



Youth and Family Outreach Family Handbook

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MISSION STATEMENT

Youth and Family Outreach creates opportunities that enhance independence and learning to support the quality of life for children, youth and families in Greater Portland.

PURPOSE

Youth and Family Outreach's (YFO) purpose is to support homeless, working and student parents and their children in the Greater Portland community by providing high quality programming. The children of parents 25 years of age or younger, who are homeless, in school or training are given priority. Available child care slots are then made available to low-income working parents and the community-at-large on a first come, first serve basis.

Youth and Family Outreach is designed to provide children with a safe and nurturing atmosphere in which to grow and learn. The child care environment and activities are intended to support and enhance the psychological, social, physical and emotional development of the children. Through the use of developmentally appropriate curriculum each child is provided with the variety of opportunities necessary to stimulate holistic development.

Our program ensures that all families, regardless of family structure; socioeconomic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds; gender; abilities; or preferred language are included in all aspects of the program.

Our center is licensed by the State of Maine, accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and a level 4 on Maine's Quality Rating System for Childcare. Our program and practices are operated in compliance with these regulations, as well as within the standards of sound professional practice which addresses the psycho-social, physical, cultural and educational development needs of children and their families.

Youth and Family Outreach is a private, non-profit corporation providing social services to children and families. Funding is provided in part by the United Way of Greater Portland, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, and the City of Portland.

Youth and Family Outreach reserves the right to modify policies generally or as specific situations may dictate.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at YFO

Youth and Family Outreach is deeply committed to the provision of programs and services that are enriched through the admission of children and their families of any ethnic origin, race, culture, religion, gender identity, ability, and/or expression and family orientation and composition. We promote acceptance, while also valuing differences. Integral to the curriculum are activities involving sensitivity to gender, disabilities, culture, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, family composition and ethnicity. We strive to hire diverse staff that reflect and respect the cultures that our children and families come from and we expect all staff to promote a loving and inclusive learning environment for all. Interpreters will be provided when requested. We support the rights of all children, including those with diverse identities and abilities, to participate actively in our group care setting. By building on developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and Universal Designs for Learning (UDI), we incorporate individualized approaches to learning that ultimately benefit all children in the program.

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

(established by DHHS's Office of Child and Family Services and adopted by YFO)

1. Children will be free from emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. Each Child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the Child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the Child.
3. Each Child has a right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards in this rule.
4. Each Child will be provided Child care services without discrimination to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex or family composition.
5. Children must be treated with dignity, consideration and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes the use of developmentally appropriate practices by the Child Care Facility.
6. Each Child has the right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for that Child in conjunction with community or state agencies by the Child Care Facility.
7. Each Child has the right to Developmentally Appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.
8. Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to Child Care Facility policies and practices.

Staff of Youth and Family Outreach will report any child death or serious injury.

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

HOURS: 7:00am – 5:00pm Monday through Friday.

A list of our closings is later in this handbook.

YFO			
Approx. Age range	Classroom	Group size	Ratio
6 wks – 24 mos.	Infants	8	4:1
18 mos. – 2.5 years	Toddlers	10	5:1
3 years – 5 years	Preschool	15	8:1
Portland residents, 4 years-5 years	Pre-K	16	8:1

We utilize community and student volunteers and interns as well as foster grandparents to add extra hands. They are not counted in ratio and at no time do interns, foster grandparents or other volunteers work alone with children or are responsible for bathroom/potting/diapering duty. Interns, volunteers and foster grandparents must be with, and supervised by, regularly scheduled staff at all times. We maintain ratios and group sizes inside and outside at all times through the use of paid staff only.

With the exception of the public pre-k classroom, classrooms use the CREATIVE CURRICULUM to guide their classroom structure. This is a curriculum that focuses on the development of the whole child by incorporating information from the family, teachers and the child. Parent/teacher conferences will be held twice per year, and upon request, to go over the assessments and observations done throughout the year.

Our public pre-k classroom employs the PREK4ME curriculum. This curriculum has a very structured routine and six core components to address the whole child. This curriculum prepares children for the skills they will need when entering kindergarten. Because your child will already be registered with the Portland school system, their records will automatically be shared with the elementary school they attend.

All classrooms are framed by either the Infant Toddler Early Childhood Developmental Standards or the Maine State Early Learning Development Standards

Each classroom posts lesson plans. Please ask your teachers where these are if you are interested in what goes on day to day.

EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

All teachers are college trained and/or have valuable years of experience working with young children. All staff receive background checks upon hiring. Staff receive no less than 40 hours of ongoing training in child development and safety practices as well as up to date CPR certification annually and first aid certification bi-annually. Your child's teachers make every effort to learn your child's routine, preferences, and personality. Those teachers will also be responsible for maintaining developmental notes and records for your child and preparing a parent/teacher conference twice per year. This conference is an important way for you and your child's teachers to maintain an open line of communication, a path for developing a sense of consistency between home and school.

CLASSROOM STAFFING:

Each classroom will have one lead teacher and either one assistant teacher or two depending on the group size and the ratio for the age group.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

For an open space in the program, priority will be given as follows:

1. Low-income adolescent parents in school, job training or the workforce.
2. Low-income parents in school, job training or the workforce.
3. General public.

Low income is defined as a family income less than or equal to 200% of the poverty line.

Annual enrollment

Each September families will be asked to complete enrollment paperwork as a method for maintaining up-to-date records and contact information. At this time your child will likely transition to the next age group.

If you are in a part-time slot, the specific days cannot be guaranteed from classroom to classroom. The director will evaluate space and will give you a two-month notice if your days are not going to be available.

Fees

Classroom	Full-time	Three days	Two days
Infants	385	289	193
Toddlers	355	266	177
Preschool (and Pre-k when school is not in session)	330	231	165
Pre-k	191	132	88

PAYMENT POLICIES

1. Childcare fees may be paid weekly or monthly.
2. All family paid payments must be made electronically either by ACH or e-bill pay.
3. Weekly fees are due Monday at the beginning of the week of service.
4. Monthly fees are due the first day of the month for the month of service.
5. Childcare fees are based on enrollment (a reserved space), not on attendance. To maintain a reserved space, childcare fees must be paid even during an absence. This includes times that the center is closed for holidays, vacations, training days or declared administrative leave (snow days).
6. Youth and Family outreach will increase tuition annually each September. This will reflect the rising costs of providing quality child care for families and retaining the most qualified and dedicated staff.
7. Payments will be made by direct deposit unless you request an alternate method. In the case of insufficient funds, you will be charged the amount of the check and any fees imposed upon YFO by the bank. No more than two returned checks will be allowed before a parent is asked to pay in cash only.
8. Childcare fees will not be allowed to accrue. Parents who have not made a payment by the end of the second week may not be allowed to drop off their child(ren) at the center until their account is made current. Parents are responsible for keeping track of their accounts; no overdue notices will be issued by the Office.
9. A minimum of two weeks written notice is required of a parent who wishes to withdraw their child from the program. The parent will still be charged two-weeks childcare fees if they withdraw the child without the required minimum written notice of termination.
10. Childcare Fees are non-refundable.

STATE FUNDING

If you are receiving funding through the Department of Health and Human Services (ASPIRE, Transitional or Child Care Subsidy) this will need to be approved through your individual case worker and we will need an agreement from this case worker prior to your child's first day at YFO.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

January	New Year's Day
January	Martin Luther King Day
February	President's Day
April	Patriot's Day
May	Memorial Day
June	Staff In-service Day
June	Junteenth
July	Independence Day
August/September (Friday before Labor Day)	Staff in-service day
September	Labor Day
October	Indigenous People's Day
October	Maine AEYC early childhood conference
November	Staff In-service Day (on Veteran's Day observed)
November	Thanksgiving Day
November	Friday after Thanksgiving
December	Closed the week last week of December
	* We may also close for training periodically. We will give families four weeks notice of additional closures.

STORM POLICY

Youth and Family Outreach will follow our local school district. When Portland Public Schools are closed, YFO will also be closed. In the event that Youth and Family Outreach makes a decision during the day to close early due to inclement weather, you will be notified on Remind.

SECURITY

We have security locks on both our front door and the side door. This number will be given to you when you enroll and changed once a year. This number is meant only for the legal guardians of your child. If you need to have someone else pick up your child please have them ring the doorbell and do not give the code out to anyone else. This increases the safety of our building. Also, our building is 150+ years old so the doors swell and shift. **Please slam/push/pull the doors tightly when coming and going so that they latch.**

ILLNESS POLICY



Illness is always an issue in child care settings. While we understand the needs of working and student parents, we must protect our children and staff from illness. We are guided by the following policies that we developed in conjunction with public health authorities and our consulting physician.

Your child should be well enough to participate in all activities both indoors and outdoors, as we are unable to provide additional coverage for ill children.

For the protection of your child, all our children at YFO and our staff, we require that you keep your child home if he/she displays any of the following symptoms:

- **Temperature – Axillary temp of 99.6 or above with another symptom ****
- **Temperature – Axillary temp of 100.5 or above ****
- **Diarrhea or stools that contain blood or mucus**
- **Persistent diarrhea (indicated by watery stool) – Three in one day or continuing over three consecutive days.**
- **Vomiting – More than once.**
- **Concerning rash or rash with fluid**
- **Significant (needing to be wiped several times an hour) discharge from eye**
- **Any symptoms requiring one on one attention or causing significant discomfort.**

If any of the above symptoms arise during the day, we will call and your child will need to be picked up within one hour after we have contacted you.

To keep your child comfortable and reduce the spread of infection, your child will have a place to rest until you come to get your child.

If any symptom(s) and/or discomfort persist for three days or more – we may ask you to bring in a completed YFO “I can return to school form” signed by your child’s physician so that the virus or infection can be identified.

If your child is sent home with any of these symptoms, we require you do the following:

1. Keep your child home until they are symptom free, or improving symptoms, without medication for at least 24 hours.
2. If requested by YFO staff, bring in a YFO “I can return to school” form signed by your child’s physician.

**** Fever reducers may not be given to prevent or disguise a fever while the child is at the center.**

When your child is exposed to a contagious disease, please report details to the Center so we can notify families and help to prevent the spread. Any of the conditions listed on the following page are among those conditions categorized as ‘contagious’.

Please note: The Center reserves the right to send home any child.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURE

As stated in the “Parent Agreement Form” if there is a medical emergency with your child and we are unable to reach you or any of your emergency contacts, we will transport your child to Maine Medical Center. We will call 911 for an ambulance to transport your child. A staff person will accompany your child and contact efforts will continue until we are able to reach a guardian.

Youth and Family Outreach Illness Readmission Guidelines Based on City of Portland Child Health Services Program

Chickenpox (Varicella)	May readmit when all lesions have crusted over and there are no further eruptions – usually 7 days.
Conjunctivitis – with significant, frequent discharge	May readmit 24 hours after eye drop treatment is started or you have a note from your physician.
Impetigo	May readmit 24 hours after oral antibiotic is started and/or topical antibiotic ointment is started. Lesions should be covered if possible.
Head lice (Pediculosis Capitus)	May readmit after first anti-parasitic treatment has been completed and there are no live lice. If live lice are found in between the two treatments, the child will be excluded until the second treatment (as directed by instructions on the medication)
Ringworm (Tinea Corporis)	Generally need not be excluded from school
Scabies	May readmit 24 hours after anti-parasitic treatment
Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever	May readmit 24 hours after antibiotic treatment is started, and no fever is present.
Cold Sores (Herpes Simplex)	Generally need not be excluded from school
Thrush	Generally need not be excluded from school.
Cold/Cough/Asthma	Exclude if activity or appetite is significantly low or if child is having trouble breathing.
COVID-19	Exclude for 5 days following a positive test

CHILDREN'S MEDICATION POLICY

IT IS ALWAYS BEST FOR MEDICATIONS TO BE ADMINISTERED AT HOME IF POSSIBLE.

1. This facility shall administer prescription medication only upon written order from a physician or according to the labeled instructions on the original medicine container and with a written, signed and dated medication request from the parent.
 - a. This container should list the following: child's first and last name, the date that the prescription was filled, the name of the licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication and instructions on how to administer and store it.
2. This facility shall record the administration of all medication.
3. This facility will not administer any non-prescription medications to a child unless ordered by a physician due to a specific diagnosis.
4. We are required to follow dosage instructions on the bottle or package of every medication.
5. It is the parent's responsibility to put away all medications in the appropriate locked medication boxes. Please ask teachers where this is located.
6. In the event that a child has a special medical medical need, a trained adult must be on-site whenever the child is present.
7. **NEVER LEAVE MEDICATIONS IN A CHILD'S CUBBY.**

HAND WASHING

The single most effective practice that prevents the spread of germs in the child care setting is good hand washing by teachers, children, volunteers, and others. Children and adults' hands should be washed, using proper hand washing technique, which will be posted by all sinks.

All personnel and/or children must wash their hands at the following times:

- Upon arrival at the center
- When moving from one classroom to another
- Immediately Before and after eating or preparing food
- After using the toilet or diapering
- Before and after using water tables. Children with sores are not allowed at the water table.
- After playing on the playground
- After handling pets or any surface that may be contaminated by pets.
- After cleaning or handling trash or whenever hands are visibly dirty
- After handling bodily fluids (i.e. blowing a nose), even if you wear gloves
- After performing cleaning tasks/handling cleaning materials
- Before and after administering medication.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Each parent will give the administration and teachers their child's schedule, not to exceed ten hours per day. This schedule will be based on the hours you are in school, job training, or work. This helps your child feel secure about the time they are spending at our center and aids us in maintaining ratios. If you need a change in schedule please talk to an administrator at least two weeks ahead of the requested change to confirm that we can accommodate that change.

WHEN ARRIVING

- 8:00am – all children are in their own classroom
- FINAL DROP OFF TIME FOR public pre-k IS **9:00**
- FINAL DROP OFF TIME IS **9:30** FOR TODDLER, TYKES and PRESCHOOL
- DROP OFF FOR INFANTS IS FLEXIBLE.
- Please be sure your child has had breakfast and has a clean diaper or has used the toilet before they arrive.
- Upon arrival wash or have your child wash his/her hands
- Check supplies – diapers, food, extra clothing, sunscreen/hats, mittens, snow pants, etc.
- Apply sunscreen if necessary
- Sign any necessary forms or fill out paperwork
- Check in with your child's teacher
- LEAVE A NUMBER WHERE YOU CAN BE REACHED IF NECESSARY.

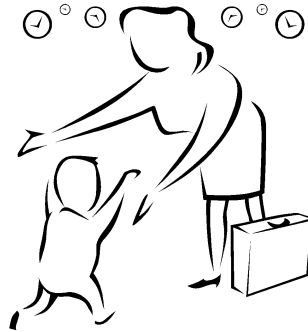
WHEN DEPARTING

- Children will be released only to a parent or a legal guardian or to persons whose names are listed as authorized to pick up your child. Parents are to notify the center in advance if a person not listed on the authorization sheet is to pick up their child. In the event that advance notice is not possible, parents must advise the center as soon as possible by telephone. Please be sure **anyone other than the legal guardian has a picture ID with them.**
- Person picking up must be at least 16 years old unless they are the legal guardian.
- In situations involving child custody, information including a signed copy of the court order stating conditions of custody, and a handwritten note from the custodial parent must be on file at the center in order to abide by the custody order.
- If an emergency occurs and you will be later than expected, you are required to call so we can plan accordingly.
- Parents arriving and/or leaving the building after **5:00** will be charged \$5.00 for the first five minutes or any portion thereof, and \$5.00 for every minute after that.
- Check in with your child's teacher; see how your child's day was.
- Pick up information from your parent information box.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE CENTER CLOSSES AT **5:00** – THE CLOSING TEACHERS LEAVE THE BUILDING AT 5:00 PROMPTLY.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

- Please call us if your child is going to be out for the day, late or needs an early drop off.
- A teacher will make a call to the home of any child who is out three consecutive days without a phone call.
- One full week of unexcused absences (no contact from parent) for a child in our center may result in termination of a child care slot.



CLASSROOM INFORMATION

- **PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING.**
- All children should have at least one **complete** change of clothes. This includes: shirt, pants, underwear and socks. (For potty training children we suggest three changes of clothes).
- During the winter, please make sure your child has snow pants, hat, gloves/mittens and boots. We go outside **every** day, weather permitting (17 degrees or above).
- During the summer please provide sunscreen if you are not going to use the brand that we offer and a swimsuit or swim-diapers. We also recommend a hat.
- If you choose to bring in meals for your child we need to adhere to the following guidelines:
 1. The meal must be nutritious and meet the same guidelines we follow with the USDA food program.
 2. No opened commercial food containers.
 3. Homemade things must be labeled and dated.
 4. All unused food will be sent home at the end of the day.
 5. If necessary we will supplement additional meal components.
 6. If necessary food will be refrigerated until meal time.
- All children wearing diapers must have at least 5 diapers per day.
- If your child does not have the supplies they need for the day you will be asked to take your child with you to get the items.

MEALS

Youth and Family Outreach participates in the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to provide balanced, nutritious meals to our children. A full breakfast and lunch and one afternoon snack per day will be offered. Meals are served family style to promote healthy food habits, encourage conversation and social skills. Please be sure to check your classroom's posted schedule for meal times as this may vary given the needs of the group.

Some of the guidelines of this program are listed here:

- Milk and water are offered to children during meals. Low fat milk will be provided for all children over one year. Whole milk will be provided when requested. We will offer a milk substitute to your child at your written request.
- We cannot serve any of the following foods to children due to the risk of choking:
 - Whole grapes
 - Nuts
 - Popcorn
 - Raw peas
 - Hard pretzels
 - Spoonfuls of peanut butter
 - Chunks of raw carrots
 - Meat larger than can be swallowed whole
 - Hot dogs

* Tooth brushing will be offered after the lunch time meal. You may provide a toothbrush or we will provide one for you.

INFANTS –

- All food must be given at home first to assure that the child does not have any reaction.
- From six weeks to four months old we will provide one type of formula. You may choose to use this or supply your own. At 4 months we will also provide infant cereal. At 6 months food from home may be offered. At 8 months we will provide solids that the family has listed they have had at home and that we are serving in our menu that day. Families will supplement additional food as necessary until the baby is 12 months old.
- When given a bottle all infants will be held to encourage a sense of trust and safety, engage in one-on-one eye contact and "conversation".
- We are not able to allow children to have bottles in the crib.
- Cups are offered to children as soon as the family and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready.
- Cups and bottles will only be offered in the specified eating area or when held.

Breastfed babies: To ensure the safe storing and serving we have the following guidelines –

- Expressed milk needs to be in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's name and date.
- Liquid milk can be stored in the refrigerator up to 48 hours (24 hours if previously frozen)
- Expressed milk can be stored in the freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for up to three months.
- We will gently mix, not shake, the milk to preserve the special infection-fighting and nutritional components in human milk.

Licensing practices: To ensure safe practices we are guided by these policies –

- Formula and infant food must come to us in factory-sealed containers (ready-to-serve powder or concentrate formulas and baby food jars)
- Bottle feedings do not contain solid foods
- Staff will discard any formula or milk not completely consumed or is not refrigerated after one hour.
- If milk is warmed, staff will use a crock pot and heat it at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit for no more than 5 minutes.
- No milk, including human milk, and no other infant foods are warmed in a microwave oven.
- We are not able to offer solid foods or fruit juices to infants younger than six months.
- We are not able to offer cow's milk to infants younger than 12 months.

We welcome nursing mothers to visit at anytime during the day. This can be coordinated with the classroom teaching staff. For your comfort there is a room adjoining the infant room for quiet time with your baby if you choose.

A MONTHLY LUNCH MENU WILL BE EMAILED TO YOU TO TAKE HOME AND IT WILL BE POSTED IN EACH CLASSROOM. A ROTATING MONTHLY BREAKFAST AND SNACK SCHEDULE IS POSTED IN EACH CLASSROOM.

TRANSITIONS

We are fortunate to be a close knit family here. The children get to know all of the staff here quite well. Therefore when it comes time for a transition from one room to the next it is often met with much excitement and enthusiasm. Typically transitions happen in September, when our pre-k students leave for Kindergarten and all classrooms move up to the next age group. Occasionally, there are spaces throughout the year and we will transition one child if they are ready. Your child's teacher will notify you of a plan for transition. At this time you are encouraged to plan a time to visit the new classroom with your child and meet the teachers. You may also request a meeting with the new classroom teachers.

Infants to Toddlers	Approx. 18-24 months
Toddlers to Preschool	Approx. 3 years
Preschool to Pre-K	4 years by October 15th

SCHEDULES

Each classroom maintains a schedule based on the needs of their particular age group. Please check your classroom's parent information area for the posted schedule. Introduction to scheduling begins in the infant room where the schedules are individualized for each child and slowly increase in structure as the children get older. Each schedule reflects a balance of large and small group activities; quiet and outdoor activities; child chosen and teacher directed activities.

COMMUNICATION / CONFIDENTIALITY

Infants – A binder with daily report forms (it is required that parents fill these out).

Toddlers, Tykes, preschool and pre-k – Communication is through email and Remind.

Staff are sensitive to the need for confidentiality. Children's files are kept confidential. They are kept in a locked file drawer in the classrooms and in the program director's office. Staff will not discuss child and/or family information in public areas or with any individual other than those that are a part of the child's care team. People that may be considered a part of the child's care team include the following:

- Child's primary teachers (lead and assistant)
- Program Administrators
- Any individual or organization that the family has signed consent to share information with (therapist, evaluator, DHHS official, etc.)

If at any time the legal guardian for a child would like to access the file this can be arranged with the program director.

By law we are mandated reporters. If we have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been, or is being abused, we must immediately report to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Incident reports will be written for anything that happens throughout the day. A signature will be taken at pick up by the person who picks up. If this is not the parent, the parent will also need to sign the report within 48 hours.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is an essential part of the day here at Youth and Family Outreach. Children have boundless amounts of energy and we encourage a healthy dose of time to exert this multiple times a day, all year round! To ensure that this is a safe and healthy experience we implement the following policies and suggestions:

- Layered clothing for winter time to ensure that your child remains dry and warm throughout the day.
- Sun-protective clothing for the summer (lightweight, long-sleeved shirts and pants) and a hat
- We offer a generic brand of sunscreen that is SPF 15 or higher. Please sign the permission form with your child's classroom if you wish for us to use this or you may supply your own.
- Due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, when recommended by public health authorities we will offer an insect repellent containing DEET. Please sign the permission form with your child's classroom if you wish for us to apply it to your child. This will only be applied once per day when recommended.

We go outside when the temperature is above 17 degrees and there are no unsafe weather advisories including high pollen or air pollution alerts.

If we are unable to take the children outside due to weather conditions, we will provide similar activities inside.

In order to ensure safety while on our playgrounds staff-child ratios will always be maintained per classroom when more than one classroom is occupying the same play area.

Our Outdoor Play Policy is as follows:

- The maximum number of children for the lower grassy side playground will be 10.
 - At least one staff member will be located at each gate on the lower playground interacting and supervising the children.
- The maximum number of children allowed on the upper grassy side playground will be 17.
 - A staff member will be located at each gate, at the sandbox and by the tree on the hill supervising and interacting with the children.
- The maximum number of children allowed on the woodchip playground will be 20.
 - A staff member will be located on either side of the climber and at the shed supervising and interacting with the children.
- When there are less children and staff, staff will be positioned where the need of the children and optimum supervision can be obtained.

TOILETING / DIAPERING

DIAPERING – Children will be checked/changed at least every two hours when children are awake and upon waking.

For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper will have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit. Cloth diapers will be placed in a clean sealable bag without rinsing and sent home that day for laundering.

TOILET TRAINING - Your child's primary classroom teachers will work together with you to come up with the best plan for your child. Communication and consistency in this very monumental step are keys to success.

FIELD TRIPS

We are fortunate to be located in an urban environment with all the culture of the city at our disposal. We frequently visit the Portland Public Library for story hour, all of the parks in the area and the waterfront. We are able to visit these places on foot and do not at any time use a private vehicle for transportation. We have a membership with the Children's Museum and Theater of Maine, we take the children on the Metro bus to get there. Your child's teachers will communicate with you in advance of a visit to the museum.

When on a field trip teachers will always have the appropriate supplies such as first-aid, a communication device and emergency contact information for each of the children.

NAPPING

All children are provided a quiet time for rest and/or napping each day. Children in attendance for more than 4 hours must have an opportunity for rest or relaxation of one hour or longer according to the age and needs of the Child. Children who do not fall asleep will have access to quiet activities. Every child will have their own nap mat, cot or crib as well as linens. Children will nap in the same place every day. Linens will be washed weekly.

SPECIAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS FOR INFANTS

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), infants will be placed on their backs to sleep on a firm surface. If infants arrive to the program asleep, or fall asleep in equipment not specifically designed for infant sleep, the infant will be removed and placed in a crib (we cannot allow infants to sleep in swings, seats, etc.), unless we receive written orders to the contrary by the child's physician. After being placed down to sleep on their back, infants will then be allowed to assume any comfortable sleep position when they can easily turn themselves from the back position. Crib mattresses meet the standards of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Cribs for infants less than 12 months old must not include soft or loose bedding including, but not limited to: bumper pads, pillows, quilts, comforters, blankets, sleep positioning devices, bibs, or stuffed toys. The swaddling of Infants and Toddlers is prohibited. Appropriately fitted arms-free wearable blankets are permitted. Pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and other soft items will not be allowed in the cribs. Blankets will only be used after the infant is able to turn themselves over. If a blanket is used, the infant is placed at the foot of the crib with a thin blanket tucked around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as the infant's chest. The infant's head remains uncovered during sleep.

GUIDANCE TECHNIQUES

At Youth and Family Outreach, positive guidance begins in infancy as a process of teaching children skills that help them to be successful in constructive, positive ways. In a safe, nurturing environment where good communication, sensible limits and consistency are practiced; children will develop problem solving skills and self control.

We begin setting limits and reinforcing some rules with infants. We move from these very basic rules to more complex ones with older children. Teachers utilize some behavior management techniques in order to maintain a safe, harmonious environment with large groups of children. These techniques include the following:

- **Positive Attention Techniques** (focus on appropriate behaviors)
 - Non-verbal attention** – such as smiles, pats, hugs, or simply being near a child whose behavior is appropriate and should be reinforced.
 - Verbal Attention** – Such as laughter, 'oohs' and 'aahs' or more specifically letting a child know exactly what you like and why you like it (Ex. – "Jonny is working hard at sitting quietly and listening to the story")
- **Negative Attention Techniques** – (Corrects, mildly disciplines or focuses on inappropriate behavior)
 - Extinction** – Involves ignoring the behavior that is inappropriate by turning your head away, not talking, or focusing on something in the room that is appropriate.
 - Vicarious reinforcement** – Involves praising another child who is behaving appropriately and is nearby to the child behaving inappropriately.
 - Prompt** – Is a calm mention to the child as to how much more you would like to see the appropriate behavior (Ex. – "I'd like it if you sat down with us for story")
 - Time away from materials/situation** – Involves taking the materials away from the child or taking the child away from the situation while gently stating why you are doing so. This technique involves redirecting the child to another activity (if appropriate) and stating the appropriate behavior that you need to see when the child re-enters the situation.

Expulsion and Suspension

High quality early learning programs are important to preventing suspensions and expulsions. At YFO our staff will create positive learning environments that focus on preventing expulsions and suspensions, encourage partnerships between programs and families to support healthy development, and ensure fairness, equity and continuous improvement to support children's social, emotional and behavioral health. We focus on fostering social emotional development and respond to challenging behaviors by incorporating positive discipline practices and policies before ever considering expulsion or suspension.

If an expulsion must occur, we will work together with you to identify community resources to assist in determining the most appropriate placement for your child.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

If a child already has an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) with [Child Development Services \(CDS\)](#), we will work with the family and CDS's Child and Family Specialist to make sure the goals of the plan are embedded into the classroom curriculum. If a child is not yet identified with a diagnosed special need, but the family or teachers suspect that a child may have a developmental delay, we will support the family through the early intervention screening and evaluation process. We will participate in the Early Childhood Team (ECT) meetings to help to determine a child's goals and will document a child's progress in meeting those goals. At all times, we work towards identifying the "least restrictive environment" that ensures successful participation for all children. In collaboration with the family we may also contact the [Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Services](#), [Maine's Early Childhood Community Partnership \(ECCP\)](#), or the [Help Me Grow](#) program to find out if there are other supports available that will aid us to help a child thrive in our care. All services from screening to therapy can take place here at Youth and Family Outreach if it is determined that this is the best place and/or if this accommodates the families needs better.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Youth and Family Outreach represents children from many different cultures, some of whom speak English as a second language. We will honor the child's native language and provide enriching experiences for native English speakers. Each classroom will endeavor to learn a few words in each represented language, many of which will be displayed as part of our print-rich environment. Some teachers help children to learn basic words in other languages such as numbers, colors, foods or names of family members. Children who come to the center with little or no English will be encouraged to participate as fully as possible. If a parent/guardian needs assistance in understanding the paperwork, we will enlist the aid of an interpreter. Because we may have many languages represented at the Center, it may not be possible to have all the required paperwork and communications translated into all the different languages. We will make every attempt to provide this service.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We believe that providing quality care for children is a huge responsibility. It is our hope to work with you to provide the consistent loving care so necessary for the development of a healthy personality. We welcome the opportunity to work along with you to provide the best possible care for your child. It is our goal for every parent to feel comfortable in the center, so open communication is strongly encouraged. Families are welcome to visit any area of the center at any time during our program's regular hours of operation.

Youth and Family Outreach encourages parent and family involvement in many different forms. Some of them may be:

- Daily direct communication with teachers and other staff members.
- Become a member of the Parent Advisory Board
- Come to your scheduled conference twice a year and/or request a conference when needed.
- Call or visit any time.
- Join your child for a snack or lunch.
- Share special skills or a hobby with the classroom
- Attend field trips.
- Prepare a special snack for the classroom.
- Join in on any occasions to participate in activities or fundraisers sponsored by the center.
- Emails, phone calls, notes sent in whichever method of communication is most comfortable for you and meets your needs.

TERMINATION

Service to a client may be terminated for violations of the center's policies and procedures including the following areas: excessive absenteeism, nonpayment of fees, verbal or physical abuse towards staff, destruction of child care property, or any client behavior that significantly detracts from the quality of child care in the center.

In such cases, staff concerns will be discussed verbally with the client prior to termination. Center staff will document client violations of center policies and other incidents. If termination is inevitable after this discussion, the center will give the client at least ten days notice of termination unless the situation warrants immediate termination. In every termination case, the client shall be informed of an appeal process.

In the case of DHHS slots, the appeal may be made to the Department of Health and Human Services. In all cases, a client may appeal a decision to the executive director of Youth and Family Outreach.

Final notification of a termination shall be made to a client in writing and to relevant funding and referral sources when necessary.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS

Youth and Family Outreach cares about all parents' concerns with the program. Please follow these steps when you need help with a concern.

1. When you have a concern about the program, you should talk to the Director. If you are uncomfortable with this you may put something in writing.
2. If you and the Center Director cannot agree on a solution within one week – OR – if the concern is about the Center Director, a parent may talk with a member of the board of trustees.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of an emergency, the Director will oversee the situation at the Center. In the Director's absence, the emergency management responsibilities are delegated to the Program Coordinator or the next in charge.

Evacuation Planning

YFO will hold evacuation drills monthly.

Two drills per year will be held at naptime.

Alternate drills (shelter in place) will be held annually.

- o **Evacuation Assembly area within walking distance:** Portland Public Schools, central office – 353 Cumberland Ave.
- o **Evacuation area at a distance for secured evacuation:** Portland Public Schools, central office – 353 Cumberland Ave.
- o **Transportation arrangements:** VIP bus tours 772-4457 (Jason Briggs)
- o **Shelter (in-place):** Toddler room

In the event of an emergency requiring an evacuation away from Center premises, the Center shall coordinate necessary provisions for the transport and continued care of children until parent/guardian or an authorized individual picks up the child.

Curriculum

The infant, toddler, tykes and preschool room employ the Creative Curriculum. The Creative Curriculum provides a framework which guides our planning and assessment. Our philosophy around curriculum with these ages is to offer a child-centered environment and approach. The most important players in this curriculum are the families, children and the teachers. Communication amongst these three is key to the success of the child's day in their child care setting. Our curriculum focuses on several different interest areas including dramatic play, block building, manipulatives/math, literacy, science, and art. Each area is carefully planned for and targets the needs of the group.

The public pre-k classroom employs the Pre-K 4 ME curriculum. This is a research based, published curriculum. It is highly focused on language, literacy, numeracy and preparing children for kindergarten. What has been discovered through using this curriculum is that children are less likely to fall behind later in public school.

There are six major components to the Pre-K day:

- Morning Meeting where items are introduced for the day;
- Words, Song Play and Letters where children learn the importance of rhyming, beginning sounds and join in large group participation;
- Small Group where children are broken into three small groups and work at different levels of difficulty on an activity that is related to the unit;
- Center Time where children have free time to choose areas where they can discover on their own the things they have learned in their group times. It is a time for socialization, for teachers to gather information and to engage in conversation with the children.
- Story readings – stories are read in four specific ways in sequence. These methods are meant to engage children in a teacher driven lesson regarding one component of the unit and focuses on detailed information.
- Let's Find Out About It – A teacher directed lesson encouraging deeper exploration of the unit topic.

The PreK for ME is a research-based, whole child curriculum that meets the requirements of Chapter 124: Public Preschool Program Standards and is developmentally appropriate for four-year old children. Adapted from the Boston Public Schools' Focus on K1 curriculum, Pre K for ME is intended to support any preschool teacher in providing a rich, play-based, intentional curriculum that is aligned to Maine's Early Learning and Development Standards as well as the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. When implemented with fidelity, Pre K for ME builds social-emotional, executive function, language, literacy, math, and vocabulary skills. In addition, students' conceptual knowledge around a variety of topics is enhanced—an important component for school success-Maine DOE website.

Curriculum Framework

Youth and Family Outreach uses [The Creative Curriculum](#) for our infant, toddler, tykes and preschool program and [Pre-K 4 ME](#) for our public pre-k classroom. We use these as the blueprint for planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate program. The State of **Maine Early Learning Development Standards** and **Infant and Toddler Maine Early Learning and Development Standards**: Guidelines for Learning & Development are the principle frameworks and reference for developmentally appropriate expectations for children. The indicators in these documents define what young children should know and be able to do. The learning activities developed to assist children to meet these indicators will be determined by the curriculum.

We chose both curriculums for our programs because these frameworks are supported by research about how children develop and learn. The curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that it addresses the indicators set forth by the State of Maine Early Learning Standards.

We believe that children learn:

- When we support them in the context of their family and community.
- By having educated teachers who understand child development and how children grow and learn at the infant, toddler and preschool stages.
- By having sensitive teachers who are knowledgeable about individual learning styles of children.
- By having an organized learning environment with a variety of age appropriate materials.
- By having a planned daily schedule that includes large blocks of purposeful play that is facilitated by highly intentional teaching practices.
- By having planned experiences that promote active thinking and experimenting.

Goals for the Children

Infant Age group

The primary goal in the infant room is to provide a safe, loving environment in which children can develop new skills, express themselves freely and experience limits that will lead them to a sense of internal control. Motor activities are a part of each day as the infant gains confidence and a sense of mastery over their environment. Infants are held and/or touched frequently throughout the day as they work on developing positive attachments.

The work of infants is developing **Trust**

- Explore first their bodies, and then their world, as they begin to stretch, crawl, and walk
- Love the traditional games of babyhood which promote coordination and development of attention (patty cake, This Little Piggy, Peek-a-boo)
- Practice new skills – grasping, reaching, picking up, pushing, etc.
- Begin to practice separating as they crawl away.

Toddler Age group

The primary goal in the toddler room is to provide a safe, loving environment in which children can develop and test new skills, express themselves freely and experience the limits that will lead them to a sense of internal control. Language is encouraged as a useful source of self-expression and social development. Motor activities are a part of each day as the children gain competence and a sense of mastery over their environment. Above all, we foster an attitude of confidence and social acceptance which is so important for the developing child.

The work of toddlers is developing **Autonomy**

- Are “into everything”
- Discover two legged locomotion
- Are giddy with their new movement ability, and the independence it brings.
- Are learning to do things for themselves
- Play not just to see how things feel, but to figure out what can be done with them.
- Work at becoming independent
- Are insistent about ME, MINE, and MY
- Are in love with the word NO (because that is the way that they practice making decisions all by themselves)
- Become easily frustrated
- Love to build up, knock down, put in and take out
- Begin pretend play
- Imitate what they see.
- Get easily excited
- Are learning to use language to express feelings and ideas
- Have a short attention span
- Are very active

Tykes/Preschool Age group

The primary goal in the preschool room is to provide a safe, loving environment in which children can develop and test new skills, express themselves freely and where teachers foster self esteem, independence and problem-solving skills. Teachers strive to encourage and support the development of socio-emotional, physical and cognitive growth by exposing children to a variety of creative experiences. Activities, both individual and group, as well as structured and free play, are offered daily. Through these experiences, staff aim to provide continued support and a stimulating environment for each preschooler at his/her own level of readiness.

Above all, we foster an attitude of confidence and social acceptance which is so important for the developing child.

The work of Preschooler is developing **Initiative**

- Integrate all the growth of early years.
- Initiate a lot of conversations, inventions, explorations.
- Ask “why” a lot
- Are aware of a wide range of feelings, and ways to express them.
- Enjoy dramatic and make believe play.
- Language and literacy skills are developing and they are working them out.
- Are curious and inventive.
- Repeat new skills until they are mastered
- Learn through active play
- Are masters of running, jumping, and climbing
- Are developing increasing control over small and large motor skills.
- Can be bossy and critical.

Goals for Pre-k children

The Pre-K 4 ME curriculum is complementary to the overarching philosophy of Youth and Family Outreach because of the belief that children learn best through being exposed to a print-rich environment, stimulating and challenging activities and an environment supportive of this.

Language and Literacy

- Teach all the concepts, skills and strategies consistent with current research.
- Systematically build knowledge related to alphabet knowledge, early writing, and phonemic awareness.
- Support language skills by identifying and reinforcing vocabulary and strengthening conversation skills.
- Consider community perspectives
- Consider family perspectives.

Mathematics

- Build a foundation for later mathematical competence, including concepts of number, basic computation, geometry, and measurement.

Science and Social Studies

- Address content-area standards with a steady exposure to rich science and social studies content in the context of language and literacy activities and engaging, hands-on exploration.

The Arts

- Promote children's sense of competence, curiosity and creativity through creative exploration, discovery, and imaginative play.
- Involve children actively in art, music, literature, movement, and more.

Physical Development

- Build large motor skills through free outdoor play and movement activities.
- Foster fine motor skills through hands-on activities across the content areas.

Social and Emotional Development

- Help children develop social skills required in a variety of settings.
- Build children's awareness of their own feelings, and those of others.
- Encourage practice of skills helpful for regulating behavior in the face of strong emotions.
- Many opportunities to experience success, both through individual effort and through guided practice.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment Philosophy

At Youth and Family Outreach the learning environment and curriculum support the development of the whole child. With this in mind the assessment plan is also designed to reflect each child's individual learning needs. In order to make meaning of the learning that occurs, we utilize the framework and the domains of each curriculum and the Teaching Strategies online assessment tool. This assessment encompasses the Maine Early Learning Development Standards as well.

Assessment Implementation

The developmental assessments will be done each quarter by staff that have been trained in the use of this particular tool. This information will be shared twice per year (fall and spring) during the parent/teacher conferences, where families will work with teachers to develop goals for their children. This is also a time for families and teachers to discuss the assessment tool being used with your child and whether or not it suits your child's needs.

If there is a concern about a child's developmental progress, we will use the observation and documentation of the child and partner with the family to refer the child to Child Development Services (CDS) or the Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Services (CCIDS) for screening and/or further evaluation. We will only contact these resources with consent from the parent/guardian. CDS and CCIDS will make the determination of the child's eligibility for early intervention services through more formal assessment methods. To the best of our ability, assessment will be delivered in a way that is sensitive to and informed by family culture, experiences, children's abilities and disabilities and home language.

Purpose of Assessment

- ❖ To understand what we want children to learn
- ❖ To know the developmental steps we expect children to take
- ❖ To observe children each day and document what we see and hear
- ❖ To learn and appreciate each child's strengths, abilities, interests and needs
- ❖ To collect information about each child to share with families
- ❖ To understand the diverse range of abilities and needs of a group of children
- ❖ To utilize the information that we have gathered about each child in order to provide opportunities to support the individual child as well as a group of children
- ❖ To be more reflective and intentional in our work with children
- ❖ To design a rich learning environment that is appealing to a range of interests and abilities
- ❖ To summarize what we learn about each child and partner with families to plan together how best to support their child(ren)'s learning
- ❖ To identify children who may need additional evaluation and support in order to succeed

Conditions

We assess each child in the least restrictive environment at Youth and Family Outreach, which is in their classroom by their primary teachers during free play, while engaged in small or large group activities or learning centers, and during transitions. We will be sensitive to family culture, language, individual situations, and special needs.

WELCOME TO

