the head teacher in evaluating and developing plans for the children. They share teaching responsibilities and assist with the supervision of the student teachers. The assistant teachers provide the teacher with information about the children which is used in assessing the goals and progress of the children. They also provide supervision of the classroom while the head teacher is out.

The Student Teachers

The student teachers are from the nearby colleges. They are preparing for careers in child development. Although they do not yet have a degree, they are in our center to receive training and experience with young children. Their observations provide valuable information to the other teachers which are important to the formulating or modifying of future goals and objectives. In our center they are accorded the same respect as any other professional.

Volunteers

We are also fortunate to be involved with a program with the local high schools allowing students over the age of 15 to participate in our program. This provides a limited number of teenagers with an opportunity to learn to work with young children.

Additional Staff

We have a fulltime cook and assistant. It is their responsibility to provide well balanced, good tasting meals and snacks at our center. Helpers come in from the local high school to assist in serving the meals and clean up.

Our center is kept in excellent condition by our janitor and assistant. Their responsibility is the cleaning, maintenance and repair of our center. They also help keep the equipment that the children work with in safe, working condition.

Through cooperation of the Health Department we have the services of a public health nurse at our center. The nurse coordinates public health services such as check-ups, immunizations, dental exams and other preventative services. She also visits the classrooms and provides health education for the program.

Our center is part of a network of services provided in the community. We are closely involved with the Public Health department and also with the Family Resource Center. The FRC provides many services including child and family counseling. We feel that any service we can provide or refer you elsewhere for will provide support for you and your family.

HOME VISIT

We plan to visit each home early each year. This visit enables the teacher to get to know you and your child outside of the center as well as to give you a chance to know us better. It also gives your child a chance to meet with her teacher on familiar ground.

CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice each year for the parents of the children in the Preschool group. There will be four conferences scheduled for the parents with children in the Toddler group. We encourage both father and mother to attend this meeting. This conference may include the assistant teacher or student teacher as well as you and the head teacher. The purpose of these meetings is to keep you informed of your child's progress at the center and you may bring up any concerns you have concerning your child. In this way we can all work together building confidence and helping your child over those difficult times we all encounter.

PARENT EDUCATION SESSIONS (Attendance is optional)

Parent education sessions centering on child development will be scheduled throughout the year. You may choose to attend the sessions of particular importance or interest to you. Please feel free to let us know about special topics, interests or concerns to help us in the planning of these sessions.

OBSERVING YOUR CHILD (Optional)

You are invited and encouraged to use our observation booths at any time. This will give you an opportunity to observe your child. At this time you can see how your child interacts with his teachers and peers. Please enter the back door of the center and slip unnoticed into the booth because you will see more typical behavior if he is unaware of your presence.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

It is important to note the policy concerning Child Abuse and Neglect. According to Kansas Child Protection Act 38-717, we, as professionals entrusted with the care of children, are obligated to report any suspected cases of physical, mental or sexual abuse or neglect. This is not a pleasant subject but we realize that if we can help one family by so doing then it is worthwhile. Referral to an agency such as the Family Resource Center can be made discreetly and confidentially. It is important to the self-esteem of every person in a family that an attempt be made to seek and accept help to deal with such problems.

Enrollment Information

69

Child's Name _____ Birthdate _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Parents Mother's Name _____
 Address (if different than above) _____

 Mother's Employment _____
 Phone _____

 Father's Name _____
 Address (if different) _____

 Father's Employment _____
 Phone _____

Siblings Names and Ages _____

Emergency Information

Child's Name _____

Home Address _____ Home Phone _____

Father's Name _____

Place of business _____ Phone _____

Mother's Name _____

Place of business _____ Phone _____

Give name of another person to be called in case of emergency,
if parents cannot be reached:

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Relationship _____

Physician to be called in case of emergency:

1st Choice _____ Phone _____

2nd Choice _____ Phone _____

Name of hospital to be used in emergency:

1st Choice _____

2nd Choice _____

Other comments (allergies, etc.): _____

Date _____ Signed _____
(Parent or guardian)

(from Planning and Administering Early Childhood Programs,
Decker and Decker, 1976, p.225.)

Developmental Information

Child's Name _____

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge. Use the back of the sheets if you need more space.

HYGIENE HABITS

Is your child toilet trained? _____

Are his movements regular? _____ At what times? _____

Does your child have special words when indicating a need to urinate or have a bowel movement? _____

Does your child nap? _____ Everyday? _____ Approximate time _____

At what time does your child go to bed? _____

Can your child use a fork and spoon? _____

Can your child use a cup? _____

Can your child brush his teeth? _____

Does your child have a particular food like? _____

Any dislikes? _____

Any allergies? _____

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Does your child prefer indoor or outdoor activities? _____

Describe some indoor activities? _____

Describe some outdoor activities? _____

Does your child watch TV? _____ Estimate how much each day _____

What are his/her favorite television programs? _____

Does your child like to spend time watching and helping you perform any household tasks? What? _____

Does your child engage in dramatic play at home? (cars, dolls, stores) Please describe _____

Does your child like stories and books? _____

Do you or another member of your family read to your child? ____
Any particular time? _____

Are there any stories or kinds of stories that you child prefers?

Does your child express an interest in music? _____

Does your child like to sing or play an instrument? _____

Does your child have a favorite song or instrument? _____

Does your child like to dance? _____

Does your child like to use building materials? _____

Does your child like to use play dough or clay? _____

Does your child like to draw? ____ to color? ____ to paint? ____
to use paste or glue? ____ any other? _____
Favorite color? _____

SOCIAL INTERESTS

Does your child have a pet? _____

Does your child have a favorite animal? _____

Does your child have children in the neighborhood to play with?

Name his special friends? _____

Does your child have an imaginary friend? _____

In your opinion does your child interact well with other
children? _____

What types of places does your child like to visit? (friends, relatives, zoo, park, supermarket, church, library, etc.)

Does your child react well to changes in his routine? Explain.

Do you know of any fears that your child has? (thunder, lightening, animals, dark, loud noise, etc.)

Please use the remaining space to make any comments that you feel would help us to know your child better.

Health History

Child's Name _____ Birthdate _____

General evaluation of family's health _____

Family deaths (causes) _____

Child's illnesses. If your child has had any of these diseases, please state age at which he had them.

_____ measles	_____ diabetes
_____ mumps	_____ heart disease
_____ whooping cough	_____ chorea (St. Vitus Dance)
_____ poliomyelitis	_____ epilepsy
_____ rheumatic fever	_____ chicken pox
_____ scarlet fever	_____ pneumonia
_____ diphtheria	_____ asthma, hay fever
_____ smallpox	_____ serious accident _____

Has your child ever had surgery? If yes, for what? _____

Has your child ever been hospitalized? If yes, for what? _____

Has your child had tests for tuberculosis? Date? _____

Skin test? _____ Date _____ Chest X-ray? _____ Date _____

Please check any of the following which you have noticed recently.

_____ frequent sore throat	_____ shortness of breath
_____ persistent cough	_____ frequent nose bleeds
_____ frequent headaches	_____ allergy
_____ poor vision	_____ frequent urination
_____ dizziness	_____ fainting spells
_____ frequent styes	_____ abdominal pain
_____ dental defects	_____ loss of appetite
_____ speech difficulty	_____ hard of hearing
_____ tires easily	_____ four or more colds per year

Any comments: _____

Any allergies: _____

Describe your child socially and emotionally _____

Are there any matters which you would like to discuss with our staff? _____

Date _____ Signed _____
(Parent or guardian)

(from Planning and Administering Early Childhood Programs,
Decker and Decker, 1976, p.226.)

Physical Examination

Child's Name _____

Height _____ Weight _____

Comment on any significant findings: _____

Ears: _____ Right _____ Left _____ Discharge _____

Eyes: _____ Right _____ Left _____ Squint _____

Nose _____ Throat _____

Glands _____ Tonsils _____

Heart and Circulation _____

Lungs _____

Abdomen _____

Bones and joints _____

Reflexes _____

Nutrition _____

Posture _____

Hernia _____ Neurological _____

Hemoglobin (if physician indicates) _____

Urinalysis (if physician indicates) _____

Does the program need to be adjusted for this child? _____

Referrals _____

Date _____ Signed _____
(M.D/D.O)

(from Planning and Administering Early Childhood Programs,
Decker and Decker, 1976, p. 227.)

Immunization Record

Child's Name _____

Successful smallpox vaccination _____ date _____ Reaction _____ Take
Immune
Accelerated

Diphtheria-Tetanus _____
(1st date) (2nd date) _____ Booster

Poliomyelitis _____
(1st date) (2nd date) (3rd date) _____ Booster

Measles (Rubeola) Disease or immunization date _____

Tuberculin test _____
(Skin test date) (Chest X-ray date)

Date _____ Physician signature _____

(from Planning and Administering Early Childhood Programs,
Decker and Decker, 1976, p. 228.)

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL PARENT INFORMATION HANDBOOK

by

JANINE M. ATWELL

B.S., State University of New York, College at Oswego, 1974

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Family and Child Development

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Manhattan, Kansas

1983

**THE FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S)**

**IS/ARE
ILLEGIBLE DUE
TO INK BLEED
THROUGH**

This report presents the rationale for and the development of a parent information handbook (PIH) model for a hypothetical child care center. The purpose of such a project is to emphasize the importance of the establishment and the maintenance of the parent-teacher relationship to the family and the center. The belief is that by presenting such a handbook the foundation for this relationship is laid. This handbook contains relevant center information: the philosophy, policies, and procedures. The basis for the PIH and the information contained therein was a questionnaire given to the parents of children attending the Stone House Child Care Center at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas; a phone survey of several child care centers in Minneapolis, Minnesota; teaching experience in child care centers; and graduate study in Family and Child Development at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. The conclusion was reached that when used as part of the enrollment process, the PIH would be a valuable communication tool. However, the decision to develop, adapt, and use this tool is one to be made by the individual child care center.

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