



REGIS
Catholic Schools

Early Childhood Programs

Parent Handbook

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Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your child to Regis Catholic Schools Early Childhood Programs. We look forward to sharing in your child's growth, development and happiness during their early years!

There are few decisions more important for a parent than who will care for and love their children. With this as our focus, we are excited about the opportunity to provide your child with a quality, educational early childhood program in a Christian environment.

Experts agree that more learning takes place during the first five years than at any other period in life. Early experiences are vital to your child's growth and development.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about our policies and services. We hope you find it helpful. After you have read through the handbook, please sign and return the **Receipt of Handbook** located on the last page. If you have any questions or comments about the program, we welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,

Gayle Flaig
Administrator of Early Childhood Programs

Julie Burhop
Center Director of Regis Child Development Center

Corissa McCoy
Center Director of Genesis Child Development Center

**And He took the children in His arms,
Put His hands on them and blessed them.**

Mark 10:16

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Mission

As part of the Regis Catholic Schools, our programs provide a Christian environment for children and families. Our committed early childhood professionals provide a stimulating, nurturing, early care and education experience through rich and diverse learning opportunities based on best practice.

Philosophy

We believe that each child is a unique individual and a precious gift from God. In believing this, we encourage social development by providing opportunities for sharing, taking turns, making friends, resolving conflicts, solving problems, helping others, recognizing and accepting others, cooperating on projects, and learning self-respect.

We believe children learn by doing and that most of life's learning occurs during the first five years. Our "hands on" curriculum allows our society's precious future to become confident and to enjoy successes in an atmosphere of respect, warmth and unconditional love. This is important because the early years are the years children build the foundation they need to continue their education.

We understand that children develop sequentially from one stage of development to another. Because of this, we feel that children must be provided with opportunities that will challenge them and aid in their progression from one stage to the next. We also believe children construct knowledge through experience; therefore, our program will provide children with a large variety of activities that will allow for success and encourage advancement in all areas of development.

Last, we feel it is most important that we work closely with the families in order to secure an environment that is most beneficial to the child. Parents are the most significant adult in a child's life. We strive to create mutual respect between parents and staff. We encourage family participation through field trips, holiday celebrations, and volunteering. Our doors are open to parents at all times.

Our Teachers

Our professionally trained early childhood teachers are the greatest strength of our program. It takes a special person to work with young children; therefore, we select our staff based on their nurturing abilities as well as their educational background. Our teachers are trained in CPR, First Aid, SIDS Prevention, and Shaken Baby Syndrome. They also receive continuing education through on-going staff development. Each staff member undergoes an extensive background check at start of hire and then again annually.

We also have a commitment to the early childhood field and often serve as a practicum and/or student teaching site for early childhood students from the local technical college and university. These students also undergo an extensive background check.

Goals

- To provide an educational early learning experience in a Christian atmosphere for young children.
- To provide a safe, creative and attractive learning environment.
- To enhance the emotional, physical and intellectual growth of each child.
- To maintain a professional and dedicated staff.
- To be committed to strengthening the interpersonal relationships between staff, children and families.

Program

We are part of the Regis Catholic Schools (RCS), operated by the Diocese of La Crosse. Our website is www.regiscatholicshools.com. The Centers are licensed to operate by the Department of Child and Family Services. Our compliance with all licensing requirements is monitored regularly. The programs are open to children ages 6 weeks through 12 years of age.

We are open Monday through Friday from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM. We are closed on the following holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, and the Fourth of July. In addition, the Center is closed one day in May, used for cleaning the Center, and one day in the fall for a staff development day.

We also offer EC4T (Eau Claire 4 Tomorrow) sessions, a four year-old kindergarten program.

Environment

When a learning environment encourages exploration and discovery, children develop a sense of trust and belonging. This type of environment is considered *hands-on learning* or *learning through play*. Children in our classrooms are encouraged to discover things on their own. They learn by exploring the actual objects we talk about. They will acquire the skills and abilities needed for a lifetime of learning through a carefully planned, developmentally appropriate environment arranged by the teachers.

Our environment contains the following elements to meet the needs of the children and promote successful experiences for them:

- Language Arts/Literacy materials - to promote listening, language, and pre-writing skills.
- Sensory materials - to facilitate the growth of tactile, visual and auditory skills.
- Materials for creative expression (art, music and drama) - to promote creative self-expression.
- Math and Science materials - to facilitate knowledge of numbers, sequence, measurement and experimentation.
- Large and small-motor materials – to develop hand-eye coordination and large muscle coordination.
- Visual symbols of our Christian faith - to set a foundation based on Christian values.

Together for the Children

As a child development center, we are a community of children, parents, and staff all interacting and sharing our lives together. In a community, people work closely together and hopefully interactions are positive, helpful, kind, and understanding. Yet it is to be expected that from time to time people will experience some conflict, some concerns, and some difficulties.

We recognize that parenting is one of the most difficult, intense, and rewarding experiences in your life. We want you to share your thoughts, hopes, and dreams for your child. You want what is best for your child, and we know it is your job to advocate and protect your child.

We, as a staff, will make mistakes, create misunderstandings, and occasionally miscommunicate. When these mistakes occur, we want you to tell us. As a staff, it is our goal to offer the best possible child care services to your family. In order to meet our goal, we need your input, your suggestions, your questions, and concerns.

When you have a concern, please remember:

- Teachers want the parents to feel very satisfied with the care their child is receiving.
- Teachers prefer that you talk with them directly, but they do understand if you would prefer to talk with the Assistant Director or Director.
- Realize that if you have a concern with a teacher, the Assistant Director or Director will need to investigate and talk with the teacher directly about your concern and deal with the issue in a straightforward manner so that the teacher can improve his/her performance and/or correct any mistakes or misunderstandings.
- Be assured that teachers do not hold a grudge against your child or “take it out” on your child after you have expressed a concern. Your child’s teacher will be more conscientious about your issue and try to improve.
- Consider using the “once is OK” rule. With minor issues, allow staff to make a mistake once or twice, but when it becomes a pattern, it is definitely a time to bring it to their attention.
- On the other hand, don’t allow concerns to build up. As concerns occur, share them with the teachers. It is disturbing to find out later that a parent had a number of concerns and never expressed them.
- Sometimes we cannot make changes you may request due to other restrictions, but we ALWAYS want to hear your suggestions. We promise to consider them seriously and respond to you in a timely manner.

General Policies

Enrollment Policy

Before a child is enrolled, a conference visit with parents and their child is required. Visiting the program allows both parent and child to become comfortable with our environment, staff, and schedule. Along with the registration fee, several information forms must be completed by the parent/guardian for each child. The Center Director will give you these forms upon registration. A child is considered enrolled in the program if all paper work and forms have been completed and are on file and he/she is in attendance at least one day per month.

Verification of Custody

It is our policy to remain neutral in all custody matters. Furthermore, the Center may not serve as a visitation site. As a condition of enrollment, a copy of the signed custody decree that indicates who has primary placement of the child, a copy of the current custody agreement, and a copy of the visitation schedule must be on file in the office. Parents are to notify the office immediately of any change in the order. This notification must be in the form of a signed court order.

In the event that a parent chooses to enroll a child without including the child's other biological parent on the authorized pick-up list, the enrolling parent must provide a copy of an official court document which indicates that the non-enrolling parent is not authorized to pick up the child (e.g. current restraining order, sole custody decree, divorce decree stating sole custody). Absent that document, the Center does not have the authority to restrict the non-enrolling parent from picking up the child, and we may release the child to that parent, provided the non-enrolling parent has legal documentation stating his or her paternity or maternity of the child. This confidential information will remain in the child's file.

State Licensing Requirements

We believe licensing and regulations of standards are in the best interest of all children. These standards relate to staff, health and safety procedures, the building, nutrition, child- to-teacher ratios and record keeping. We are subject to inspection by state and city health, fire, and licensing officials.

Fee Structure and Payments

Please refer to the handout "Policies and Procedures Regarding Fees and Payments".

Returned Checks

There is a \$25 service charge for each check returned for insufficient funds.

Insurance

Regis Catholic Schools does not carry a general health and accident insurance policy covering children. Parents are responsible for all medical costs incurred with respect to their child/children while attending our program.

Attendance Tracking

Tracking child attendance is very important for safety reasons as well as ratio management. **If your child is scheduled and is going to be absent, please notify the Center before 9:00AM.** If we have not been notified by 9:00AM, contact will be made with the parents as to the child's whereabouts.

Absences and Vacations

Each child is allowed a certain number of "Personal Days" per year, for which no fee is charged when the child is not in attendance (this also includes holidays). Parents are responsible for payment of any nonattendance days beyond the number of personal days allocated. Parents need to indicate the use of personal days by filling out the pink "Personal Day Request" form located next to the check-in computer.

Schedules

Due to the limited number of slots available for infants and toddlers, our program will only contract service on a four or five day basis. Part time schedules are available for children ages 2 ½ years and older. If a child's schedule changes, a new contract will need to be submitted and approved. All contracted services will be updated annually.

Maternity Leave

If you will be taking a maternity leave while your child is in our program, some scheduling options are available to you. Please talk with the Center Director regarding these.

Withdrawal/Termination

When parents decide to terminate their child care arrangement, a two week's written notice to the Center Director is required. Personal days may not be used during the two week notice. In the great majority of cases, termination of care by a parent is due to reasons such as relocation, child entering school, etc. We also recognize that not every situation is appropriate for every child. If, for any reason, the program is found to be unsatisfactory for a child, we will make every effort to discuss this with the parents in order to determine the cause. Whenever possible, we will work together to make the necessary adjustments. If this is not possible, the parent and/or the program may choose to terminate the arrangement on a timeline that is in the child's best interest.

The Center reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment **immediately** for the following reasons:

- Failure to pay fees.
- Failure to submit required forms and information.
- The child's behavior is hazardous to self or others.
- The child's disruptive behavior continues regardless of guidance approaches.
- Lack of cooperation from parents with the program's efforts to resolve differences and/or meet the child's needs through parent/staff meetings or conferences.
- Abusive behaviors by parents toward their child or other children, program staff or other parents (including foul language).

Refund

Any overpayment of fees at time of withdrawal will be refunded.

Clothing

Your child should have two extra sets of seasonal clothing in case of spills and accidents. All clothing needs to be **clearly labeled with your child's name**. We cannot assume responsibility for unmarked clothing.

Because our program has so much to offer, we ask that you send your child in comfortable clothes and sturdy shoes that will allow them to take part in creative art and sensory activities. Children should come dressed for action and adventure. We recommend washable clothes that are easy for your child to manage.

Personal Belongings

As part of the learning experience, all toys and educational materials are shared by the children in the program. The program has an ample supply of equipment and materials.

We cannot assume responsibility for loss or damage to any personal possessions children bring into the Center. It is distressing to children to misplace or lose personal toys and sometimes difficult for the teacher to identify the owner. Toys and items of value should be left at home, unless it is for a scheduled "show and tell" day. Please help your child understand why it is not wise to bring items that they may not wish to share with the group. It is acceptable for a child to bring a blanket or stuffed toy for rest time.

Each child will be assigned a cubbie/locker for their coat, boots, extra clothes, art projects, etc. Please check your child's cubbie/locker at the end of each day for projects, notes, and any soiled clothing to be taken home.

Hiring Staff to Baby-Sit

RCS does not take responsibility for any services that an employee may provide outside of the program. We simply ask that you please respect the employee's Code of Conduct and program confidentiality as an employee of the Center.

Confidentiality

Records of all children are confidential. Persons having access to these records shall be the parent or person authorized in writing by the parent to receive the information, administration, and the child's teacher. Employees are not allowed to discuss families, children, or other staff members with parents.

Photo/Video Release

Children may be photographed or videotaped for projects and/or for marketing materials. Each parent must complete the written *Photo Release Permission* form (given to you at orientation) indicating consent or non-consent to use their child's photograph.

Children with Special Needs

We understand that there are developmental concerns that arise during the early childhood years. We believe in educating the whole child and meeting them wherever they are on the developmental continuum; however, our facilities and staff may not be equipped to address all children's needs. We want to maintain the best environment for the children currently enrolled in our program, as well as provide the least restrictive environment for the child with special needs. Therefore, it is our policy to make reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities. This information will be shared with staff assigned to care for that child. It is our intent to integrate children with special needs into our program to the extent feasible, given each child's abilities and limitations.

Ultimately, our program may not provide the least restrictive environment if accommodations result in significant difficulty or expense to the program, if adaptations for behaviors fundamentally alter the nature of our existing program, or are not readily achievable; or if the child's condition will pose or does pose a significant threat to the learning, health, or safety of other children or staff in the center. The administration may request documentation that the child is receiving outside services. After consultation with the parents and the teachers involved and, if necessary, the child's doctors, the administration will make a case-by-case decision whether our center is capable of properly meeting the needs of the child in question.

Family Involvement

Parent involvement is encouraged in many ways. Throughout the year, special events are planned for families to attend and/or volunteer. Parents are welcome to participate in any field trips.

Safety Policies

Security System

We strive to provide the best possible care and education in a safe and secure environment. Each registered parent will receive a code or FOB that will allow them access into the building. Visitors will need to ring the doorbell for assistance.

Safe Arrival and Departure from the Center: The Responsibility of the Parent

It is important that your child's day begins on a positive note. For safety reasons, each child will be taken by their parent to their classroom. Make sure to let the teacher know your child has arrived. Our responsibility begins when you place your child in the care of our teachers. Many children enjoy it when their parents spend a few moments in the classroom at the beginning of the day, and we encourage parents to do this when they are able to do so. In some instances, long good-byes can make the child upset. If you see this is the case, we recommend the parent/guardian leave promptly after saying goodbye.

When leaving the program at the end of the day, please be sure your child stays with you at all times. **We cannot allow children to enter or exit the building without being accompanied by an authorized adult.** Also, parents may not leave a child unattended in a vehicle.

Grouping Children

When the Center first opens for the day and attendance is low, children are frequently gathered in one room before they move on to their respective classrooms. Likewise, at the end of the day as children are picked up, remaining children might be gathered in one room. A note will be posted on a classroom door when the class is visiting another area in the building.

Because we schedule staff hours around the hours of the children, it is very important for parents to adhere to their contracted arrival and departures times (see Attendance Tracking).

Computer Check In/Out System

When you and your child arrive at the program, please use the computer in the entry way to check your child in each morning and out at the end of each day (as well as for doctor appointments, etc.). The Center Director will show you how to use this system. We use this computer software system to assist in maintaining accurate attendance records. If a parent forgets to check their child in or out, the parent may fill out a slip located next to the computer indicating the error.

If you are going to be away from your place of work for the day, be sure to leave a phone number where you can be reached in case you are needed for an emergency. When picking up your child at the end of the day, be sure the teacher knows he/she is leaving with you. Please be sure your child stays with you as you exit the building.

Releasing a Child

If someone other than the child's custodial parents or guardian will be picking up the child from the Center, prior authorization must be made in writing. The parent or guardian is the only person who can authorize the program to release the child to another individual. Parents are required to provide the name of at least one other adult who has permission to pick up the child in case of an emergency. This authorization is given on the enrollment form and should be updated in writing periodically. Persons on the authorization list must be at least 18 years and be able to supply documentation of their identity. A staff person will ask for proper photo identification before releasing a child to someone other than his/her custodial parent or legal guardian.

The enrolling parent or legal guardian will be required to certify that his/her instructions on releasing the child from the Center are in accordance with the law and not in violation of any other parent's or legal guardian's rights. A court order is required to be part of the child's file if either parent is prohibited from picking up the child (see Verification of Custody)

Intoxication and Picking Up A Child

It is our policy not to release a child to a person who is or seems intoxicated or impaired. In any situation where a person who is intoxicated or impaired tries to pick up a child from the program, the Center Director or teacher will call the emergency contacts to find another person to pick up the child. If there is resistance of any kind, the police department will be notified and given a description of the vehicle.

Transportation Policy

Parents will be notified in advance of fieldtrips through monthly newsletters and parent memos. Permission slips will need to be completed by the parent for each child to participate and be transported on the field trip. Transportation will be provided by the RCS System school bus. While transporting children, the driver and teachers shall maintain the vehicle in a clean and safe manner. In addition, the driver and teachers shall use the following procedures:

- Teachers shall maintain an attendance list of all children attending the field trip. Each child will be checked on and off the bus.
- Children will remain seated at all times. Children are quiet and orderly, speaking to each other in quiet voices while the bus is in motion.
- Teachers shall be equipped with children's emergency information, a first-aid kit, and a cell phone.
- Driver will adhere to: no loud radio, no earphones, and no cell phone usage while driving the bus.
- Driver and Teacher shall walk from the front of the bus to the back of the bus after all children have departed to look for children and belongings.
- Teachers shall immediately notify the Director and the child's parent/guardian if a child is missing.

This vehicle shall be inspected regularly to ensure high safety standards. All drivers shall be state licensed, over 21 years of age, and have experience driving a school bus. A copy of the driver's driving record shall be kept on file with the center.

Visiting the Center

Parents with children enrolled in the program may visit the Center at any time during the Center's hours of operation. Please check in with the Center Director upon your arrival.

Emergency Procedures

A top priority of the program is to provide a safe environment for children. In order to assure that our program is a safe place, we have specific safety procedures. An *Emergency Action Plan* is located by the computer in the entrance. The staff is trained in disaster preparedness and emergency evacuation procedures. In addition, the building is equipped with an emergency backup lighting system, should the need arise.

Fire Procedure

Specific procedures are provided for the staff and children to follow in case of a fire. Monthly fire drills are practiced. Exit route maps are posted in each classroom. The staff is trained in the operation and use of a fire extinguisher.

Tornado/Severe Weather Procedure

Specific procedures are provided for staff and children for severe weather warnings and are practiced during the months of April through October. Children are escorted to the lowest level of the building and will remain there until it is safe to return to the classroom. Parents arriving during any weather warnings are encouraged to remain in the building until the warning has been lifted.

Utility Failure

In the event of a prolonged power failure the Center will be closed and the parents would be notified to come and pick up their children.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event that the Center would need to be evacuated for any reason, the children will be escorted to the designated building and will remain there until the Center is safe to re-enter or the child's parents pick them up. Cell phones will be utilized in an emergency. Attendance will be checked whenever children are moved from one location to another. Staff will bring any necessary medications, supplies, and emergency records.

- Relocation for Regis – Sprint Building (across from parking lot)
- Relocation for Genesis – Sacred Heart Church (next to Genesis)

Inclement Weather

Every effort will be made to have the Center open at its regular time during inclement weather. (This is not to say that there may be very rare circumstances that the program may close due to very serious inclement weather). Our goal is to make sound decisions based on the safety of families and staff, while still meeting families' need for child care. In the event of a blizzard occurring during childcare hours, parents will be called and asked to pick their child up early. We post all closing information on local news stations. You may also call the Center for an outgoing phone message regarding the status. As always, please notify the program if your child will not be attending.

Accidents/Injuries

We make every effort to create a safe environment for children. A first aid kit is kept in the office and in classrooms. However, accidents do occasionally happen with small children. If a child is injured while in our care and the injury requires medical attention, you will be contacted to pick up your child. If, for some reason we cannot reach you, the Center will seek the appropriate medical attention. It is crucially important that all emergency numbers and medical information be kept current at all times. If you need to make changes to the information listed on the enrollment form, please contact the Center Director.

In an **emergency**, when immediate attention is needed, the Director will contact 911 and call for an ambulance to be sent, and then immediately call the parents. After the rescue squad has arrived, it is up to the paramedics what to do. If they decide your child needs emergency treatment, they will take the child to the medical facility as indicated on the child enrollment form, and the parent will be responsible for the medical charges. The child's complete file will be taken that contains the child's medical history as well as emergency medical permission forms. Any injury requiring medical attention shall be reported by the Director to the Licensing Specialist within 48 hours of its occurrence. All staff are trained in CPR and First Aid.

Car Safety Seats

State law requires that children transported in vehicles must be buckled securely into car safety seats/seatbelts that meet state requirements. Parents will take whatever steps are necessary to maintain and use car safety seats.

Health Policies

Medical Requirements

We adhere to state regulations regarding health and immunization records for your child. Each child shall have a physical examination not more than six months prior to or later than thirty days after admission to the program. Please note that health examination forms must be updated every six months for children under the age of 2 and every two years for children over the age of 2.

Medication

The health and safety of the child is our primary concern when administering medication. We adhere to state regulations and procedures to ensure that your child receives the proper dosage of medication. **Please do not leave medications of any kind in your child's diaper bag, backpack, or cubbie/locker. The medication must be handed directly to the teacher.** We must have a signed *Medication Authorization* Form for all medications (both prescription and over-the-counter). All medications are stored in a locked cabinet or refrigerator and are inaccessible to children. We cannot administer any medication that is expired, not in its original container, or without an updated and signed medication form.

We will administer prescription medication as prescribed by a licensed physician. Written permission must be secured from the child's parent or legal guardian. We cannot administer the initial dosage of a medication and will only be given by designated trained staff. Prescription medication must be presented in its original container with a label bearing the child's name, dose and time to be given and the number of days to be administered. Parental instructions must be consistent with labeling on the medication or doctor's note. . Documentation is made that shows the name of the medication, the amount, time given, and the name of the person giving the medicine.

If a child has an EpiPen, the medication will be kept in a locked box, inaccessible to children. The EpiPen is to be labeled with the child's first and last name, contain a copy of the prescription label and be inside an empty bag or container. If your child is using a nebulizer, the medication must come in the original box with the prescription label on it.

Over-the-counter medicines will be treated in much the same way. We cannot administer any over-the-counter medication on an "as needed" basis. Oral over-the-counter medication such as aspirin, ibuprofen and cough medicine will only be administered with the written permission and instructions of the parent. A medication form must be filled out each time the medication is to be used. Over-the-counter medications may only be administered for the time limit listed on the container and for no more than the dosage recommended. Topical lotions and ointments can be administered with the written consent and instructions of the parent. All containers need to be clearly labeled with the child's name.

Special Needs and Medical Conditions

We must be informed of special needs or medical conditions that impact your child's health, well-being, or involvement in activities. Parents are responsible for keeping this information current. The program provides appropriate forms to be completed by a physician and parent when certain medical conditions are present. To meet the specific medical needs of children with severe allergies, seizures, or special medical conditions, the administration must be informed prior to enrollment and proper paperwork be completed by the parent.

Illness

State licensing regulations prohibit us from caring for even mildly ill children. Children with a contagious disease or fever may not attend the program. If your child becomes ill while at the Center, they will be kept in the office and you will be notified and asked to pick your child up from the program within 30 minutes. If we are uncertain of a rash or other unexplainable condition, a doctor's note will need to be issued stating the condition is not contagious before your child may return to the program.

The decision to send a child home because of illness is not taken lightly. Staff members know first-hand of the hardship of having to leave work if a child is ill. We ask you to understand that your child will be sent home when we feel the child is uncomfortable with illness or is possibly contagious. We appreciate your cooperation with this policy.

Any child experiencing the following symptoms or who is unable to keep up with the group will be sent home:

- A fever of 101 degrees or higher
- Diarrhea 2 times
- Vomiting
- Contagious skin or eye infection
- Profuse bodily discharge of any kind

If your child is sent home because of illness, he/she must be free of any of the above symptoms without fever reducing medication for at least 24 hours before returning to the Center.

Communicable Disease Policy

Parents need to notify the program immediately if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease. State law requires that we notify parents of children who become exposed to certain contagious diseases. This is done through a notice posted by the classroom.

Head Lice Policy

Parents are to notify the Center if their child has head lice. When head lice or nits are found on a child while at the center, the parent will be notified to pick up their child. Recommendations for proper treatment will be offered by office management from the Eau Claire County Health Department.

It is our policy that a child needs to be nit or lice free before returning to the Center. Before returning to the classroom, the child will need to be checked in the office first. If nits or lice are found they will be sent home for additional treatment. Confirmed cases of lice will be posted to notify other parents. Cleaning of the classroom will be thorough and cloth articles will be placed in sealed plastic bags for ten days.

Sanitation

Our Center is designed to be cleaned easily and maintained at high standards of sanitation. Our staff cleans and disinfects changing tables after each diaper change. All toys and equipment are disinfecting on a daily and weekly schedule. We promote good hygiene with the children. Frequent hand washing is practiced by staff and children. Hand washing is always required before and after eating, after toileting, as well as many times throughout the day.

Indoor Room Temperature

The Center will remain in compliance with state licensing regulations for a minimum indoor temperature of 67 degrees Fahrenheit. Air conditioners will be used throughout the program in the event that the temperature exceeds 80 degrees Fahrenheit.

Biting

One of the program's most difficult jobs is to have to inform a parent that their child has been bitten. You have entrusted us to care, nurture, and protect your child. How could this occur in a quality program? The reality is biting does happen in any program caring for infants and toddlers. When it happens, and sometimes continues, it can be very stressful for children, parents, and staff. Parents of a child who is bitten may feel frustrated and angry. Parents of a child who bites may feel helpless, embarrassed, or frustrated.

Every child in the infant and toddler classrooms is a potential biter or will potentially be bit. It is important to understand that because a child bites, it does not mean that the child is "mean" or "bad" or that the parents of the child who bites are "bad" parents or they are not doing their job as parents to make this stop happening. **Biting is purely an indication of the developmental age of the child.** It is a developmental phenomenon and can be tied to children's ages and stages.

Every child is different. Some bite more than others and some may not bite at all. Group care presents challenges and opportunities that are unique from home. The children are surrounded by many others for hours at a time. Even though there are plenty of toys and materials available for all the children, two or three children may want that one particular toy. The children are learning to live in a community setting. *Biting is not something to blame on the child, parents, or caregivers.* There are many possible reasons as to why an infant or toddler may bite.

When a child bites for the first time, it often "comes out of the blue" thus making it hard to prevent. We carefully supervise and play with the children thus stopping many bites before they occur. We have duplicate toys so children will not have to compete for an item. Activities are balanced to provide active and quiet play to help release frustration. We maintain low ratios and watch for signs of tension or frustration in children. Parent communication at drop-off time is essential to help us predict a child's mood or likelihood of biting. Please be sure to let us know if your child is on medication, teething, didn't sleep or eat well, is going through any changes at home, or seems out of sorts. Teachers try to minimize the behavior by:

- Letting the biting child know in words and manner that biting is unacceptable.
- Avoiding any immediate response that reinforces the biting, including dramatic negative attention. The teachers will tell the child that "biting hurts" and the focus of caring attention is on the bitten child. The biter is talked to on a level that he/she can understand. The teacher will help the child who is biting work on resolving conflict or frustration in a more appropriate manner.
- Examining the context in which the biting occurred and looking for patterns. Was it crowded? Too many toys? Was the biting child getting hungry/tired/frustrated?
- The teachers will confidentially keep track of every occurrence, including attempted bites, and note location, time, participants, and circumstances.
- A teacher may also "shadow" a child who has a tendency to bite. This involves staying very close to the child to try and prevent biting.

- Teachers may also consider changes to the room environment that may minimize congestion, commotion, or competition for toys and materials.

When a child has been bitten, we comfort that child immediately and wash the bite with soap and water, then apply a cold compress to minimize swelling and bruising.

It can be frustrating for the parents of children who have been bitten that we are unable to “fix” the biting child quickly or terminate care. We try to make every effort to extinguish the behavior quickly and balance our commitment to the family of the biting child with that of the other families. Confidentiality is also practiced with biting. We cannot tell a parent who bit their child. Most children soon stop biting. After all efforts have been used to control the behavior, it may become necessary to remove the biting child from the program, either for a short period of time or permanently.

Meals and Snacks

The program provides breakfast from 8:00-8:30AM, a mid-morning snack, lunch at 11:30AM, and an afternoon snack for all children who are able to eat table foods. Teachers eat with the children and model good nutrition and sound eating habits. Each meal begins with a short prayer. A monthly menu is posted on the parent board of your child’s classroom. If a child has a disabling condition or illness (physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional) that restricts their diet, a food substitution will be provided when a statement signed by a licensed physician is on file. The statement must identify: the child’s disability and why it restricts the child’s diet, the food(s) to be omitted, or the food that must be substituted. Parents are required to provide meals for children with mild food allergies or intolerances that are not considered disabling, as well as any other special requests for foods such as organic, soy-based, and any other food substitutions.

Parents are allowed to bring a special treat for a holiday or birthday. Due to an influx in childhood allergies, these treats need to be store bought and peanut free with the ingredient list included. For infants, parents may choose their own brand of infant formula, provide breast milk, or use the Center’s brand of formula (“Parent’s Choice”). Parents of infants are required to complete a form at the time of enrollment indicating their choice in this matter. The Center’s formula, whole milk, infant cereal, and jar baby food is included in the cost of tuition. As infants begin to eat jarred baby food, parents are asked to keep the infant teachers informed of foods that their child may be served. Parents should indicate what foods their child may have in writing on the Food Intake Form provided by the infant teachers. This should be updated as needed. Any special requests for soy-based formula, organic food products, or any other food substitutions must be provided by the parent.

All children enrolled in the Center, including infants, are eligible for meals through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP monitors and approves all menus and food portions. The CACFP gives financial assistance to child care institutions providing licensed child care throughout the state. In Wisconsin, the CACFP is administered by the Department of Public Instruction. The primary goal of the CACFP is to improve the diets of children 12 years of age or younger.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Rest time

State licensing requires children to rest at least 30 minutes each day. Young children really need this rest time to relax and unwind from their busy morning schedule. This quiet time enables them to have a more positive afternoon and be a happier child at home with you at the end of the day. Each child will have their own cot and should bring a fitted crib sheet (this is used on their cot) and a small blanket from home. If left at school, the sheet and blanket are stored on their cot and sent home for laundering on Friday each week.

Outdoor Play

Health experts are unanimous on the importance of fresh air and the negative health consequences of children spending too much time in closed, indoor settings. Children who are well enough to attend our program must be well enough to participate in all activities, including outdoor play. Please be sure your child has adequate outdoor clothing. Except in extreme weather, children are expected to go outside every day. Children do not go outdoors if the temperature/wind-chill is less than 10 degrees Fahrenheit for over the age of two years and 20 degrees Fahrenheit for under the age of two years.

Reporting Suspected Incidents of Child Abuse and Neglect

Each employee in a child care center is mandated by the State of Wisconsin to protect children whose health or welfare may be jeopardized through physical or sexual abuse or neglect. The staff must report any suspected incidents of physical or sexual abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. Extreme confidentiality will be used in any incident.

Education

Curriculum

Our curriculum is child centered and play-based utilizing themes, projects, and activities to encourage learning. Because our program is designed to maximize individual development and promote developmentally appropriate practices, our activities focus on the *process* of learning. Our curriculum includes language/literacy experiences, art, music, math, science, large and small motor skills, and more.

A program of integrated activities meets the developmental needs of each age group. We strive to provide an exciting, educational environment with opportunities for discovery, creativity, and self-expression.

Developmentally appropriate activities are planned for each learning center to promote success and challenge each age level. A balance between teacher-initiated and child-initiated activities is used with emphasis on the child's choice. Materials are gathered, created, and implemented with these goals in mind. Teachers post lesson plans, along with the daily schedule, on the parent bulletin board of their classroom. There is time allowed for active outdoor play, creative games, independent discovery, and group activities.

Religious Curriculum

Our program promotes Catholic principals through basic concepts, prayers, religious songs, and stories that teach children about Jesus. Christian values are taught by word and example . . . to love one another, to be kind to each other, to comfort those who are sad, and to share with each other.

Assessments

Each child's progress is monitored through ongoing observation, anecdotal notes, work samplings and assessments using the *Portage Guide to Early Education*. These assessments are discussed with parents using a portfolio including a summary narrative, work samples and photos during parent conferences.

Classroom Transitions

Criteria for a child to move into the next classroom include: age, social and emotional development, self-care skills, and child/teacher ratios that have been established for each classroom. When your child is ready for an older group, you will be informed by the Center Director as to when he/she can be expected to change classrooms. Before any child moves, a visiting schedule is set to ease the transition from one room to the next.

Behavior Guidance

Our program promotes a positive approach to managing the behavior of all children. Teachers create an environment and opportunities that promote positive interactions among the children. With this as our focus, we implement **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is a proactive systems approach designed to teach social skills to children and prevent and address challenging behaviors. Our goal is to provide children with the opportunity and motivation to make choices, to function independently, and to learn social skills through gentle, encouraging guidance, respecting the needs of others, adapting to routines and simple rules, and to learn responsibility for their own actions.

No child will be humiliated, shamed, frightened, or subjected to verbal or physical abuse by staff **or** by parents on the premises.

Positive Guidance

Behavioral expectations are consistent with the age and developmental needs of your child. Redirecting children to more appropriate activities, acknowledging and affirming positive behaviors, teaching by example and helping children understand logical consequences to their behavior usually resolve most situations.

If your child is experiencing a change in his or her home environment that may affect behavior, please let your child's teacher or the Center Director know. Communication is important to your child's progress. We will keep you informed of any issues we feel should be addressed.

Managing Behavior

Teachers will use positive methods of discipline that encourage self-control, self-direction, positive self-esteem and cooperation. Discipline is individualized, yet consistent for each child. These guidelines will be followed:

- We use praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior.
- We teach children behavior expectations using PBIS standards and program rules.
- Rules that are developed will focus on health/safety, consideration of others and their feelings, and care of materials and equipment.
- Limits are set to reflect the children's stage of development and will be consistently regulated.
- When a child has a physical or emotional outburst, we provide comfort and privacy. This allows the child to regain composure and insures the safety of other children and staff. A brief, supervised separation from the group will be used as a last resort, when a child is unable to break a pattern of negative behavior. This will allow the child to refocus before rejoining the group.

If all the above have failed, a meeting will be set up with the parents to determine a positive individual behavior plan. Regis and Genesis Child Development Centers reserve the right to terminate a child's enrollment for persistent, unacceptable behavior that threatens the safety and/or quality of the program.

Communication

Newsletters and Memos

Teachers keep parents regularly informed of classroom activities through posted lesson plans and monthly newsletters. The parent board, located close to the classroom door, has the month's food menus, daily schedule, and other information.

The Center Director will keep you informed of upcoming center events and other information through monthly newsletters and memos. The parent board, located near the computer at the entrance, has the Center license, food program information, and parent resources and educational workshops.

Daily Notes

Daily notes are provided for infants and toddlers. These notes will indicate your child's meal schedule, nap schedule, diaper changes as well as other daily activities. For preschool age children, a "What We Did Today" note will be posted on each classroom door or bulletin board. This is a brief explanation of the group's activities and other information. We feel this provides a quick means for you to be informed of your child's daily activities and can promote conversation on the way home.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are offered in the spring and the fall each year. This will give you the opportunity to discuss your child's progress as well as any other concerns you may have. Conferences may also be scheduled whenever the parent or teacher has a concern. We do not schedule conferences for school-age children; however you may schedule a meeting if you see a need or would like to discuss your child's progress.

Please consult with the Center Director or your child's teacher should any problems arise concerning your child, whether at home or at school. This will help us work more effectively with your child.

Feedback and Suggestions

Our program welcomes comments and suggestions to improve the quality of care and service to your family. When areas of concern arise, the problem should be brought to the attention of the teacher. If additional communication is necessary, the concern may be taken to the Center Director or the Administrator.

RCS Early Childhood Program Receipt of Handbook

I verify that I have received an orientation to the program and the Regis Catholic Schools Early Childhood Center Parent Handbook. I have read and agree to abide by all of the regulations, policies, and procedures. I understand that this handbook is a guideline, and it should not be construed as a contract between RCS, parents/guardians, or any other person. RCS is committed to reviewing its policies continually and reserves the right to change policies at any time.

Parent/Guardian

Date

REGIS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

(Rev. 9/14)