

Ballestrini's Child Care & Early Learning Centers

Family Handbook

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Mission Statement

Ballestrini's Child Care Center makes every effort to ensure that every child enjoys a pleasurable learning experience. Our program strives to develop positive learning outcomes to all children regardless of their backgrounds or experiences.

Goals and Objectives

Ballestrini's Child Care Centers Philosophy is to provide a warm, nurturing environment that encourages the development of the "whole child." We strive to provide an environment that is based on successful experiences, which encourages all children to develop a healthy self-concept. Ballestrini's Child Care Centers is a program which recognizes the uniqueness of each and every child and provides positive encouragement for the child's continued growth. We offer an environment that provides the child with the opportunity to learn by doing, moving from concrete hands-on experiences to more abstract concept development. We provide opportunities for a lifetime of creative living and learning.

Physical Development and Health Opportunities are offered to get physical exercise using a variety of equipment indoors and outdoors, to participate in individual and group games, music, creative dramatics, to participate in fine motor activities, and arts and crafts.

Cognitive Development Opportunities are offered to read books, do flannel boards, listen to tapes or records, watch videos, do experiments, cook, and go on field trips- strong emphasis on autonomy skills.

Literacy And Language Development Opportunities including reading books, telling stories, problem solving, and name recognition and writing are part of our everyday curriculum.

Creative Arts Development Opportunities are abundant through out the day including art projects, sensory exploration, music and movement.

Mathematics Development Opportunities are all around us. Shapes, colors, counting, sorting and patterns are all around us. We use these natural opportunities to learn and grow.

Social Studies Development Opportunities allow us to learn about ourselves, families, and communities. We love special visits from readers, the fire dept or dentist office to learn about our community. Children also participate in activities and event that help the community around them such as making banners and cheering on the Torch Light Parade runners.

Science Development Opportunities allow us to learn about the world around us through predictions and experiments. Growing plants, raising butterflies from caterpillars and nature walks are just some of the ways we explore.

Social Emotional Development are provided to express growing independence/self-reliance, and to work or be alone. All of the above are opportunities to interact with peers and adults and opportunities are also offered with board and card games, and time to just sit and talk with friends.

Basic Operating Policies

Our child care program is a private facility licensed by the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. We welcome children aged six weeks to 12 years. For detailed information on the regulations governing our center, please refer to the State of CT Office of Early Childhood Regulations document: https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/centers_statsregs.pdf

Operation Hours: Monday - Friday 6:30AM-6:00PM

Ratios: Children under 3 years of age is 1:4. Children 3 to 12 years of age is 1:10

ProCare: Upon enrollment, you will receive information on downloading our childcare management app, ProCare. This app provides updates on your child's activities and facilitates communication with our staff. All invoices and childcare payments will be managed through the ProCare app.

Authorized Pick up list: A list of authorized individuals to pick up your child must be on file. Only those listed persons will be permitted to pick up your child. The authorized person must present a picture ID, matching the name on our records. Changes to the pick-up authorization must be made in person

Rest Time : Nap time is required for programs operating 5 hours or longer. While we encourage rest, children not napping may engage in quiet book reading. Cots and cribs are provided, and parents must supply a blanket and crib-sized fitted sheet. Favorite blankets or stuffed toys are welcomed. If bedding for nap time is not provided, parents will be called to bring bedding to the center. These nap items must be brought in every Monday and brought home every Friday for laundering. No child may sleep with bibs, necklaces or any other object around their neck. **Infants Please see Infant safe Sleep Policy.**

Clothing : Children should be dressed in comfortable, washable play clothes suitable for various activities. Please provide a labeled change of clothes, including socks and underwear. Outdoor clothing appropriate for the weather is essential, and parents should supply swimsuits and towels on hot days. Sunscreen should be applied before arrival. Remember-the child is going to get dirty!

Field Trips : Advance notice will be given prior to a field trip. The costs for field trips are not included.

Smoking policy: No smoking is allowed on any Ballestrini's Child Care property.

Babysitting : Employees are prohibited from tutoring, caring for, or babysitting children enrolled in our program outside the facility.

Changes to permanent records: Parents are required to fill out a record change form for any alterations to permanent records, including schedule changes, authorized pick-up persons, and contact information.

Items Brought From Home: Children are encouraged to keep personal items at home to prevent loss or breakage. We cannot be responsible for items brought from home. Show and share days are designated for children to bring in items related to the classroom theme. Please check with your child's teacher for these special days.

Admission Policies

Before a child is enrolled, a complete online enrollment must be submitted. Once the online registration has been received additional paperwork will be required. This includes but is not limited to:

- Child questionnaire
- State of CT health evaluation
- Potassium-Iodide-KI permission
- For school-age children (K-6) Transportation form
- Policy review agreements
- **If your child has any allergies, asthma or other medical conditions additional paperwork will be required.**

Annually parents will be required to review the following forms:

- Emergency and release authorization forms
- Medical forms
- Registration forms
- Permission forms

Confidentiality

At Ballestrini's Child Care Centers, we are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of all matters related to our childcare center and its children.

Access to Records: Access to children's records is limited to parents/legal guardians, childcare staff, and daycare licensing officials. Each child's personal file, including enrollment forms and developmental records, is stored securely to prevent unauthorized access.

Information Sharing: Details regarding a child's enrollment or personal information will not be disclosed to others without written consent from the parent/guardian. Parents can trust that information shared with staff members remains confidential, and our staff is committed to respecting this confidentiality.

Photo Authorization: Ballestrini's Child Care is allowed to use photos taken at the center for promotional materials and digital communications. By enrolling your child at our center, you hereby grant and authorize Ballestrini's the right to take, edit, copy, publish, distribute, and make use of any and all pictures or videos taken of your child(ren) for these purposes. This authorization shall continue indefinitely unless you otherwise revoke said authorization in writing.

Your child's well-being and privacy are our top priorities. If you have any concerns or wish to discuss this authorization further, please feel free to contact the center director.

Educational Programs

The Ballestrini's Preschool Program goals have been developed to promote the emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development of each child. We hold the philosophy that each child is a unique individual with a variety of interests, needs, and abilities.

Curriculum Topics:

- Language and Literacy
- Science
- Dramatic play
- Practical Life Activities
- Music
- Art and media
- Sensory Stimulation
- Physical Development and Health-including gross and fine motor
- Social Studies
- Social and Emotional Development
- Mathematics

Children at Ballestrini's Child Care Center will follow a flexible daily schedule that meets individual needs of the diverse population served by our program. The plan allows for cultural, language and developmental differences to be addressed. The schedule will include opportunity for problem-solving experiences that help to formula language development and sensory discrimination. Children will have the opportunity to express their own ideas and feelings through creative experiences in all parts of the program.

Lesson Plans Consist of:

- A balance of child initiated, and teacher directed activities.
- A balance of active and quiet activities.
- A variety of activities that motivate children to explore and learn through play.
- There will be sufficient opportunity for indoor and outdoor physical activities, which will a for fine and gross motor development.
- A regular balance of sensory activities, art, science, music, large motor, math, reading readiness, field trips, cooking, group activities, dramatic play, fine motor, and language development.
- Experiences that promote self-reliance
- A variety of activities to support all types of learners
- Varied choices for children in materials and equipment
- Language learning experiences that provide opportunities for spontaneous conversation, as well as experiences with book, poems, stories and songs
- Experiences that promote self-reliance and build self-esteem including but not necessarily limited to self-care of body and clothing, care of possessions, shared group responsibility for equipment and materials
- Health education experiences that include modeling good health practices, sound nutrition and safety awareness
- Rest, sleep or quiet activity
- Activities differentiated to each child's needs based on regular assessment
- Parent/Teacher conferences are offered twice a year. Meetings discuss the child's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional progress. Conferences are documented and copies are offered to parents.

Infant Program

Ballestrini's Infant Programs provide a safe and nurturing environment. We create an atmosphere that enables your child to gain confidence to try new things. Infants mirror the world around them as they grow. A loving caregiver and a dependable routine are a child's first "curriculum". Activities in the infant program provide numerous opportunities for children to explore their environment safely, both indoors and outdoors. A child who wants to play will always find a willing adult for a game of Peek-A-Boo or hide a toy, stack the blocks or roll a ball. In a quieter moment, there is always a comfortable lap to snuggle into for a story, a song, or just a gentle cuddle.

Infant Program Schedule

Infant schedules are personalized for each child; refer to individual schedules for feeding times. Younger infants may nap at alternate nap times.

6:30 am-8:00 am: Teachers greet children. engage in play

7:45 am-8:30 am: Clean up, Wash hands for breakfast/morning snack

8:30 am - 9:00 am: Diapering

9:00 am-9:30 am: Individual activities - large motor, music, art, sensory, story

9:45 am-10:00 am: Diapering

10:00 am - 11:00 am: Scheduled nap time (older infants)

11:00 am-11:30 am: Clean up, wash hands, eat lunch.

11:30 am-12:00 pm: Diapering

12:00 pm-2:00 pm: Individual activities - large motor, music, art, sensory, story

1:30 pm-2:00 pm: Diapering

2:00 pm-3:00 pm: Scheduled nap time (older infants)

3:00 pm-3:30 pm: Clean up, wash hands for snack

3:30 pm-6:00 pm: Individual activities - large motor, music, art, sensory, story

Toddler Program

As your infant begins to blossom into the active toddler there are many fun activities waiting for him or her to explore. Toddlers finger paint, glue, and tape during arts and crafts. Toddlers also have daily circle-time which involves singing, finger play, creative movement, and a chance to socialize. Toddler curriculum has a strong emphasis on early social and autonomy skills. Curriculums involve age-appropriate activities supporting all domains of development including social emotional, early literacy and language, mathematics, social studies, cognition, creative arts, physical development and health, and science.

Toddler Program Schedule

6:30 am-8:00 am: Teachers greet children. engage in play

7:45 am-8:30 am: Clean up, Wash hands for breakfast. Breakfast is served.

8:30 am - 9:00 am: Diapering and toilet training

8:45 am-9:30 am: Outdoor Play (Weather permitting)

9:30 am-10:30 am: Planned academic time: group time (singing, stories, language development), art, music, cooking, and science. All activities include some self-directed elements.

10:30 am - 11:00 am: Diapering and toilet training

11:00 am-11:30 am: Clean up, wash hands, eat lunch.

11:30 am-12:00 pm: Diapering and toilet training

12:00 pm-2:30 pm: Nap time

2:00 pm-2:30 pm: Diapering and toilet training

2:30 pm-3:00 pm: Clean up, wash hands, snack

3:00 pm-4:00 pm: Outdoor play, large muscle, self directed activity

4:00 pm-4:30 pm: Directed activities

4:30 pm-6:00 pm: Free choice. All children transition home

Preschool Program

At Ballestrini's, our Preschool Program is designed to foster the emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development of each unique child. We believe in recognizing and nurturing individual interests, needs, and abilities. Our curriculum encompasses a rich variety of engaging activities, ensuring a well-rounded educational experience that prepares children for the next stages of their academic journey.

Preschool Program Schedule

6:30 am-8:00 am: Greet children. Engage in self-directed activities at activity centers.

7:45 am-8:15 am: Clean up, Wash hands for breakfast. Breakfast is served.

8:15 am-9:30 am: Outdoor Play (Weather permitting)

9:30 am-11:00 am: Planned academic preschool time: Directed activities, including large muscle, small muscle, group time (singing, stories, language development), art, music, cooking, and science. All activities include some self-directed elements.

11:00 am-11:30 am: Outdoor play (weather permitting)

11:30 am-12:00 pm: Wash hands, eat lunch.

12:00 pm-12:15 pm: Clean up, wash hands, and children use the bathrooms.

12:15 pm-2:30 pm: Rest time: Nappers nap, non-nappers have rest time, followed by planned quiet activities.

2:30 pm-2:45 pm: Clean up cots, use bathrooms.

2:45 pm-3:00 pm: Snack time

3:00 pm-4:00 pm: Outdoor play (weather permitting) and free choice.

4:00 pm-4:30 pm: Directed activities

4:30 pm-5:30 pm: Free choice. All children transition home

School age Program:

This program offers children many free choice activities. We try to help the children settle after a long, structured school day. We have a spacious outdoor area for sports. Fun and creative activities are scheduled daily. This program is available for kindergarten to sixth grade students.

School Year Schedule:

6:30-9:00 - Greet children; self-directed activities
7:30-8:30 - Breakfast is served
8:00-9:30 - Children board bus to school, self-directed activity \\
3:30-4:30 - Bus drops off children (times vary), snack time
3:45-4:30 - Outdoor play (weather permitting)
4:30-5:00 - Homework group, art project
5:00-6:00 - Free Choice Play; transition to homes

Summer Program Schedule:

6:30-9:00 - Greet children; self-directed activities
7:30-8:30 - Breakfast is served
8:30-9:00 - Free time, self-chosen activities
9:15-10:15 - Planned activity
10:15-11:15 - Sports activity
11:30-12:00 - Lunch
12:00-12:30 - Playtime
12:30-1:30 - Quiet time
1:30-2:30 - Planned activity
2:30-3:00 - Snack
3:00-4:00 - Sports activity
4:30-5:30 - Free time, self-chosen activities

Consultant Services

We are required to have an education, health, dental and social services consultant. All consultants will be available for annually reviewing our policies, and reviewing our in-service education programs. They will be available for advice and consultation regarding the program by telecommunication and in person.

Technology Usage

We recognize the importance of technology in today's world and its potential benefits for learning and communication. Our technology usage policy is designed to ensure a safe, secure, and age-appropriate digital environment for both children and staff.

Acceptable Use:

- Children will have supervised access to age-appropriate educational technology
- Staff will use technology for administrative purposes and educational activities as approved by the center.
- Personal electronic devices, such as smartphones, tablets, or gaming devices, are not allowed for children. (unless you receive written permission from director)
- Staff members are discouraged from using personal devices for personal matters during work
- Internet access will be filtered to ensure age-appropriate content.
- Children will not have access to social media.

Educational Technology:

- Educational apps, software and videos will be selected based on age appropriateness and educational value.
- Technology will be integrated into the curriculum in a balanced manner, supplementing, not replacing, traditional learning methods.

Screen Time Guidelines:

- Screen time will be limited and tailored to the child's age and developmental stage.
- Activities involving technology will be balanced with outdoor play, social interactions, and other non-screen activities.

Reporting Concerns:

- Any concerns about technology use or content should be reported promptly to the childcare center director.

Financial Policies

Enrollment Deposit: A non-refundable deposit equivalent to the first and last weeks' tuition is due before a child attends the program. This deposit is nonrefundable once paid. Following initial enrollment, weekly tuition payments are due on Friday by 6:00 PM for the upcoming week of care.

Weekly Payments: Payments are to be made weekly on the Friday prior. Parents whose payments are not made before services are rendered will have their child's enrollment suspended until payments are made.

Billing Structure: Parents are charged for the hours and days scheduled, plus any overtime. Fees remain the same whether the child attends the childcare center or not, except for approved scheduled vacations. Full-time care includes 9 1/2 hours of care per day, five days per week. Additional time is allowed, but an additional hourly rate will apply. Research in Early Childhood Education shows that children attending more than 45 hours per week may demonstrate more aggressive behaviors and have greater difficulty in school.

Holiday Closures and Absences: Weekly tuition payments do not change during weeks that include holiday closings, inclement weather closings, or a child's absence. Tuition rates are based on the need to support personnel throughout the year. Although your child may be absent due to illness or family vacation, we are still required to provide pay and benefits to the staff in your child's program.

Payment Procedure: Payments will be made using Procare Tuition Express. You can set up your payment method within the app. Our preferred payment method is ACH bank transfer.

Late Payments: When payment has not been received by the Friday prior to childcare service, a late fee of \$25.00 will be charged to your account. Parents whose payments are not made prior to services rendered will have their child's enrollment suspended until payments are made.

Returned payments: Any payments returned for non-sufficient funds or any other reason will result in a charge of \$25.

Last Week Retainer: A last week retainer equivalent to your child's regular scheduled tuition will be held on file until your child's last week of care. This retainer will be applied only if your child was enrolled with us for more than six months, and a two-week written notice has been given.

Financial Assistance/Child Care Subsidies: Ballestrini's Child Care Centers work with the following agencies to provide reduced costs for childcare services: Care 4 Kids, MCCYN, Childcare Aware, DCF, the VA, and Mohegan Tribe. Ballestrini's will not reduce tuition without the certificate of approval. Until the certificate is received, parents are responsible for the full tuition cost. Please see the center director for more information.

Attendance Policy

Daily Arrival: Upon arrival, children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Each child must be signed in. Parents/guardians are required to make eye contact and communicate with a staff member prior to leaving their child at the center. Under no circumstances is the child to be sent into the center unaccompanied by a responsible adult. **For the safety of all children, please refrain from leaving unattended vehicles running.**

Daily Departure: Please be punctual. If you anticipate a delay, notify the child care center immediately. This allows us to reassure your child and provide appropriate staff coverage. Each program at the center has a specific closing time, and parents are expected to have an alternate plan available if they are unable to pick up their child by closing time.

Attendance: Parents are required to notify the center no later than 9:00 AM on the day of their child's absence. For planned absences, please complete the Advance Notice of Absence form available on our website.

Late arrivals/ Early departures : We request that all children arrive no later than 9:00 AM to ensure an uninterrupted schedule for the program. Exceptions for late arrivals are permitted for appointments with director approval. Please be aware that drop-offs and pickups are not allowed between the hours of 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM.

Schedule Changes: Permanent schedule changes require a Schedule Change Form submitted two weeks in advance. Short-term schedule changes can be accommodated with the verbal approval of a director. A \$10.00 schedule change fee applies.

Late Pick Up: Please adhere to your scheduled pick-up time or arrange for an alternate person. A fee of \$10 for every 5 minutes after closing will be charged. This must be paid the next business day unless other arrangements have been made. State law mandates that two staff members remain on duty as long as a child is present in the center.

In the event that your child is still at the child care center after designated pick-up time and we have not heard from you, we will take the following steps (in order):

1. Attempt to reach you at home, work or school.
2. Call the people listed on the emergency card
3. Call the authorities if we can not make contact with parents/guardians or authorized pick up person.

Vacation Policy : There will be no charge for holding a place for the child while on vacation, providing:

1. The parent gives the center at least six weeks written notice prior to going on vacation. **Please use the advance notice of absence form to submit a vacation request**
2. The child has been enrolled in the program for one year or longer.
3. The vacation is a maximum of one week per program year of enrollment, any additional weeks will be charged as follows:

2nd week of vacation (full tuition due)

3rd week (half tuition due)

4th week (full tuition due)

Holidays the program will be close:

- Memorial Day
- New Year's Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- Christmas Eve
- New Year's Eve @ 2:00PM
- Good Friday @12:00

Holiday Closures and Absences: Weekly tuition payments do not change during weeks that include holiday closings, inclement weather closings, or a child's absence. Tuition rates are based on the need to support personnel throughout the year. Although your child may be absent due to illness or family vacation, we are still required to provide pay and benefits to the staff in your child's program.

Withdrawal Procedure

Withdrawal Notice: Parents are required to provide at least two weeks' written notice when withdrawing a child from our program. Without sufficient notice, the center may face challenges in efficiently filling the vacancy, and parents will be responsible for payment for at least two weeks after the initial notification of written withdrawal. If the child is re-enrolled at a later date, a new registration fee will be required.

Termination by Ballestrini's Child Care Centers: Ballestrini's Child Care Centers reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment if we determine that our program is not meeting the child's needs. Termination may also occur for the following reasons:

- Incomplete or lack of an updated physical/immunization record
- Non-compliance with tuition policies and/or failure to make payments
- Failure to abide by all policies of the childcare center
- Abusive behaviors or verbal threats by parents or children toward staff members or other children/families (See Aggressive Behavior Policy for more detailed information)
- Parents disciplining, in any way, children (other than their own) while at the program
- Special needs or needs related to a serious illness that cannot be met by the program. In this case, staff will make every effort to assist parents in finding a program that can better accommodate the individual child's needs prior to withdrawal
- Failure to cooperate with Ballestrini's Child Care staff to resolve differences or to meet your child's needs through parent meetings/conferences
- Consistent late pick-up

Refund of Deposit : If Ballestrini's Child Care terminates a child's enrollment, the last week's deposit will be refunded to the family within 30 days.

Trial Period : The first two weeks of enrollment at Ballestrini's Child Care Center are considered a "trial period." Child care may be terminated by either the Provider or the Parent(s) during this trial period without advance notice. After the trial period, child care may be terminated by the Parent(s) only by providing the center with a 2-week written notice. Failure to provide 2-week written notice will result in the Parent(s) agreeing to pay the regular scheduled fees for the 2-week period

Disenrollment: We reserve the right to disenroll any child at any time if we believe the child's behavior poses a risk to another child or staff member. Every effort will be made to work with families and suggest resources.

Parent Communication

Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the center. They are expected to read and be in compliance with the operating procedures of the child care center. Parents are to be aware of supplemental notes and newsletters which are sent home.

ProCare: This is our childcare management app. Once you enroll you will be provided information on how to download the app and set up your account.

- Everything that your child does throughout the day will be documented in ProCare
- There is a messaging component for parents and administration to communicate.
- All invoices and childcare payments will be made using the ProCare app.

Newsletters: Newsletters containing information such as monthly themes or special visitors will be distributed to families via email.

Family Information Bulletin Board: A family bulletin board will have general information posted. Information such as parent meetings and special events in the community will be posted here. Information on local resources for parents will also be available here.

Volunteer Opportunities: We encourage parents to actively participate in our program. Opportunities for volunteering, such as assisting with special events, field trips, or classroom activities, will be communicated through ProCare, newsletters, and the family bulletin board.

Special Events or Celebrations: Parents are invited to participate in special events and celebrations organized by the childcare center. Details about upcoming events, including dates, times, and ways to get involved, will be communicated through ProCare, newsletters, and the family bulletin board.

Telephone and Written Communication: Staff will make every attempt to notify parents either by phone or a written note when they feel a situation arises that a parent/guardian should be aware of. We also request that families keep staff informed of any concerns or changes at home.

Email: Parents can contact the director via email to express concerns, ask questions, or provide program feedback. The e-mail address is Ballestrini.ChildCare@gmail.com

Conferences/ Progress reports: Teachers offer conferences at parent's request. Parents can discuss their child's cognitive, physical, social and emotional progress. These conferences will be documented. Progress reports will be given to the parents at the end of the school year. Lead teachers assess children regularly both through regular observations and formal 1:1 assessments. A copy will be kept in the child's file.

Incident/Accident Reports : Incident/Accident Reports are crucial documents used to record and report various situations that may occur in the early learning setting. These situations include, but are not limited to:

- Injuries resulting from play, accidents, or aggression from another child

- Instances of aggression towards another child or staff member
- Inappropriate statements made to another child or staff member
- Inappropriate physical contact to or from another child
- Unusual behavior causing teacher concern (see note below)

These reports detail information about the reason for the incident, the time of day it occurred, and the teacher's response to the situation. Privacy laws prohibit us from disclosing the names of any children involved, except for your own. Please refrain from asking staff members about the identities of other children if more than one is involved in the incident. Staff members are strictly prohibited from releasing this information under any circumstances. All incident or accident reports are the property of Ballestrini's Child Care Center, and parents may be required to sign acknowledgment, with a copy provided for their records.

Reporting of Child Behaviors: There are instances when unusual statements, actions, or appearances of a child may lead the teacher to have concerns about the child's well-being. While there can be innocent reasons for such occurrences, teachers, lacking background knowledge, may feel compelled to address potential issues of neglect. Teachers are not authorized to make conclusive determinations about neglect but are mandated by law to report concerns to the Department of Child & Family (DCF) Services.

To assist teachers and alleviate potential misunderstandings, we encourage parents to keep teachers informed of any changes or challenges their child may be experiencing. Open communication is the single best approach to prevent misunderstandings and address concerns promptly.

If, at any time, a family has concerns about a staff member potentially abusing or neglecting a child, these concerns must be reported to the director. Subsequently, the center and/or the parent will initiate a report to DCF for a thorough investigation. During the investigation, a staff member may be suspended, and all requirements outlined by DCF will be rigorously followed. Our primary concern is the safety of all children, both at home and within the program. We are committed to ensuring a fair investigation for any concerns raised, upholding our dedication to the well-being of every child in our care.

Assessment Plan

At Ballestrini's Child Care, we prioritize the development of the whole child. Our comprehensive assessment plan ensures that we monitor and support children's growth across various domains, fostering a nurturing environment conducive to learning.

Assessment Types:

- 1. Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ):** Upon enrollment, families are required to complete an Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) using the Sparkler App, accessible through the center's ID code provided during enrollment. The ASQ is also completed by lead teachers approximately 30 days after a child starts in the program. ASQ results are automatically ranked by the app and shared with 211 services if a referral is needed. Results are communicated to families, and conferences can be requested at any time. ASQs are updated at each age transition (0-4 months, 4-8 months, etc.).
- 2. Assessment Portfolios:** Assessment portfolios are curated throughout the year for all Pre-K aged children. These binders showcase progress across various academic goals and are available for parents to review upon request. Portfolios inform individualized learning goals and curriculum planning, reflecting achievements and challenges. Portfolio items are completed by lead teachers in small groups or individually.
- 3. Ongoing Reflections on Lesson Plans:** Reflections on lesson plans are recorded on the second page of the "Week at a Glance" sheet for all ages. These reflections guide future lesson planning, addressing what worked well, modifications needed, children's demonstrated interests, mastered skills, and areas requiring further attention. Reflections also indicate children's interests to be incorporated into future lesson plans.
- 4. Progress Reports:** Formal assessments with progress reports are conducted for toddlers and preschool-aged children in January and May. These reports cover development across all domains and are sent home, encouraging parent-teacher conferences at these times. Assessments for progress reports are conducted individually by lead teachers.
- 5. Professional Development on Assessments:** Lead teachers are trained on ASQs relevant to their classroom age range, with ongoing support. All teachers receive training during in-person professional development sessions and CCEI courses (e.g., CUR 135, 1200, 1210, 1220), covering assessing young children and utilizing assessment data for future planning. Assessment data informs professional development opportunities and curriculum improvements.

Assessment Related Policies:

Teachers' planning time includes reflection on lesson plans without interference from conferences. Lead teachers collaboratively plan daily from 12:30 to 2 PM, supported by float staff during nap time. All planned activities are designed for differentiation, allowing for individualized learning. Educators adjust plans according to each child's interests and needs, noting changes in lesson plan reflections for future planning.

This Assessment Plan underscores our commitment to providing a supportive and enriching environment for every child, fostering their development and ensuring a collaborative approach between educators and families.

Complaint Procedure

Our childcare center is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment for children and their families. We recognize that concerns or complaints may arise from time to time, and we value open communication to address and resolve issues promptly and effectively.

Submitting a Complaint: Parents or guardians are encouraged to submit complaints in a constructive manner, either verbally or in writing. Parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the staff member directly involved or the center director. Complaints can be submitted in writing to the center director.

Conflict Resolution: While every effort is made to meet the needs of children, parents, and staff, we realize that from time to time a conflict may occur between parents, staff, and administrators. The following processes is followed should a conflict occur.

1. A respectful discussion is held between the persons directly involved at a time and place that ensures privacy and sufficient time for a through resolution to take place
2. If resolution is not found at the first meeting, a second meeting is held with the director for the purpose of creating a plan for resolution and a timeline for expected success.
3. If the conflict is not resolved according to the timeline, adjustments may be made to the plan, and an additional timeline be established.
4. If at anytime the director determines that resolution is not possible, she or he will consider one of the following immediate actions:
 - i. Withdrawal for services from the program
 - ii. Suspension of the staff member until disciplinary actions can be taken

Grounds for determining that a resolution is not possible include but are not limited to:

- a. Any person involved displays inappropriate behavior such as shouting, accusing, name calling, swearing or physical assault.
- b. Any person involved refused to follow the prescribed plan
- c. Any person involved jeopardizes the process by spreading information concerning the conflict to those outside the immediate conflict or those involved in the resolution process.

Health Policy

As mandated by the State of Connecticut, we are required to maintain on file a statement signed and dated by a physician, physician assistant, or an advanced practice registered nurse confirming that the child is current with immunizations or has a scheduled appointment within the past year to keep the child's immunizations up to date. Physical exams must also comply with state regulations. Health records are confidential, and only information relevant to the child's care will be shared with classroom teachers. Records may be disclosed to the nurse consultant for review and the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood as necessary.

Children in good health benefit more from their school day. Parents are requested not to bring their child to the center if he/she will be unable to fully participate in indoor and outdoor activities with peers. Children with colds unaccompanied by fever or fatigue may attend the center.

Communicable Disease: Parents are required to notify the child care center within 24 hours if their child has been exposed to any communicable disease (e.g., Chickenpox). The center will inform all families in writing when children in the center have been exposed to a communicable disease. Additionally, the center will notify the Commissioner of Health within 24 hours of becoming aware of any illness or condition specified by law or regulation. No personal information will be shared with other families in the program but may be shared with the health department when necessary for contact tracing. The illness log is used by staff to record any symptoms of illness in children or staff. Each teacher is responsible for maintaining the log accurately, and parents are promptly notified of symptoms in accordance with program policy.

Guidelines for Excluding Child from Child Care Center: If a child becomes ill while at school, we will make the child comfortable in a designated "quiet corner" where they can be seen and heard by staff but separated from the group to reduce the risk of spreading the illness. We will then contact the parent/guardian to have the child picked up as soon as possible. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, we will contact an authorized individual from the emergency/release list.

Illness which Exclude Attendance at the Center

- Fever: Auxiliary temperature: 100.4 degrees or higher. Child may return after being fever free for 24 hours without any fever reducing medications.
- Respiratory Symptoms: Difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing: child may make high-pitched croup or whipping sounds after he/she coughs. The child is unable to lie comfortably due to continuous cough. May return once cough has subsided.
- Respiratory Illness (Febrile): Excluded until the child is without fever for 24 hours and is well enough to participate in normal daily activities.
- Diarrhea/ Vomiting: Child may return after symptom free for 24 hours.
- Eye/Nose Drainage: Any discharge other than clear may be signs of infection. Child may return with doctors note.
- Sore Throat: Sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present
- Rash: Skin rashes, undiagnosed or contagious. Child may return with a doctors note.
- Infected Sores: sores with crusty, yellow or green drainage which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages. Must have Doctors note to return,
- Itching: Persistent itching (or scratching) of body or scalp, must have Doctors note to return
- Lice: Exclude until first treatment has been completed and no live lice
- Appearance/ Behavior: Child looks or acts differently; unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, and difficult to awaken.
- Unusual Color: Eyes or Skin yellow (jaundice), Stool gray or white, Urine dark, tea colored
- Measles: Exclude until 4 days after the rash appears.
- Mumps: Exclude until swelling subsides (usually 5 days may be as long as 9 days)
- Pertussis: (Whooping Cough) Exclude until 5-7 days after antibiotic treatment begins,
- Pin Worms: Exclude until after treatment has been started.
- Ringworm: Exclude until 24 hours after treatment begins
- Scabies: Exclude until 24 hours after treatment begins and child is without fever for 24 hours.
- AIDS: Exclude infected child if he exhibits biting and is not in control of his body fluids, or has open skin sores which cannot be covered.
- Chicken Pox: Until all blisters have dried into scabs, about 6 days after rash onset.
- Conjunctivitis: Exclude until treatment has been received for 24 hours.
- Fifth Disease: Exclude until no fever present.
- Giardiasis: For those with diarrhea only, exclude until the child has started treatment and diarrhea is no longer present.
- Hand Foot and Mouth: Exclude until fever is gone and child is well enough to participate in normal daily activities (sores may still be present) Requires a note from the child's doctor.
- Hepatitis B: No exclusion necessary unless infected child exhibits biting behavior or has open sores that cannot be covered.
- Impetigo: Excluded until sores are healed or can be covered with bandages, or until child has been treated with antibiotics for at least a full 24 hours. Requires a dr note.

Medication Administration:

Prescription and non-prescription drugs will be administered to a child enrolled at Ballestrini's Child Care Centers, providing that the proper Medical Administration Form has been filled out. If your child is taking medication at home, please be sure to notify the center. Ballestrini's Child Care Center will follow our medication administration policy. Please be sure all medications or topical creams are handed to a staff member and not left in child's belongings so they can be safely stored.

Ballestrini's Child Care will undertake the administration of the following medications:

- **Oral over the counter medications:** Over the counter non-prescription medications are not permitted unless prescribed by a physician and the signed medication permission form is brought in with the medications.
- **Prescription Medications:** Staff members are certified to administer prescription medications to children providing the medication is brought to the program in the original prescription bottle accompanied by an appropriately completed and signed medication permission form signed by both the child's physician and parent.
- **Topical Medications :** Non-prescription topical medication will be administered to a child by a staff member providing that the medication is in the original container and is labeled with the child's name, name of medication, and the direction for the administration. A Non-prescription topical med form must be filled out by the parent and kept on file. This authorization is limited to the following topical medications:
 - Non-prescription diaper changing ointments that are free of antibiotic or steroid components.
 - Non-prescription powders
 - Non-prescription insect repellent
 - Non-prescription sunscreens that are free of amino benzoic acid or its derivatives. (Sunscreens will be applied in the afternoon, parents are to apply first coat of sunscreen before drop off)
- **Inhaled Medications:** Inhaled medication administration requires specific detailed plans of care developed in conjunction with the physician, parent, and child care center. The determination of when inhaled medications are to be administered must be specifically defined. Inhaled medications will be administered by hand held inhalers. A prescription medication administration form must be kept on file.
- **Injectable Medications:** Injectable medications will be stored on site for treatment of allergic reactions. A prescription medication administration form must be kept on file. This medication will be administered by any certified staff member in the event of an allergic reaction. A written care plan will be in place for the usage of the medication. This procedure will be on file and approved by the parent, physician, director and nurse consultant.

Individual Care Plans

We understand that each child is unique and may have specific needs or requirements. To ensure that we provide the best possible care and support for every child, we implement Individual Care Plans (ICPs) as needed.

Development: Individual Care Plans are developed in collaboration with parents/guardians, relevant professionals (if applicable), and our staff to address specific developmental, medical, or behavioral needs of the child.

Documentation: Each child's Individual Care Plan is documented and kept confidential. Only authorized staff members have access to these plans.

Implementation: Staff members are responsible for implementing the strategies outlined in the Individual Care Plans consistently and effectively.

Review and Updates: Individual Care Plans are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant and effective. Updates are made as needed based on the child's progress or changes in their needs.

Communication: Open communication between staff members, parents/guardians, and any relevant professionals is essential to ensure that the child's Individual Care Plan is followed appropriately and adjusted as necessary.

By adhering to our Individual Care Plans policy, we strive to provide personalized care and support for each child in our care, promoting their well-being and development.

Hand washing Policy

We are committed to maintaining a safe and hygienic environment to prevent the spread of illnesses and promote overall health. Our Hand-washing Policy is a crucial component of our efforts to ensure the highest standards of cleanliness within our facility. This policy outlines the specific instances when hand-washing is mandatory for both staff and children, along with detailed instructions on proper hand-washing techniques. By adhering to these guidelines, we collectively contribute to a healthy and thriving community for everyone involved in our childcare center.

Staff shall wash their hands:

- Before and after changing a child’s diaper
- After toileting or assisting a child using the toilet
- Before and after eating, handling food, preparing bottles, or feeding children
- Before and after administration of medication or first aid
- Before and after use of water table or sensory bins
- After handling bodily fluids (saliva, nasal secretions, blood, vomit, etc.)
- After handling soiled items, such as garbage
- After handling animals/animal cages
- After any cleaning
- Whenever hands are visibly soiled

Children shall wash their hands:

- Before and after each diaper change
- After toileting
- Before eating meals or snacks
- After blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Before and after water or sensory play
- After playground use/outdoor play
- After handling animals/animal cages
- Whenever hands are visibly soiled

Proper hand-washing technique:

1. Wet the hands and apply a small amount of liquid soap to the hands
2. Rub hands together vigorously with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (about two rounds of the “Happy Birthday” song!)
3. Wash all surfaces of the hands, including the backs of the hands, palms, wrists, between fingers, and fingernails
4. Rinse hands thoroughly to remove the soap lather
5. Dry hands with a single use disposable towel
6. Turn the faucet off with the towel.

Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Sanitizing Plan

The responsibility for cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing the facility will be shared among the staff, with specific roles and responsibilities assigned to create and maintain a clean and safe environment for children and staff

Daily Cleaning:

- Daily cleaning will include routine tasks such as sweeping, mopping, and wiping down surfaces in common areas.
- High-touch surfaces, including doorknobs, light switches, faucets, and toys, will be cleaned and sanitized multiple times a day.

Weekly Cleaning:

- Deep cleaning of all surfaces and areas will be conducted at least once a week.
- Carpets and upholstery will be vacuumed and steam-cleaned on a regular basis.

Monthly Cleaning:

- Monthly cleaning tasks will include disinfecting soft toys and play equipment.
- Ventilation systems and air filters will be inspected and cleaned or replaced as needed.

Seasonal Cleaning:

- Seasonal cleaning, such as window washing, will be carried out as needed.
- Outdoor play equipment will be inspected and cleaned in preparation for seasonal changes.

Infectious Disease Outbreak Response:

- In the event of an infectious disease outbreak or confirmed case within the facility, a specialized cleaning and disinfecting protocol will be implemented to ensure the safety of all children and staff.
- The facility may be temporarily closed during this period to allow for a thorough cleaning and disinfection process.

Cleaning Products and Supplies:

- All cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting products used will be approved by relevant health authorities and recommended by NAEYC.
- Staff will be trained on the proper use of these products and provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) when necessary.

Documentation and Monitoring:

- A cleaning and sanitation log will be maintained to document the frequency and details of cleaning activities.
- Regular audits and inspections will be conducted to ensure compliance with cleaning protocols and NAEYC standards.

Communication:

- Parents will be informed about our cleaning and sanitization procedures, especially during infectious disease outbreaks, and encouraged to follow appropriate hygiene practices at home.

This plan is designed to ensure that our facility maintains a high standard of cleanliness, sanitization, and disinfection as recommended by NAEYC's "Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting Frequency Table." It is a collaborative effort among staff, parents, and the management to create a safe and healthy environment for children and to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Behavior Guidance Policy:

Our program promotes a positive approach to managing the behavior of all children. Discipline at the program has two primary goals. We strive to find a solution to the current situation. We attempt to help the child process feelings, recognize consequences, explore alternative solutions and outcomes, and develop self control. To accomplish these goals we use the following techniques on a daily basis:

Prevention: A well-designed and well-equipped classroom tailored to the developmental level of the children prevents frustrations, interruptions and hazards. It offers privacy, independence, and easy adult supervision, In addition, the daily routine provides enough time for play, a sense of security, little waiting, and few transitions.

Positive redirection: The basic procedure used in all classrooms is positive redirection, which is redirecting unacceptable behavior to an acceptable alternative. This may be enhanced by verbal praise and other reward systems. We praise children for the appropriate behaviors and successes by describing what we see and how we feel. "I see the books are all on the shelf. It is nice to have such a clean room"

Modeling: Children learn from what they see and hear around them. We strive to provide an environment in which children and teachers can learn to care and feel respect for one another. Teachers model behaviors that they wish to see in the children of the program.

Limit setting: We have a few clear, simple rules that vary according to the developmental level of the children. In establishing rules, each teacher follows these guidelines:

1. Tell children what they are to do in a positive tone.
2. Post rules prominently throughout the classroom for parents and staff to read.
3. Specify rewards for following rules
4. Explain rules to students and apply rules consistently.

Problem Solving: We appeal to the child's growing intellectual and moral reasoning by using natural and logical consequences and asking questions to encourage problem solving. Teachers help children identify their needs, feelings, causes, alternatives and choices. We provide cues such as the Statement, "Use your words". Staff is there to assist the child in developing their own resolution with peers.

Managing behaviors: When a child has a physical or emotional outburst, we provide comfort and privacy. This allows the child to regain composure and ensures the safety of other children and staff. "Time out" will be used only as a last resort, when a child is unable to break a pattern of negative or attention-seeking behavior. This is not a punishment, but rather a time of renewal for the child. When the child has regained control, he/she will be allowed to join the group. In any event, the time out should not exceed the number of minutes corresponding with the age of the child (for example three minutes for a three year old).

Disenrollment: We reserve the right to disenroll any child at any time if we feel the child's behavior is going to harm another child or staff member.

Prohibited Actions: Children will not be subjected to any form of corporal punishment including physical punishment, psychological abuse or coercion, humiliation, embarrassment and ridicule.

Biting Policy

The news that your child has bitten or been bitten can be stressful. Biting can occur in the best of families, and within the best child care programs. Biting can occur anytime a group of children are together.

Young children can be quite self-centered. They know what they want, and they need it immediately. Biting generally occurs during a child's toddler years. The child can not yet fully express what it is they want, need, or feel. Due to the frustration a child often resorts to biting. At this age children often become educated by copying. A bite can happen just simply because a child saw another friend bite. Biting also occurs in phases. It is the adult's responsibility to intervene so the child will know that biting is not an okay thing to do.

There are several methods we try to prevent biting from occurring. Modeling kindness, caring and gentleness are demonstrated so these behaviors will be repeated by the children. Eventually we will learn the sequence of events prior to the biting, which will help in trying to prevent a bite from occurring. The day is designed so children will have an opportunity to participate in stress relieving activities such as outdoor play, sensory play, music, and art.

Even with all the preventive measures a bite can still happen. The child that has been injured will be taking care of first. The injured child will receive a large amount of TLC. We make it abundantly clear to the biter that biting hurts and biting is not acceptable behavior.

When a child has been bit or has bitten an incident report will be filed. It is a center policy to keep the names of the children involved in the incident confidential.

If biting becomes a common occurrence staff will work with the children's parents to set up an action plan to help address the biting behavior. Children may be expelled for excessive biting.

Safety and Compliance Policy:

At Ballestrini's Child Care Centers, the safety and well-being of all children in our care is our top priority. It is critical that children follow instructions and respect the rules of the center to maintain a safe environment for themselves and their peers. Any behavior that compromises the safety of the child or others will be addressed seriously. This policy outlines the steps we will take in situations where a child does not listen to staff, exhibits unsafe behavior, or puts themselves or others at risk.

Non-Compliance with Safety Instructions: Children are expected to listen to staff and follow safety rules at all times. Non-compliance with instructions, especially in high-risk areas such as parking lots, hallways, or during outdoor play, will be considered a serious offense. Running away from staff, leaving designated safe areas, or engaging in other dangerous behaviors can jeopardize the safety of the child and others.

Steps Taken in Response to Unsafe Behavior:

- **Level 1: Verbal Warning and Parent Notification** The first time a child refuses to follow safety instructions, staff will issue a verbal warning to the child and notify the parent of the incident. Staff will discuss the behavior with the parent to ensure consistency between home and the center in reinforcing safe behaviors.
- **Level 2: Suspension** If the unsafe behavior continues or if the initial incident poses a significant danger, the child may be suspended for 1-2 days. The suspension allows time for reflection and reinforces the importance of following safety rules. **During the suspension period, parents are encouraged to discuss the importance of listening to adults and following safety instructions with their child.**
- **Level 3: Termination** If the behavior persists, or if the child's actions result in repeated safety violations, the center may terminate the child's enrollment. This step is reserved for situations where a child's behavior poses an ongoing risk to themselves or others, and when all efforts to resolve the issue have been exhausted.

Immediate Suspension Certain behaviors that pose an immediate and serious safety risk may result in an automatic suspension. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Running into the parking lot or other areas with vehicle traffic
- Fleeing from staff supervision
- Any other behavior that endangers the child or others

In these instances, the suspension will be immediate.

Termination of Enrollment

The following circumstances may lead to the termination of a child's enrollment, as deemed necessary for the safety of the child, other children, or staff:

- Repeated non-compliance with safety instructions despite warnings and suspensions
- Engaging in behavior that puts other children or staff members in danger
- Failure by parents to cooperate with the center in addressing the child's unsafe behavior

Note: The safety of every child is of paramount importance, and we reserve the right to suspend or terminate a child's enrollment if their actions compromise the safety of others. While we will make every effort to work with families and provide support, persistent unsafe behavior cannot be tolerated in the interest of the broader community.

Aggressive Behavior Policy

Aggressive behavior is defined as using physical or verbal abuse towards peers and/or teachers. Depending on the age group, aggressive behavior is usually a response to a child's inability to express frustrations to their individual needs. Aggression is a learned response. Our goal is to teach children to use safe and alternative ways to express their frustrations. There may be times when, despite our best efforts, a child is not responding to frustrations in a manner that is safe for their peers or their teachers. A child's inability to learn appropriate responses to frustration may be a result of a developmental delay that our program cannot adequately address. This policy is designed to address children that may need more support or are unable to learn appropriate methods for dealing with their daily frustrations through typical means. The following steps will be taken to attempt to limit the need for suspension or expulsion from the program.

- **Level 1:** Behaviors are logged in the classroom. Teachers and director will work to assess the function of the behavior. As well as discussion behaviors and possible functions of the behaviors with the family. Staff will make every effort to use support strategies listed in our discipline policy to limit the behavior with the support of the family as well as make any changes possible to room layout, materials or routine that will benefit the child.
- **Level 2:** Child continues with multiple incident reports describing acts of aggression towards their peers and/or staff - Parents are required to seek outside mental health consultant for child and develop a plan of action with the center. Information on where to find help will be provided upon request. The child pediatrician is often a great starting point for more resources. The child may be sent home if the safety of the child, staff or other children in the program is at risk.
- **Level 3:** Aggressive behavior continues and/or parents do not follow through with the program's evaluation recommended within the given timeline- Child is no longer enrolled with Ballestrini's Child Care Centers. We will make every effort to help the family utilize all local resources and to find a new placement if necessary.

This policy will be followed as it complies with federal and state civil rights laws.

Abuse and Neglect Policy

All of our staff have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved in our center.

Child Abuse includes:

- Any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, beating, burning)
- Any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation)
- Neglect of a child (i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision)
- Emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating, or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth)
- At risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect).

Child Abuse is defined as: A child who has had

- Non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him
- Injuries which are at variance with the history given of them
- Is in a condition, which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, and deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

Child neglect is defined as: A child who has been:

- Abandoned
- Denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally
- Allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his wellbeing (CT statutes 46b-120)

Staff responsibilities: As childcare providers we are mandated by law to report any suspicion that a child is being abused, neglected or at risk.

Specifics on reporting a suspected case of abuse or neglect

Call the Department of Children and Families (open 24 hours a day) at 1-800-842-2288. - The reporter's name is required, but may be kept confidential.

Information needed:

- Name of child/Date of birth / Address/ phone number
- Name of parents or guardians / Address/ Phone number
- Relevant information such as: physical or behavioral indicators, nature and extent of injury, maltreatment or neglect
- Exact description of what the reporter has observed
- Time and date of incident
- Information about previous injuries, if any
- Circumstances under which reporter learned of abuse
- Name of any person suspected of causing injury
- Any information reporter believes would be helpful
- Any action taken to help or treat the child
- Seek medical attention for the child – if needed

Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF – 136) to DCF.

Staff are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT General Statutes, Section 17a-101e).

All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at the Center. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.

The management of this program supports a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child.

The administration will protect the child, including immediate notification of a parent or guardian, once there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child in our program.

Any staff member accused of abuse or neglect may be immediately removed from his or her position until DCF's investigation is completed. Based on whether the allegations were substantiated or not, the employee would either be dismissed from his/her position or allowed to return to work.

Staff Training: Staff will be required to attend annual staff meetings, focusing on the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of a mandated reporter. All new staff will be trained in these procedures prior to their start in the classroom.

When an accusation of abuse or neglect by a staff member is made, the Director must immediately inform the parents or guardians that a report has been made to DCF. Health care officials may need to talk to a child's parents to access the cause of the child's injuries and offer support and guidance.

Diapering Policy

All children's diapers will be changed at a minimum of every 2 hours while awake, as well as before and after naps. We do not allow cloth diapers.

The following procedure will be followed when changing diapers:

1. Staff and children will wash their hands thoroughly and dry them with a paper towel.
2. Staff have the option to put on protective gloves.
3. Child will be placed on disposable changing paper.
4. Soiled diaper will be removed and child will be cleaned with wipes. Soiled diaper, wipes and changing paper will be disposed of in a designated trash can with a lid that will be emptied at least daily.
5. If gloves are used, gloves will be removed and a new, clean diaper will be applied.
6. Staff will assist children in washing their hands.
7. Diaper area will be washed and sanitized with a bleach water solution
8. Changing paper will be replaced
9. Staff will wash their hands and dry with a paper towel

Toilet Training

Toilet training will begin when appropriate for each child's age and stage of development. Parents will be consulted on the methods used at home. Feedback will be provided on each child's progress at the center.

Children will be offered frequent opportunities for using the toilet.

Objective of successful toilet training:

- Keep the child comfortable
- Give the child a sense of pride and accomplishment

Procedures for toilet training:

- When parents and staff agreed to begin toilet training, the child will be taken to the toilet at frequent intervals
- The parents are required to start the process at home first, either over a weekend or during vacation. Please keep in mind that the activity level here can distract a child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than in a home.
- We will not put a child on the potty for the first time.
- Providers will first use pull-ups (supplied by the parent) and then after we have made progress we will move to the heavy ply cotton and form fitting plastic underwear that will contain all bodily fluids inside the underwear with out any leakage.
- Parents are not allowed to send children in underwear unless they are ready. All children must have on plastic underwear or a pull up over their underwear at the child care center at all times during the potty training process.
- We will not force any child to sit on the toilet
- The child's allowed to sit as long as he or she is willing.
- Any sign of distress the process is stopped
- The child is never punished or embarrassed for accidents
- If the child has soiled or wet clothing, normal diaper changing procedures are used
- Staff and children will wash hands before and after using the toilet
- Bathroom floor sinks and toilets will be clean and sanitize daily

Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to potty-train in regular underwear. This is for sanitary reasons. Regular underwear cannot contain urine and feces to prevent the spread of germs in our center.

Nutrition

For children over the age of three years, the child care center provides a nutritious snack in the afternoon (2:30PM). Children often participate in snack preparation. The menu is posted in the center for easy reference. Children bring in their own nutritious lunch and breakfast from home. Please be sure any food that needs to be heated is placed in a separate non-plastic microwave safe container.

We request that parents follow healthy eating guidelines for children. More information can be provided upon request. Candy, gum and foods containing large amounts of processed sugar are not served in the center.

Special diets can be accommodated with a medical note from the pediatrician stating food allergies and suggested meal plan.

Parents that wish to provide a treat for an occasion such as a child's birthday, please notify the center at least a week in advance. A simple dessert will be an exception to our "no sweets" policy.

Infant and toddler diets are determined by their parents and primary health care provider. Formula and/or solid foods will be fed by the care giver in prescribed quantities and at specified times. Infants are required to be served formula or breast milk until 1 year of age unless otherwise instructed by a physician. Bottles must come to the center pre made with the appropriate amount in each bottle and be labeled with the child's full name. All formula or breast milk will be discarded one hour after first offering the bottle to the infant. Breast milk must be labeled with the date milk was expressed. All children with bottles will be held while being bottle fed.

It is recommended toddlers drink whole milk until 2 years of age. Written instructions are to be provided. Toddler mealtimes will be served in accordance with the childcare schedule. We ask that parents provide a drink for each mealtime. Cups and bottles will be rinsed and sent home for proper cleaning daily. Drinking water will be offered to infants and toddlers throughout the day.

Families that wish to have their children brush their teeth after lunch may provide toothbrush and toothpaste for their child. Families are responsible for providing and replacing all needed materials including toothbrush, toothpaste and a storage container. Families are responsible for replacing materials as needed and regular sanitation.

Food Safety Policy

Before preparing or handling food, hands and all surfaces must be clean and sanitize

Dry foods must be stored in an appropriate cabinet. No open food packages. Open food must be placed in a closed container

Refrigerated foods must be stored in the refrigerator. The refrigerator must be kept at or below 40°F

Before serving any food, expiration date should be checked and any expired food will be thrown out.

All fruit and vegetables must be thoroughly washed before serving

Food can not be microwaved in plastic or styrofoam containers, plates, bags or wraps

Bottles must be warmed in the bottle warmer only. Bottles are never to be microwaved

Breast milk must be labeled with child's full name and date milk was expressed

Microwaves and refrigerators must be cleaned daily or as needed.

Any dishes used must be cleaned using 3 sink sanitation methods-Dishes must be washed, rinsed, sanitized, then air dried.

Any special feeding instructions or allergies are to be posted in the kitchen at all times. All infants schedules and any special feeding instructions are to be posted at all times.

All children will special feeding instructions and all infants and toddlers will have all foods and amounts documented in procare

Infant Feeding

Food and formula must be provided by parents for all infants enrolled in the program. Parents or healthcare providers determine the infants' diets, including the use of formula, milk, or solid foods. Caregivers will administer these items in prescribed quantities and at specified time intervals. Infants are required to be served formula or breast milk until after one year of age unless otherwise instructed by a doctor (American Academy of Pediatrics). **Parents are responsible for providing written dietary instructions.**

Bottle Feeding:

- Staff will adhere to proper hand-washing procedures before handling bottles.
- Bottles will be labeled and stored appropriately.
- Formula or breast milk will be warmed in a bottle warmer (never in the microwave), with the temperature pretested.
- Any unused breast milk or formula will be discarded **one hour after** the initial offering of the bottle to an infant.
- Each infant's feeding schedule will be accessible to all staff.
- Caregivers will hold infants during bottle feedings.
- Bottles will not be propped for feeding purposes.
- Careful monitoring of infants holding their own bottles will be ensured.
- Caregivers will hold and burp infants after feeding.
- A detailed record of each infant's food intake, including formula, water, and juice consumption, will be maintained.
- Bottles will be rinsed and sent home for proper cleaning or cleaned using a dishwasher.

Solid Food Feeding:

- All surfaces will be thoroughly cleaned before feeding.
- Infants starting solids must bring a sippy cup of water.
- Staff and children's hands will be washed using proper hand-washing procedures.
- Each child will receive an adequate amount of food from each food group daily.
- All food will be appropriately prepared and handled, with pieces cut into bite-sized portions suitable for the child's age.
- Staff will be present to assist children during meals and snacks.
- A record of the food consumed by each child will be maintained.
- Each child will be properly cleaned after eating.
- Tables, high chairs, and floor surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected after each feeding.
- Leftover foods will be stored correctly.
- Dirty dishes will be washed either by a dishwasher or by using the bleach sterilizing method.

Additional considerations:

- Parents will ensure that any known allergies or dietary restrictions are communicated to caregivers and documented for each infant
- Parents will introduce all new foods at home

Infant Safe Sleep Policy

Our program prioritizes the safety and well-being of our infants and has implemented the safe sleep practices recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Sleep Position: All infants under twelve (12) months of age will be placed in a supine (back) position for sleeping unless there is written documentation from a physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse specifying a medical reason for an altered sleep position.

Sleeping Environment: Infants will sleep in well-constructed, free-standing cribs or beds designed for infant sleeping, meeting current safety standards. The crib or bed will have a snug-fitting mattress. Once infants can easily turn over from the supine to the prone position, they will be put down to sleep on their back but allowed to adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep.

Items in the Crib: No blankets, pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, or softer stuffed toys will be placed under or with an infant during sleep. Such items shall be kept out of the infant's crib or bed. Infants shall not be put to sleep on a sofa, soft mattress, or any other soft surface. Infants shall not be put to sleep in a child restraint system intended for use in a vehicle, an infant carrier, a swing, or any place not specifically designed to be an infant bed unless there is written documentation from a medical professional specifying a medical reason for their use.

Nothing shall be placed or hung over the side of a crib or other sleep equipment that obstructs the staff's visibility of the infant.

Attire and Accessories: No child may sleep with bibs, necklaces, or any other object around their neck.

Transition to Sleep: Infants arriving at the program already asleep will be gently woken to ensure they are alert and well, then allowed to go back to sleep in their designated crib.

Sleeping Outside Designated Sleep Equipment: If an infant falls asleep in any equipment not designed for sleep, they will be immediately moved to a designated crib.

Parental Responsibilities: Parents are required to provide a mini crib (porta crib) fitted sheet. This sheet should be brought in on Mondays and taken home on Fridays for laundering.

Our program is committed to regularly reviewing and updating our safe sleep practices to align with the latest recommendations and ensure the continued safety and well-being of our infants.

Emergency procedures

Continuity of Operations: In the event of an emergency parents will be notified using the Procare App and email as to the plans of the facility. In the instance of the internet being down phone calls will be made to each individual parent.

Weather

In the event of inclement weather, the safety and well-being of the children at Ballestrini's Child Care Center are our top priorities. If the center closes early due to advice against unnecessary travel, parents will be immediately notified via phone or ProCare. Parents unable to pick up their child/children must arrange for someone on their pick-up authorization or emergency contact to ensure a safe pick-up.

Refusal to pick up: a parent refuses to pick up their child/children or make arrangements for their safe pick-up, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) will be notified. After one hour past the center's closing time, the child will be turned over to local authorities, and a report will be made to DCF.

If inclement weather occurs when the childcare center is closed, an announcement will be made via ProCare.

Tornado, Hurricane and Severe Thunderstorm:

- Stay calm and comfort the children. After assisting them to the designated area, one staff member will take attendance.
- Move children indoors. Keep children away from windows or doors if the storm appears to be strong. Stay tuned to the radio for further developments.
- "Watch" Procedures: In the event of a watch, bring children inside immediately. One staff member will monitor the radio for updates and listen for sirens. Keep children calm and engaged in constructive activities.
- "Warning" Procedures: If a warning is issued, indicating confirmed sighting and location, take shelter immediately. Gather the children and proceed to the identified safe area.

Fire Emergency

Fire Prevention: Fire Safety is a regular part of curriculum for the children and the emphasis is on safety procedures. Evacuation routes and actual staff responsibilities during the evacuation are posted in each room. All emergency telephone numbers are posted by the telephones.

Fire Drill: Each month a fire drill will be held. These drills will be scheduled monthly. The drills will be a combination of scheduled and surprise drills, both for the children and the staff. The drills will be logged in a fire drill book; date and time noted.

Actual Fire: If a staff person discovers a fire, he / she will activate the fire alarm. A call to 911 will automatically be activated. Staff person may use the fire extinguisher from the wall if he/she feels it is safe to do so. Staff will exit the children following the fire drill procedures. All will calmly proceed to the designated area outside of the building at the back fence of the playground. Each Staff member will be sure that all children in his / her class are accounted for. The director or person in charge will be responsible for taking the sign in sheets and Emergency / Pick up authorization book, which is located at the front desk. Once outside Staff will take attendance. Never re-enter the building without proper approval.

In the event that it is not safe to return to our building or remain on the premises, children will be taken to an approved shelter. Parents will be notified by telephone of the fire and will be informed at this time where they may pick up their child / children. Fires will be reported to the division of public health within 24 hours.

Medical Emergency

Ballestrini's Child Care Center is operated in a manner, which minimizes accidents and injuries to children and staff. If an accident or injury occurs, our staff will act immediately to administer emergency procedures and rectify deficiencies in the program. If it appears that an accident may lead to future complications, or if it becomes serious, the child needs to be medically examined. The following procedures are required:

- A. The staff person will carry out immediate first aide,
- B. The director (or designated person in charge) will contact parents.
- C. If parents or the alternate emergency number cannot be reached, the director will have the authority to call a previously designated physician as indicated on the child's enrollment form and/or 911 for treatment and/or transportation by ambulance to the local hospital, which is Lawrence and Memorial. If we are on a field trip we will use the hospital closest to our location. A staff member will accompany the injured child to the hospital and stay until the parent arrives.
- D. In some emergency situations, the staff should contact the local emergency unit before calling the parent (i.e. cessation of breathing). Staff will administer CPR and check vital signs.

The involved staff person must complete an accident report form for all children that are involved in an accident, injury, or incident. The director will review reports.

Emergency Evacuation Plan

In the event of a nuclear disaster and the state of Connecticut orders and evacuation, Ballestrini's Child Care Center will follow the following evacuation plan:

1. A siren will sound to alert (steady siren for 3 Minutes)
2. Turn on radio and listen to one of the following radio stations for information regarding whether or not we are to evacuate the area or stay inside: **WTYD 100.9FM WWE 102.3FM**
3. The director and head teacher will gather first aid kits, Diapering items, Blankets, clothing, Food, Emergency contact book, and other essential items for transport to the shelter. They will also close the doors and windows and turn off all electrical appliances (except refrigerators and lights)
4. Children will be removed from the building in an orderly fashion and transported by a bus that will be provided by the town. We will notify parents via ProCare that evacuation has begun.
5. Using the attached map we will evacuate to our designated relocation area in a calm orderly manner. Our relocation area is Wethersfield High School
6. We will remain at Wethersfield High School until directed by emergency personnel that it is safe to return.
7. Using ProCare, or phones all parents will be notified of the children's location.

Human Caused Events

Emergencies such as human caused events and lockdowns due to outside happenings may require you to shelter in place (use of any room or interior space for the purpose of providing temporary shelter from a hazard). If this is the case the following procedures should be followed:

1. Gather all children inside away from windows and doors
2. Close and lock all windows and doors
3. If there is a danger of explosion, close blinds, shades or curtains and keep children away from windows. Turn off heating, cooling, fans or ventilation system- anything that can ignite and cause a spark.
4. Do not allow anyone to enter or leave the building until emergency personnel determine the area is "all clear"
5. Notify parents/guardians not to pick children up until the incident is over.

Supervision Plan

General Guidelines:

- **Unsupervised Time:** At no time shall a child be left unsupervised. Children have the right to continuous supervision throughout their time at the center.
- **Awareness of Group Size:** Staff must always be aware of the number of children under their supervision and maintain the appropriate staff/child ratio.
- **Floater Staff Recruitment:** Ensure a floater staff member is available to supervise your group when leaving an area or group temporarily.
- **Visual / Auditory Supervision:** For infants and toddlers, staff must have both visual and auditory contact with all children. Children aged three and above must be within sight or sound of a staff member at all times. Sound supervision for older children should be used in short intervals, with regular visual checks.
- **Mirrors and Supervision:** Note that mirrors do not replace direct sight and sound supervision; they are complementary tools.

Group sizes / Ratio :

- **Under 3:** Maintain a ratio of 1:4. Group size shall not exceed 8 children.
- **Over 3:** Maintain a ratio of 1:10. Group size shall not exceed 20 children.
 - Group sizes may temporarily increase during special events with prior planning.
 - Children aged 2.9-3 years may be included in 1:10 classrooms with written parent or guardian permission.
- **Mixed-age groups:** the younger age group's ratio will be applied.
- **Nap time:** During nap time the overall staff ratio shall be maintained at all times.

Ratio will be maintained both indoors and outdoors as described above. When children are outdoors the playground will be zoned for better control.

Bathroom supervision:

- Children three years and under will be changed no less than every 2 hours and earlier if necessary.
- During potty training, maintain staff ratio.
- Bathrooms are individual use stalls for the children three years and up.
- Children are given privacy when using the bathroom, with staff available outside the door if assistance is needed.

Swimming Policy:

- **Supervision and Safety:** Children will be supervised at all times when participating in swimming or wading activities to ensure their safety.
- **Water Safety Education:** Water safety education will be included as part of the program curriculum to ensure children understand basic water safety rules and procedures.
- **Prohibition of On-site Swimming:** Swimming or wading is strictly prohibited on-site at the child care center, except during field trips to the beach.
- **Parental Consent:** Parents must provide written consent for their children to participate in swimming activities, acknowledging the inherent risks involved.
- **Staff Qualifications:** A staff member, at least 20 years old, certified in CPR by AHA, ARC, or ASHI, and with acceptable lifeguard certification training, will directly supervise the children during swimming activities.
- **Non-swimmer Identification:** Non-swimming children will wear a red shirt for easy identification by lifeguards and staff.
- **Staff-to-Child Ratio:** For safety purposes, staffing ratios will be maintained as follows:
 - For infants (12 months and younger), there will be at least one program staff member in direct physical contact with each child.
 - Toddlers under 3 years old will have at least one program staff member for every two children.
 - Preschool children (3 to 5 years old) will have at least one program staff member for every four children.
 - School-age children will have at least one program staff member for every six children.

Pet Care Plan:

- **Educational Integration:** Pets are considered educational resources and will be integrated into the curriculum to promote learning opportunities such as pet care responsibilities and understanding animal behavior.
- **Health and Safety Measures:** Specific protocols will be implemented to maintain the health and safety of both children and pets. This includes regular veterinary check-ups for daycare pets and procedures for handling pet-related allergies or incidents.
- **Communication with Parents:** Clear channels of communication will be established with parents regarding the presence of pets in the daycare. Parents will be informed of any planned pet visits and encouraged to address any concerns or questions they may have.
- **Pet Selection Criteria:** Pets allowed in the daycare environment must meet specified criteria, including temperament, suitability for interaction with children, and compliance with local regulations.
- **Staff Supervision:** Pets will be handled only under staff supervision, and hand-washing will be required for both children and staff after handling pets.
- **Proper Housing and Care:** Pets will be housed in cages made of waterproof materials for easy cleaning. Food and water will be provided on an as-needed basis, and animal droppings will be disposed of properly in closed receptacles.
- **Visiting Pets:** Owners must ensure visiting pets are properly housed, cared for, inoculated, and licensed according to local health codes before scheduling a visit to the daycare. All parents will be notified when a pet will be present at the daycare, and the pet owner will be responsible for its care during its stay.
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The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct

The NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) code of Ethical Conduct outlines a set of principles and standards to guide early childhood professionals in their work with young children and their families. Here are the key components of the NAEYC Code of Ethics:

Preamble: The preamble sets the tone for the code, emphasizing the importance of the early childhood profession and the ethical responsibilities of its members.

Ethical Responsibilities to Children: This section emphasizes the paramount importance of children's well-being and development. It highlights the obligation of early childhood professionals to promote children's safety, health, and learning in nurturing and inclusive environments.

Ethical Responsibilities to Families: Here, the code emphasizes the importance of building positive and respectful relationships with families, recognizing families as partners in children's education and supporting their diverse needs and backgrounds.

Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues: This section underscores the importance of collaboration, teamwork, and mutual respect among early childhood professionals. It encourages professionals to support and learn from one another, fostering a positive and supportive work environment.

Ethical Responsibilities to the Community: This section emphasizes the role of early childhood professionals as advocates for children and families within their communities. It encourages professionals to contribute to the well-being of the community and advocate for policies that support children's rights and access to quality education and care.

Ethical Responsibilities as Early Childhood Professionals: Here, the code outlines the ethical obligations of early childhood professionals in upholding the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and continuous learning. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining confidentiality, avoiding conflicts of interest, and engaging in ongoing professional development.

Statement of Commitment: The statement of commitment reaffirms the dedication of early childhood professionals to uphold the principles and standards outlined in the code, promoting the well-being and development of all children and families.

NAEYC Code of Ethics Policy

Ballestrini's Child Care Centers is committed to upholding the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct in our interactions with children, families, colleagues, and the community. As such, we adhere to the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) Code of Ethics as a guiding framework for our practices.

Respect: We treat all children, families, and colleagues with respect, dignity, and kindness, regardless of their background, culture, or abilities.

Integrity: We conduct ourselves with honesty, integrity, and transparency in all aspects of our work, including communication, decision-making, and interactions with others.

Advocacy: We advocate for the rights and well-being of children and families, striving to create inclusive and equitable environments where all individuals have access to quality education and support.

Professionalism: We maintain high standards of professionalism in our interactions, responsibilities, and relationships within the workplace and the broader community.

Responsibility: We take responsibility for our actions and decisions, seeking to uphold the trust placed in us by children, families, and colleagues.

Continuous Learning: We engage in ongoing professional development and self-reflection to enhance our knowledge, skills, and practices in early childhood education.

Collaboration: We collaborate with families, colleagues, and other professionals to promote the best interests of children and support their holistic development.

Confidentiality: We respect the privacy and confidentiality of children and families, ensuring that sensitive information is handled securely and shared only with authorized individuals.

Ethical Dilemmas: We approach ethical dilemmas thoughtfully and seek guidance from relevant policies, regulations, and professional standards to make informed decisions that prioritize the well-being of children.

Compliance: We comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines governing early childhood education, including those established by NAEYC and other relevant organizations.

By adhering to the NAEYC Code of Ethics, we demonstrate our commitment to promoting the highest standards of ethical conduct and professionalism in our work with young children and their families.