
HANDBOOK

FOR

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROVIDERS

SERVING DAYCARE/PREK SITES

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INTRODUCTION

As special education providers we are often called upon to provide services to children at daycare and preschool sites. This is a wonderful opportunity to engage children in their natural environment and nurture skills that will promote their success in social and educational activities.

While we have knowledge of the challenges and needs presented by children with disabilities, we are not always fully aware of the procedures and constraints existing at daycare and preK settings. To achieve the best results for children with special needs, a collaborative effort is necessary.

This handbook is designed to provide general guidelines, as well as some specific policies to assist special education providers in creating relationships with daycare and preK sites, that will support children with special needs in meeting their goals. While we cannot cover every possible situation that may arise, we are hopeful that within this framework, communication and collaboration will flourish and successful solutions in any case, can be found.

As we move forward, we hope to add or revise this handbook as new situations develop. We welcome suggestions from the providers and daycare/preK staff to strengthen the usefulness of this handbook.

Special thanks to the Jewish Community Center Early Childhood Development Program and to PEACE, Inc. Head Start, who created handbooks for their programs that addressed many of the issues covered here and prompted the Coalition to pursue this project.

The Central New York Coalition for Young Children with Special Needs.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- It is important for providers to familiarize themselves with the policies and procedures of each daycare or preK site where they are working.
- It is a reasonable expectation of daycare and preK site directors that we, as providers, will adhere to their policies and standards while we are working at their site.

FIRST VISIT CHECKLIST

Allow extra time on your first visit to introduce yourself to the Director and review these issues:

- Where to sign in? Where to park? Where is the bathroom available for providers?
- What are the best times to schedule services? What are times to avoid (meals, naps, playground)?
- What are policies regarding your personal belongings (what is/is not allowed and where to store)?
- Is there an individual center handbook of policies/procedures specific to that center?
- What is the fire drill procedure?
- Is there a curriculum or particular educational philosophy promoted at the center?
- What are the policies regarding behavior management or physical contact?
- What is the preferred mode of service (pull out/push in)? What areas are available for pull out service?
- What is the chain of command for communicating concerns such as reporting incidents or mandated abuse reporting?
- What goals you are working on, how they will be addressed, how your concerns/goals should be shared with staff and how you plan to share information with parents.
- What the center must do to obtain release of information from parents, if they want copies of student documents (IFSP, IEP) or if they want to discuss a child's progress.
- Are permissions needed to use center equipment?
- What is the policy regarding visitors?
- Be sure to provide your name, discipline and contact information including your agency and supervisor contact information. Ask what procedures to follow if you are absent to notify parent, teacher and/or director and if you wish to be notified if the child is absent.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The health and safety of the students we serve is always a primary concern.
- While providers may have received training in health and safety practices according to their individual agency policies, we must all familiarize ourselves with the health and safety practices which are required by New York State regulation at daycare/preK sites.
- We must all abide by these regulations when we are working at daycare/preK sites.

TOXIC MATERIALS

Regulation: 418-1.5j All matches, lighters, medicines, drugs, cleaning materials, detergents, aerosol cans and other poisonous or toxic materials must be stored in their original containers. Such materials must be used in such a way that they will not contaminate play surfaces, food or food preparation areas, or constitute a hazard to children. Such materials must be kept in a place inaccessible to children.

- This means that providers should check their bags to ensure that all materials are non-toxic and are age appropriate. If therapists have hand sanitizer in their bag, it must be stored out of reach of children. All paints, crayons, pens, pencils, etc. that therapists have children use must be non-toxic.

Regulation: 418-1.5t The following items must be used and stored in such a manner that they are not accessible to children: handbags, backpacks or briefcases belonging to adults; plastic bags; and toys and objects small enough for children to swallow.

- This means that providers must lock up their purse or leave it in their car. Ask the childcare staff where you can put your personal belongings. It also means that there can be no plastic bags in the bag of toys the therapist brings into the center. If items are stored in plastic bags, such as Ziploc bags, the bags must be securely put away when not in use. Toys must be age appropriate. As such, if a toy says it is for children 3+, it cannot be used in a toddler classroom.

HANDWASHING

Regulation: 418-1.11k Staff must thoroughly wash their hands with soap and running water at the beginning of the day, before and after the administration of medications, when they are dirty, after toileting or assisting children with toileting, after changing a diaper, before and after food handling or eating, after handling pets or other animals, after contact with any bodily secretion or fluid, upon moving to work with a new group of children, and after coming in from outdoors.

- This means providers must wash hands each time they enter the classroom, after toileting or assisting children with toileting, before and after food preparation/serving, after sneezing, coughing, wiping a runny nose, and/or coming in from the playground. This also means that if a provider goes from classroom A to Classroom B, they must wash hands when they get to Classroom B, even though they may have just previously done so in Classroom A.

Regulation: 418-1.11k1 Staff must ensure that children thoroughly wash their hands or assist children with thoroughly washing their hands with soap and running water when they are dirty, after toileting, before and after food handling or eating, after handling pets or other animals, after contact with any bodily secretion or fluid, and after coming in from outdoors. For diapered children, caregivers must ensure that adequate steps are taken to clean the child after each change of diaper. Staff must assist children in keeping clean and comfortable, and in learning appropriate personal hygiene practices.

- This means that providers should have children wash their hands after toileting/diapering, before and after eating, after child sneezes, coughs, and/or wipes their nose or returning from outdoor or other messy activities. Therapists should help children learn how to effectively wash their hands

GLOVE USAGE

Regulation: 418-1.11m Safety precautions relating to blood must be observed by all staff coming into contact with blood, as follows: (1) Disposable gloves must be immediately available and worn whenever there is a possibility for contact with blood, including but not limited to: (i) changing diapers where there is blood in the stool; (ii) touching blood or blood-contaminated body fluids; (iii) treating cuts that bleed; and (iv) wiping surfaces stained with blood.

Regulation: 418-1.11m5 Clothes contaminated with blood must be placed in a securely tied plastic bag and returned to the parent at the end of the day.

Regulation: 418-1.11m6 Surfaces that have been blood stained must be cleaned and then disinfected with a germicidal solution.

- This means, providers must wear disposable gloves whenever there is a possibility of contact with blood. It also means if a child gets blood on their clothing, the clothing must be removed and placed in a plastic bag for parents to pick up at the end of the day. Lastly, if blood has gotten onto a surface, it must be cleaned and disinfected immediately. Any blood should be reported to the Director.

SUPERVISION

Regulation: 418-1.7g Daily supervised outdoor play is required for all children in care, except during inclement or extreme weather or unless otherwise ordered by a health care provider. Parents may request, and providers may permit, children to remain indoors so long as required staff/child ratios are maintained.

- This means that services should not happen during outside times, unless therapy is a push-in model that would make sense to occur outside. Please talk with the child care director and staff about their policy regarding outside play times and therapy.

Regulation: 418-1.8d Children cannot be left without competent direct supervision at any time.

- This means that children are never to be out of eyesight of adults. If you are providing therapy and a child needs to use the bathroom, for example, you must walk them to the bathroom. They are not permitted to walk down the hall to the bathroom by themselves.

- You cannot leave a child alone in a therapy space to talk with a teacher, get a missing item from your belongings, etc.
- This also means that providers may not use their cell phones in classrooms and/or when working with children because their focus is no longer on children.
- Lastly, this means that providers should schedule a time to meet with classroom teachers outside of the classroom to talk in depth about goals for the child, strategies for the child, etc. Providers are encouraged to include teachers in push-in sessions so teachers can see what the provider is doing and can continue the work in between sessions. However, if providers need to have a more in-depth conversation, they should schedule a time to have this when the teacher can be outside of the classroom without responsibilities for teaching and supervising children.

Regulation: 418-1.8i Each day care center shall require any and all visitors to the facility to: (i) sign in upon entry to the premises; (ii) indicate in writing the date of the visit and the time of entry to the facility; (iii) clearly state in writing the purpose of the visit; and (iv) sign out upon departure from the facility indicating in writing the time of departure.

- This means that providers must sign in and sign out each time they are at the center to work with a child. Please ask the child care director/staff where the sign-in/sign-out book is located. Please be prepared to show ID when you sign-in to the center.

DISCIPLINE

Regulation: 418-1.9a The child day care center must establish written disciplinary guidelines and provide copies of these guidelines to all staff and parents of children in care at the center. These guidelines must include acceptable methods of guiding the behavior of children. Discipline must be administered in such a way as to help each child develop self-control and assume responsibility for his or her actions through clear and consistent rules and limits appropriate to the ages and development of the children in care. The staff must use acceptable techniques and approaches to help children solve problems.

Regulation: 418-1.9 e Corporal punishment is prohibited. For the purposes of this Subpart, the term corporal punishment means punishment inflicted directly on the body including, but not limited to, spanking, biting, shaking, slapping, twisting or squeezing; demanding excessive physical exercise, prolonged lack of movement or motion, or strenuous or bizarre postures; and compelling a child to eat or have in the child's mouth soap, foods, hot spices or other substances.

Regulation: 418-1.9f Withholding or using food, rest or sleep as a punishment is prohibited.

Regulation: 418-1.9h Methods of discipline, interaction or toilet training which frighten, demean or humiliate a child are prohibited.

- This means that all child care centers have an OCFS approved discipline policy. It is your responsibility to ask for a copy of this policy from the director and to follow the policy. At a minimum, corporal punishment of any kind is prohibited. It also means that children may not be physically required to attend circle activities, required to sit for extended time, or required to eat/try foods. This frequently means that sticker charts for behavior are not permitted in most centers.

COMMUNICATION

- Communication between special education providers and the staff of daycare and preK sites is critical for creating the most successful collaborative efforts in the interest of children with special needs.
- Throughout the year, keeping everyone informed of a child's goals, progress and challenges is critical in creating a strong team effort to promote the greatest success. This can be challenging within our busy schedules and the constraints on daycare/preK staff. You may need to employ a variety of methods (written, phone, discussion, team meetings) to accomplish this. Remember that a release from parents is required to share information and a special release is available for use of email.
- Two-way communication will help to increase the knowledge of both special education providers and daycare/preK staff. Share your concerns and explanations of your methods with staff but also be prepared to modify your approaches to fit within the policies and philosophies of the center.
- Conflicts may arise between special education practices and daycare/preK site policies. It is important for providers to share the reasons for their practices and work with daycare/preK staff to achieve the same goals with methods that are in harmony with the site policies and procedures.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

As experts in meeting the needs of children who present challenges in educational settings, you may be approached by staff for advice, or resources. Staff at daycare/preK sites may be unfamiliar with the referral process. As providers we can encourage them to call and direct parents to:

Mid-State Early Childhood Direction Center (ECDC)

Phone: 315-443-4444

Toll-Free: 1-800-962-5488

Email: ecdc@syr.edu

Some individual special education provider agencies also have services available such as screening, consultation, parent education groups. This information is available through the Central New York Coalition for Young Children with Special Needs. Through our email listserv we are able to gather information from member agencies. Our website is www.cnypreschoolcoalition.org.

Providers may also find helpful information at the Office of Child and Family Service (OCFS) website: www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main