

# Good early childhood program checklist for families essay example

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## **Reflection Paper of an Early Childhood Program**

### Introduction

A good early childhood center has some basic characteristics aimed at making the learning process as enjoyable for the child as much as possible and also ensuring that the child is always safe. Lake Orion Community Schools has several early childhood programs. The following is a reflection of the information provided in their parent hand book and my observation of the facilities and services provided at the facility that makes it an early childhood center of choice for parents.

### **Reflection on the parents hand book**

First the handbook must provide the physical location and address of the center at the earliest opportunity. This was provided in the first page in the Lake Orion Community Schools handbook. This should then be followed by a welcome note to all potential parents followed by a description of the services offered at the center. On the hand book this too was well outlined with the information provided clearly outlining that the center offers services including child care, preschool and kindergarten of which there were three different centers so that the parent can choose from depending on which ever was convenient for them depending on their locality.

A good early childhood center must be licensed, This center is licensed by the state of Michigan Department of Human Services, licensing, inspection reports, special investigation reports that had been conducted in the center since May 2010 were available for the parents to review at the center. This information is available in the handbook for parents to get to know where to

get the information on licensing and accreditation. The educational philosophy, goals and objectives of the center should also be clearly outlined. This information is available on the handbook with their overall philosophy being to provide each child with enriching experiences in a conducive atmosphere that enables each child to experience maximum development of their potential. The other policies that should also be clearly outlined include policy on discipline, handling of sickness and injuries. The kind of discipline measures to be taken by the teachers and the kind of offence that attracts the discipline measures are outlined, the program's rules and regulations that the children are to follow are also clearly outlined in simplified language and placed in the class notice board for the children to read. The center prefers to use time out and there is also information on when the parent is called in to help handle the discipline issues of their children, including suspension for the older children. Also each parent pays a small fee for the children's insurance cover so that they can be rushed to hospital in case of a sickness emergency. Information on the hospital is provided, it is also stated in the handbook that the parent is contacted once the child is ill. The parents are also asked to notify the center when their children stay home due to illness and the center states on their handbook that they notify the health department of any incident of communicable disease in the center. The parents are also obligated to provide a health appraisal report for the children before admission and immunization records of the child.

A background check on the staff that handles children in a program is also important. On the handbook it is stated that the center does a thorough background check on the staff that it hires and it also requires reference for

the staff before they are employed. The staff also receives training on safety and first aid for the children; this is aimed at making the parents confident to leave their children under the care of the staff. Classroom activities form a large part of activities for the day for children in kindergarten. There is a clear stated classroom policy on the hand book. The daily routine of class and outdoor activities are displayed on the classroom board for all parents to see, on the hand book it is stated that parents are allowed to make visitation in the classroom, check information that is posted on the boards outside the classroom and they are also advised to attend class conferences whenever such are organized by the center. Safety of the children is paramount in an early childhood center, the handbook has clear written policies and procedures on how to handle emergencies such as fires, firefighting equipment are strategically placed at various points in the institution. The staff has also been trained to handle various emergencies. The handbook also clearly outlines the policy on dropping and picking of children from the center to ensure safety of the children. The handbook clearly states that the center uses the handbook for public playground safety guidelines and not state license rule to avoid any conflict of interest between the school and the parent. On matters of hygiene the center clearly states on its policy on not washing soiled clothing for hygiene reasons. It also outlines on the handbook procedures and frequency of sanitization of toys, equipment and other surfaces.

Finally the billing policies and procedures are also clearly outlined on the handbook. This is important so as to avoid conflicts with the parents. On the handout it is clearly stated that a fee schedule will be given to each family

every year, the preferred mode of payment by the center is through the pro care billing software. Parents receiving subsidy for tuition are cautioned that the state or federal government reimbursement procedures do not alter the parent's obligation to pay fee to the program and that their account must always hold a two week balance. Parents are also warned in the schedule that fee changes may occur in the course of the year and this shall be communicated to the parents when approved through a revised schedule. The parents are also communicated to that in case the child needs additional care support the extra costs that arise shall be billed to the parent.

### **Reflection of the center tour**

A short interview that I conducted on four programs staff that I chose randomly shows that the staff turnover is low. One person had worked in center for twenty one years while the others had worked continuously for over five years, staff stability is important when dealing with children and other young learners as the children must trust their caregivers and they too must understand the children's individuality to be able interact productively. The staff is also well trained from the data that I got from the human resource officer and the center offers to its employee's continuous training on current early childhood practices. They have also been trained on how to handle emergencies that may arise, detect child abuse and other issues that touch on children. Staff that is dealing with children should also be warm, patient, calm and show love to the children. From my observation and talking to the staff as they went on with their duties, I can conclude that the staff is warm and welcoming; they are very patient with the children and

always maintaining eye contact with the children during their interaction. A look at the school also reveals that each class has twenty children. This is the maximum number per class as stated in the admission policy on the handbook. A smaller number increases child to teacher contact and this is especially important when handling young children, the classroom learning materials such as books, toys art material are sufficient to ensure each child access to them, from the class time table I made a conclusion that the class activities are varied and exciting including time allocated for music and painting. There is also a napping area for those children that may feel tired in the course of the day and a supervisor is stationed to watch over the children as they sleep. Attendance records are also well kept so that the teachers can know how many children are in their care at any given time. Tour around the school reveals that the school is well fenced complete with a guard to vet the people that get into and out of the center. The outdoor play area is large enough and this is recommended for the children to develop their motor skills, the play equipment is acceptably safe Hygiene standards are also well outlined. In the facility there are hand washing facilities next to each washroom and the children are taught from an early age to always wash their hands after using the wash room, in the child care center there are designated diaper changing areas with disinfectant placed strategically for disinfection after diaper change, The medicines that the children bring to school are clearly labeled with their names and dosage, First aid kits are strategically positioned and the staff handling the children have all received training on how to use them. Firefighting equipment is also strategically placed.

The center operates an open door system in which the parents are always welcome, there are avenues for them to channel their feedback including a suggestion box located next to the main entrance, copies of the program policies are available at the reception and once a parent enrolls their child into the center they receive a copy of their signed contract. In general from the early childhood handbook and observation of activities that take place in Lake Orion Community Schools a parent is able to be convinced that the place is a good place for their children to undertake early childhood education.

#### Supervision

P Are children watched at all times, including when they are sleeping? Yes

- Are adults warm and welcoming? Yes
- Do they pay individual attention to each child? Yes
- Are clear and simple safety rules established with the children? Yes
- Do adults focus on the positive and redirect behavior rather than yelling,

Spanking or using other negative punishments? Yes

- Are there enough staff-members to supervise all children? Yes

#### Training

• Does the director have a degree and some experience in caring for children? Yes

- Do the teachers have a credential or an early childhood-related degree and

experience in caring for children? Yes

**• Are all adults continuing to receive early childhood-related training or education? YES**

• Is there always someone present who has current CPR and first aid training? Yes

• Is there always someone present who has current SIDS and Shaken Baby? Syndrome training? No

• Have the adults received training specific to my child's age and needs? Yes except if the child has special needs.

• Are the adults willing to seek out such training? Yes

• Have the adults been trained on child abuse prevention? Yes

• Are the adults willing to seek out such training? Yes

Learning

• Are there specific areas for different kinds of play (blocks, puzzles, art, and dress-up?

etc.)? No the play area is common but used differently at different times.

**• Is the play space organized and is toys and materials easy to reach and use? Yes**

• Are toys age-appropriate? Yes

• Are some toys and materials available at all times and are some rotated? Some are used on a rotational basis.

• Are there daily or weekly activity plans available? Yes

• Have the adults planned experiences for my child to enjoy? Yes

• Will my child be engaged in conversations with adults throughout the day which

are appropriate to his/her age? Yes



- **Will my child be asked questions, when appropriate, and encouraged to speak**

and communicate? Yes

- **Will my child be read to at least twice a day and encouraged to read or explore**

books on his or her own? Yes though the frequency depends on the program of the day.

## **Health and Safety**

- Do adults and children wash their hands (after using the bathroom, changing?

diapers, eating etc.)? Yes

- **Are diaper changing surfaces cleaned and disinfected after each use? Yes**

- Do all of the children enrolled have the required immunizations? Yes

- Are medicines labeled and out of children's reach? Yes

- Is there a system in place to ensure children are given the correct medication? Yes

- Are cleaning supplies and other poisonous materials locked up, out of children's?

reach? Yes

- **Is there a plan to follow if a child is injured, sick or lost?**

- Are first aid kits readily available?

- Is there a plan for responding to disasters (fire, flood etc.)? Yes

- Is the outdoor play area a safe place for children to play? Yes
- Is the equipment the right size and type for the age of the children who use it? Yes
- In center-based programs, is the playground area surrounded by a fence at least four feet tall? Yes

• **Is the equipment placed on mulch, sand or rubber matting? Some on mulch others on sand.**

- Is the equipment in good condition? Yes
- Is the number of children in each group limited? Yes they are in groups of five.

Smaller group size has been shown to be an important indicator of quality.

Management

- Is the program's license in good standing with the state or local agencies who oversee licenses? Yes

• **Are parents and/or staff asked to evaluate the program? Yes at the end of each year.**

- How many training hours do the program staffs take each year? (Receiving ongoing training has been found to be an important step in providing excellent care) . They take two weeks of in-service training yearly.

**• Is the program accredited by a national organization? Yes it is. Accreditation means that**

this child care/early education program has been recognized by a leading national organization as a provider of excellent care.

## **Communication**

- Will I be welcome any time my child is in care? Yes you will.
- Is parents' feedback sought and used in making program improvements?

Yes

- Will I be given a copy of the program's policies? Yes
- Will I be given a contract signed by the caregiver? Yes
- Are annual conferences held with parents? Yes