

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

***THE CARING PLACE  
100 CENTRAL STREET  
GARDNER, MA. 01440  
978-632-5745 / Fax: 978-669-0089  
An Early Education and Care Program  
Established: 1991***

***Rev. Steven Lundrigan, Pastor  
Jane N. Pineo, Director  
[jane@tcpgardner.com](mailto:jane@tcpgardner.com)  
Martha J. Mallet, Assistant Director-Preschool  
Abigail J. Pineo, Curriculum Coordinator/Technology Coordinator***

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## **Welcome to the Caring Place**

Hello and welcome to The Caring Place,

My name is Jane Pineo and I am the Director of this early education and care program. I have been with The Caring Place since its establishment in 1991. It is my goal, and that of my teachers, that you and your child or children will grow in all areas of development: social, cognitive, emotional, and physical while learning and having fun. It is also my hope that you will find The Caring Place a welcoming community for the entire family where you can find advice, support, and a connection to the greater Gardner area and its resources. We offer a clean, safe environment that allows children to thrive, learn and grow to reach their full potential. The teaching staff is professional, caring and highly trained to meet the needs of each child.

Please take some time to look over this Parent Handbook. It has been put together with care and includes all Caring Place policies that concern your child and your family. I hope that this will make your family's transition to our program a smooth and happy one.

I am always available to meet with any family. I may be reached by phone 978-632-5745 during working hours and also by email [jane@tcpgardner.com](mailto:jane@tcpgardner.com).

When you enroll your child at The Caring Place, you and your family become members of our very caring and loving Caring Place family.

Jane N. Pineo, Director

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**THE CARING PLACE** is an early education and care program established to meet the needs of children and families in the greater Gardner community. The program offers full day preschool along with a part-time preschool program and before and after school care. The program services children ranging in age from two years and nine months (2.9) through Grade 6 regardless of sex, race, and religion or cultural differences. The program is opened five (5) days per week and fifty-two (52) weeks per year. The program focuses on the whole child and employs professional, competent and caring staff.

### ***OUR PHILOSOPHY***

**THE CARING PLACE** recognizes that all children grow and develop at their own individual pace. We offer a program designed to benefit the whole child. Families, cultures and community are important to the development of curriculum and implementation of the daily operations of **The Caring Place**.

All children have the right to a full, enriching, academic and loving environment. The staff works hand in hand with families to foster self-esteem that is essential for the positive development of young children. A variety of educational activities promote social, physical, emotional and cognitive growth. The staff utilizes a variety of mediums and materials appropriate for the child's aptitudes, interests and abilities.

A relaxed, home-like and loving environment allows the children to discover, explore, and become independent. Competent, professional, caring and energetic teachers facilitate the children's developmental growth. The staff understands that family and culture are important and incorporates and encourages these ideals and values in daily life at **The Caring Place**. Parent involvement is very important to the continued growth of all areas of the program.

**The Caring Place** staff continually attends professional development conferences and college classes to keep current in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education.

**The Caring Place** maintains CORI checks on all staff and ensures a safe, nurturing, loving, and warm environment for your child to learn and grow.

### **ABOUT THE CARING PLACE**

## ***An Early Care and Education Program***

### **FULL DAY PRESCHOOL OPERATES YEAR - ROUND**

Our **FULL DAY PRESCHOOL** program is available from 7:00 A.M. until 6:00 P.M\*. The program centers on the whole child. It is filled with fun learning opportunities throughout the whole day presented in an age appropriate and developmentally appropriate approach. Our program facilitates growth in all areas of a child's development: social, intellectual, physical, and emotional. Outside activities and play are an essential part of each day.

- See Daily Schedule in Parent Handbook ( pages 8-9).

### **BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

The Caring Place offers before school and after school care and summer and school holiday care for children that attend Holy Family Academy and Gardner Public Schools from Kindegarten – Grade 6

### **PART TIME SCHOOL YEAR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM OPERATES SEPTEMBER – JUNE PART-TIME PRESCHOOL:**

***Session I – Tues/Thurs 8:30 – 11:15***

***Session II – Mon/Wed/Fri 8:30– 11:15***

***Session III – Mon – Fri 8:30 -11:15***

***Session IV - Mon – Thurs 11:30- 3:30***

THE CARING PLACE has a **part time** preschool program that centers on the whole child. It is filled with fun learning opportunities presented in an age appropriate and developmentally appropriate approach. Our program facilitates growth in all areas of a child's development: social, intellectual, physical, and emotional. Outside activities and play are an essential part of each day.

**STAFF** to child ratio is 8/10 children to one teacher and all staff undergo a CORI check before employment at The Caring Place.

## ***Curriculum***

The Caring Place provides a safe, nurturing environment in which staff work together as a team to ensure that learning be a wonderful, exciting and fun experience for each individual child. To best serve the individual child, a Meeting Room and Meeting Room teacher is assigned that will meet the child's needs, strengths and interests. Meeting Room teachers are responsible for planning and implementing developmentally appropriate and age appropriate curriculum that follows the **Massachusetts State Curriculum Preschool Guidelines, Frameworks and Standards**. Teachers are responsible for keeping individual assessment records for each child in their classroom. Assessments are done and sent home throughout the year to the parents or guardians.

Children are offered daily choices to engage in a variety of learning experiences, both individually and in small groups. The teachers provide a variety of developmentally appropriate learning opportunities and materials that are selected to engage children in active, meaningful learning and to achieve the following goals:

- Foster positive self-identity and sense of emotional wellbeing.
- Foster the development of age-appropriate self-help skills such as picking up the classroom, pouring juice, putting on coats or jackets, and personal grooming.
- Encourage pro-social behavior such as cooperation, turn taking, talking to solve problems, and empathy.
- Encourage and allow children to think, reason, question, and problem solve and experiment, which are the necessary developmental skills, needed for mathematics, science and social studies.
- Foster language and emerging literacy development through the use of oral reading, written words, phoneme awareness, rhyming, writing centers, and an integrated curriculum based on specific authors or series.
- Foster and model sound health, safety and nutritional practices. Children are allowed to cook at least once per month.
- Encourage creative expression, representation and appreciation for the arts.
- Respect cultural diversity.
- Allow for flexibility within each day.
- Build on children's emerging interests, ideas and developmental skills.

The staff continues to build on knowledge of child development and early childhood programming through workshops, professional conferences and college courses. The staff exhibits positive role modeling that foster respect and work with parents as partners in their child's education and care.

The ultimate goal of The Caring Place staff is to allow children to explore, learn, laugh, cry and discover themselves and others in a safe, loving environment and leave with a true sense of wonder, curiosity, independence and self-esteem that will stay with them as they grow.

### **Returning Preschoolers:**

Many students attend the Caring Place for two or three consecutive years. Returning students are placed into a classroom and with a teacher that will help the student maximize his/her cognitive, social, physical and emotional growth. Decisions are based on both teacher and parent input and the Director makes the final decision on class placement.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Every child and parent(s) will receive a written assessment of progress periodically throughout the year. This evaluation will include the social, emotional, physical and cognitive progress of the child. Each written assessment will include a parent comment section. Parent input is very important to our program and with the information gathered the teacher may incorporate realistic, developmental goals of both parent and teacher into their classroom learning opportunities.

The Caring Place uses the Creative Curriculum® assessment tool as well as other methods of assessment.

Staff is available to meet with parents to discuss their child's progress and/ or to discuss concerns at any time that is convenient for both parent(s) and teacher.

Parent conferences will be held in the spring for all children entering Kindergarten the following Fall.

### **Kindergarten Transition:**

The Caring Place, along with the parents, conduct an exit assessment in the form of a Transition form that is forwarded to the child's Kindergarten program. Included in the assessment form is permission from the parents to allow the child's Kindergarten program to contact The Caring Place for further information.

A copy of the transition permission paper is available at the end of the Parent Handbook.

### **DAILY SCHEDULE**

7:00-8:30am -- Children begin arriving, welcome by staff, hand washing, and free choice

8:30am -- Preschool arrival to Meeting Room for welcome and hand washing

8:30-11:15am -- Free choice Learning Opportunities  
30 minute outside time per group (weather permitting)  
Morning Snack  
Circle and Story  
Daily Learning Experience  
(classroom schedules vary)

11:15am- Part-Time Preschool children depart

Transition for full day children: songs, story, and meeting time

11:30-11:45am -- Hand washing/ preparation for lunch

11:30-12:30 -- Lunch with the teachers

12:00-12:45pm-- Teeth brushing/ nap preparation

12:30-2:30 – Rest period/ 45 minutes required

11:30 - 3:15 P.M. afternoon preschool program, preschoolers welcome and hand washing

Schedule similar to A.M.

1:15-2:20pm – Child get up from nap/Free Choice

2:00-5pm –Story/Snack/Outside Time/Free Choice

5:00- 5:30pm—Quiet story time/small circle time

5:00-6:00pm – Quiet time boxes/activities/Free choice

6:00pm: Closing

Children begin leaving @ 3:30 and continue at varied times

### ***LUNCH AND SNACK TIME AT THE CARING PLACE***

***The Caring Place*** provides nutritious, daily snacks. Learning to eat a variety of nutritious foods is an important lesson for a child. The children participate fully during snack time, pouring their juice or water, handing out snack, cleaning up before and after and having conversations while eating. You may bring in snack for your child's group (see snack sign-ups in rooms), however we encourage nutritious snacks that meet the USDA's CACFP\* food guidelines. We encourage families to celebrate their cultural heritage by sending the foods of the many diverse ethnic groups enrolled in the program.

The Caring Place does not provide lunch for the full time children. Lunch is eaten in the kitchen and classrooms with staff sitting with the children. It is important to remember that children's appetites vary and child-sized servings are encouraged. The Caring Place has two microwaves and hot lunches are acceptable. Children's lunches should include a variety of foods from each food group. Please see suggestions below.

Excessive amounts of sweets such as cookies, candy and other sweets is discouraged. Also, hard candies are a choking hazard for young children.

\**Child and Adult Care Food Program.*

For nutritional information please see [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

### SUGGESTIONS

Try cutting your child's sandwich into shapes, or use a cookie cutter. You will be surprised how much better a triangle or circle tastes! Also, children love raw vegetables such as, green beans, broccoli, celery and peppers. All of these vegetables make a colorful surprise in your child's lunch box!

### A SAMPLE NUTRITIOUS LUNCH

- A serving of milk as a beverage
- A serving of lean meat, poultry or fish, or cheese; or an egg or peanut butter; or a combination of these foods.
- A serving of two or more vegetables or one vegetable and one fruit
- A serving of whole grain or enriched bread, rolls, muffins, biscuits, or cornbread.
- NAEYC requires that no child younger than four years of age be served these foods: hotdogs, whole or cut into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas; hard pretzels; or chunks of raw carrots. Please keep this in mind when sending in snack for your child's class, as we have many two and three year olds. Please ask your child's preschool teacher if there is anyone younger than four in your child's class if you are sending any of these items.

## ***THE CARING PLACE POLICIES***

### ***ACCIDENT/ INCIDENT POLICY***

In the case of a minor accident/incident that requires first aid by a staff member (i.e., small abrasion that requires a bandage, small bump that requires ice, removal of small splinter, etc.) the Accident/Incident will be logged by the staff member attending to the child. The parent or guardian will receive written notification signed by the attending staff and a copy will be placed in your child's file.

In the case of a major accident/incident, immediate emergency measures will be taken with every effort to contact parents or authorized emergency contacts. The staff will proceed with emergency measures as authorized on the child's admission form on file.

**The Caring Place** utilizes Heywood Hospital, 250 Green Street, Gardner, MA as the first call emergency center.

There is staff on site with current Infant/Child first-aid and CPR certification at all times. Staff has been trained in the administration of an Epipen. Certification is in staff's personnel file.

### ***EMERGENCY PROCEDURE***

Emergency drills are practiced monthly in each classroom. When weather permits, the children exit the building during this drill. During colder months, the children practice within

their classrooms. At least two times per year the Gardner Fire Department conducts these drills.

Emergency numbers are located in each classroom. Emergency evacuation procedures are posted in each room. All staff is familiar with all of the emergency policies.

**\*The complete copy of The Caring Place Emergency Plan is available upon request.**

### ***ADMISSION POLICY***

**The Caring Place** is an Early Education and Care program for children from two years and nine months (2.9) through the sixth (6) grade. Admission to **The Caring Place** preschool and early care program is open to all children from the age of two years and nine months (2.9). The school age program is open to children from first (1) grade through the sixth (6) grade. Admission is open to all children regardless of sex, race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status or place of residence.

Prior to attendance in the program, the child and family are encouraged to visit. The Director will meet with parents or family members to discuss required paperwork, program operation and will be available to discuss any questions or concerns.

All children must have a physical examination within one year of the admission date and this must be updated annually. Children must be current with immunizations in accordance with the State Department of Public Health.

### ***ATTENDANCE POLICY***

**PART TIME PRESCHOOL:** Upon arrival, your child must be accompanied to his/her Meeting Room for attendance.

**At all times a telephone call is required if your child will not attend the center on scheduled preschool days.**

**FULL DAY PRESCHOOL:** Parent/Guardian is required to sign their child in each day on the daily/dated attendance log. Parent/Guardian is required to sign their child out at the end of the day. Your child must be presented to a staff member before you leave.

**At all times a telephone call is required if your child will not attend the center on scheduled days.**

Attendance sheets are kept on file at the center.

### ***CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT POLICY***

All the staff at **The Caring** is **Mandated to Report** any suspected child abuse/neglect of a child or children in their care. The staff must log, in writing, the form of abuse or neglect suspected with specific concerns such as, unexplained bruises,

burns, and the person or persons suspected of the abuse. Staff must log any verbal information that a child may disclose during the course of the day. Disclosures may include, but are not limited to, such issues as sexual, physical or emotional abuse, or disclosure such as being left alone or with a young sibling or relative. Neglect issues such as lack of adequate lunches, inappropriate clothing, cleanliness and general physical health, inappropriate car seats and/or seat belting of children must also be logged and reported.

The written log must be signed and dated and will be given to the Director, who will notify the Department of Children and Families, file a written 51A reporting the staff members concerns and findings. The Director will attempt to notify the family that a 51A has been filed at the Department of Children and Families and the concerns in the report. The Director, staff member(s) and Social Service worker will work together to support both the child and family concerning issues and problems leading up to the report.

In the case of the Department of Children and Families or a parent or staff member notifies that program of suspected abuse by a staff member, the staff will be put on immediate, paid leave awaiting the investigated outcome.

### **PROGRAM CLOSINGS\***

**PLEASE REFER TO YEARLY CALENDAR POSTED ON WEBSITE: [www.tcpgardner.com](http://www.tcpgardner.com)**

Professional Development Day  
 Labor Day  
 Columbus Day  
 Thanksgiving and the day after  
 Christmas\*  
 Day Before and New Year's Day  
 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
 Professional Development Day TBD  
 Good Friday  
 Patriot's Day  
 Memorial Day  
 Fourth of July  
 \*Day before and/or after Christmas

### ***COMPLAINTS/CONCERNS/DIFFICULTIES***

In the case of a complaint, concern or difficulty, the following procedure must be followed:

- If a complaint/difficulty is with a particular staff member, you may arrange a meeting with the staff member to discuss the problem.
- If the issue is not resolved, the Director will be notified and a meeting with the staff member and family member will be arranged to resolve the matter.

- If the issue is still not satisfactorily resolved by an agreement between both parties, the family may appeal to the Board of Directors of The Caring Place. A representative of the Board will meet with the Director and staff member. In the case that a complaint or difficulty is with the Director, the following procedure must be followed:
  - The Director and family member(s) will arrange a meeting to discuss the issue.
  - If both parties do not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the family member(s) may appeal to the Board of Directors of The Caring Place.
 If you as a parent or guardian of a child enrolled at The Caring Place have a dispute with a decision made by the Director of The Caring Place, or feel that a determination has been made in error, you have the right to appeal.

To file this appeal, you must notify the Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, in writing, within five (5) working days of the alleged dispute. Clearly marked on the envelope enclosing the appeal must appear the wording – Dispute- TCP. After your appeal is received, it will be distributed to an Appeal Board for evaluation. Said Board will issue a response within ten (10) working days. If the Board finds on your behalf you will be advised in writing.

#### ***LATE PICK - UP/ EARLY DROP OFF POLICY***

If a child is picked up late from their scheduled full day or part time preschool time, there will be a \$5.00 fee for each 15 minutes or portions thereof that you are late. This is paid directly to the staff member at the center at the time. Parents are expected to call and inform staff of tardiness and approximate time of pick up. Payment is still required even if you call. Calling enables the staff to assure your child that everything is fine.

**Early Drop-Off For Part Time Preschool: Children should not arrive before 8:30 A.M. and must leave by 11:15 A.M.** Early arrival will constitute a fee.

In all cases 1 (one) verbal warning will be given. A fee will be charged for any tardiness/early arrival after. Constant tardiness may result in termination.

#### ***LEAD POISONING TEST***

The state of Massachusetts requires that all children under 6 years of age be tested for lead poisoning yearly. Too much lead in the body can cause serious damage to the brain, kidneys, nervous system, and red blood cells. High levels can slow a child's normal development and cause learning and behavioral problems. Lead poisoning may occur when children eat, chew or suck on lead painted objects. Other sources include

contaminated soil or dust and fumes created by renovations and sand blasting. The risk of lead poisoning is increased by normal hand-to-mouth activity in young children. Please consult your child's doctor or your local clinic for more information on lead screening.

**REMINDER:** This must be done yearly and results must be on file at the center.

### ***MEDICATION POLICY***

All **medication, both prescription and non-prescription**, will only be administered by staff trained to administer medication, to a child with a written parental authorization and a written order from the child's physician listing the medication(s), dosage and criteria for administration. No medication of any form may be administered without written authorization of both physician and parent or guardian. (FOR PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION THE LABEL ON THE MEDICATION IN THE ORIGINAL CONTAINER MAY BE USED AS THE PHYSICIAN'S AUTHORIZATION). **Prescription medication must be accompanied by the pharmaceutical printout stating the various side effects of the medication.**

All over-the-counter medications must be in the original manufacturer's unopened packaging with the child's name printed clearly on the container. All medications must be given to a staff member to place in a locked cabinet or a locked medicine box in the staff refrigerator out of the reach of children. **Medication must not be placed in the child's lunch box or cubby.**

Topical non-prescription lotions such as sun block, aloe or skin lotion and any other non-medicated substance may be administered to a child only with written authorization of the parent or guardian. The written authorization must include the name of the product and must be in the original unopened container.

Attached is a medication form that you may use if the situation arises. Please keep it in your handbook for future use. Medication forms are available at the center.

Please inform the staff at the Caring Place if you have administered any medication to your child before they have arrived to school. Please inform the staff of the name, dosage and reason for this medication.

**AUTHORIZATION FOR MEDICATION**

I hereby authorize **THE CARING PLACE** to administer the following

Medication to my child, \_\_\_\_\_.

Medication \_\_\_\_\_ Prescription \_\_\_\_\_

Dosage \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Prescription \_\_\_\_\_

Time to be administered \_\_\_\_\_, method to be administered \_\_\_\_\_ and for \_\_\_\_\_ days.

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
(for non-prescription medication)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*  
**WASH HANDS BEFORE/AFTER ADMINISTERING MEDICATION**

**Please initial the following as they are confirmed:**

Date	Correct Child	Correct Medication	Correct Dose	Correct Time	Correct Method

\*This form must be filed in the child's record after the course of the medication has been completed

## FULL DAY PRESCHOOL PAYMENT AGREEMENT THE CARING PLACE

### **PAYMENT FOR FULL TIME ( 5 days/ 9 or less hours daily/Extended Full Time 9-11 hours daily):**

Payment is required at the beginning of each week. If other arrangements are needed, please contact the director.

You are required to pay each week, even if your child is not attending for any reason.

Please review vacation policy in Parent Handbook.

### **PAYMENT FOR FULL DAY ENROLLMENT( Less than 5 days per week):**

Payment is required at the beginning of each week. If other arrangements are needed, please contact the director.

You are required to pay for all the days and/or hours for which you have enrolled your child, whether your child attends or not.

Days may be **added** if care is needed and enrollment permits, however, you must pay an additional fee for this day.

**Payment for services that is three (3) weeks overdue will result in a Termination of Services Notice. Full payment will be due within five (5) days of notice to prevent termination. A meeting with the Director must be scheduled to discuss payment plan.**

If a planned closing falls on one of the scheduled days payment is required. If we close due to severe weather, payment is still required. We are open year-round and remain open in most inclement weather.

### **LATE PICK-UP FEE/EARLY DROP-OFF FEE**

If a child is picked up late from their scheduled time, there will be a \$5.00 fee for each 15 minutes or portions thereof that you are late. This is paid to the staff member at the center at the time. Parents are expected to call and inform staff of tardiness and approximate time of pick-up. Payment is still required even if you call. Calling enables the staff to assure your child that everything is fine.

One (1) verbal warning will be given. A fee of \$5.00 per 15 minutes late will be charged for all tardiness after the verbal warning.

**Termination of Services:** A written notice two weeks in advance of termination of services is required if a family is terminating services. No monetary reimbursement will be given for early termination. .

## ***PART TIME PRESCHOOL PAYMENT POLICY***

**PAYMENT FOR PART TIME PRESCHOOL ONLY:** Payment is expected at the beginning of each month.

Credit is not given for days the child is absent due to illness or family vacation.

Preschool will be closed on the same holidays, vacation days, weather related closures, and in- service release days as Public Schools in Gardner.

PRESCHOOL TUITION IS PAID IN NINE (9) MONTHLY PAYMENTS

September - May

**Payments that are two (2) months overdue will result in a Termination of Services Notice. Payment in full will be due within five (5) days of the notice to prevent termination. A meeting with the Director may be scheduled to discuss the issue.**

### **REFERRAL POLICY**

The Caring Place referral procedure is as follows: Staff and/or parent/guardian may request that a child be referred to an outside agency for reasons including, but not exclusive to: speech, behavior management, developmental issues, health, safety issues. A meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian, staff member and director to discuss the reason for referral and the best agency to refer. A staff member, the Director or the parent/guardian may complete referrals. At no time can a referral be sent without parent/guardian written permission. In some cases the staff member and/or director will be asked to be a member of the referral team. If deemed necessary, the staff and center will work with the referral service for the best interest of the child and family. All meetings held at the center will be documented in writing and a copy will go to the parents and one will stay in the center in the child's file. A follow-up letter will be submitted to parents at a later date. At all times, all materials and referrals remain confidential and staff is available to meet at any time.

### **AGENCIES AVAILABLE FOR REFERRAL\***

Gardner Public School - Special Education Department  
978- 630-4076

Department of Children and Families  
617-748-2000

Child Care Resources  
1-800-660-6269  
[www.sevenhills.org](http://www.sevenhills.org)

Gardner Community Partnership Program  
978-630-3354

\*This is a brief list and in no way conclusive to agencies that may be used or are available for referral. The Caring Place has compiled a booklet of community resources that is at your disposal upon request.

### **REFUND POLICY**

If, in the unlikely event, that a child is unable to adjust to the routine of the center, or the center is not meeting the child's individual needs, a meeting will be scheduled with the Director to discuss this issue. If the Director, staff and parent(s) agree with the results of the discussion, a refund of the deposit will be deducted from the last weekly/monthly payment.

### **THE CARING PLACE RELEASE OF CHILDREN POLICY**

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1. Only the parent, guardian or an authorized adult (18 years of age or older) may pick up your child.
2. Parents or Guardians must complete an authorization form (included in the admission papers) with names of adults that will be authorized to pick up your child. This will be kept on file at the center.\*
3. We must be informed in writing when there is a change in pick - up.
4. Identification (photo required, i.e. license) will be required of any authorized adult before the child will be released.
5. If release to a parent or guardian is prohibited- a restraining order or court documentation must be on file at the center.

\*Parents may add or delete names from the authorization form at any time. This must be done in writing; please contact the Director to change your child's file.

### **SICK CHILD POLICY**

It is so easy for children to transmit colds and other illnesses that we must insist on ***your cooperation*** in regards to **The Caring Place** policy on sick children.

If your child vomited, had diarrhea, earaches, sore throats, extremely running nose or severe cough, or fever you must keep your child home until all symptoms have been gone for **twenty four hours**. **If your child is sent home from the program with any of these conditions they may not return to The Caring Place for at least twenty four hours after the symptoms have subsided and the child is fever free (without medication) for twenty four hours and is able to fully participate in an active day.** This is for your child's comfort as well as the welfare of the other children and staff at the center.

Children may be sent home with a severe cold, cough, running nose, lethargy or discomfort, if the Director discerns that the child is not able to participate fully in the daily activities of the program.

**Parents or guardians must make immediate arrangements to transport their child from the center.**

No child will be admitted with running, red eyes or unexplained rash without a note from the child's doctor stating that they are no longer contagious.

If your child has a contagious disease such as chicken pox or bronchitis they may not be readmitted until completely well. A physician's note may be requested. **Families will be notified in writing and with information on how to protect your child by the program director in the case that children were exposed to a contagious disease.**

Please be reminded that children must remain out of the program for twenty four hours **after** their fever broke, stopped vomiting, started medication, etc.

Staff may refuse admittance to the center if any of the above conditions are present.

This policy is in place to **protect all the children** and staff at **The Caring Place**. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Director or Assistant Director (978-632-5745).

### ***STORM POLICY***

The Caring Place is open year-round. In the event of severe weather, listen to your local radio station or watch the Gardner cable television station Channel 8, for the announcement concerning GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS. If PUBLIC preschool is canceled for Gardner Schools, *part time preschool* is canceled for The Caring Place.

**FULL DAY PRESCHOOL/BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL CLOSING:** If weather conditions are too severe, The Caring Place will close. Please check The Caring Place website: [www.tcpgardner.com](http://www.tcpgardner.com) after **6:15 A.M.** concerning weather related closing. **Early Closing:** In the event that weather conditions deteriorate throughout the day, the program may decide to close early. Parents will be notified by telephone about the impending closing. **Please make sure we have current telephone numbers and emergency numbers in your child's file.**

### ***TERMINATION/WITHDRAWAL POLICY***

A written two-week notice is required for any child that will be **withdrawing** from the program. Payment will be charged until the written notice is received whether the child attends or not.

Children that are **terminated** due to the guidelines below will be assessed a two week payment after the first day of termination.

Termination of services may be determined by the following guidelines:

- a. Chronic tardiness: If, after several warnings, tardiness in picking up your child still presents a problem, a meeting will be arranged with the Director to discuss the issue. If no reasonable solution is determined, termination may result.
- b. In the unlikely event that a child is unable to adjust to the program, becomes a chronic disruption to the program, is a danger to him/herself or the other students enrolled in the program, a meeting will be arranged with the Director to discuss possible solutions. If no reasonable solution is determined, termination will result.
- c. If it is determined by the child's school district, the director and parents that the child has a special need that cannot be serviced by our program referral to an appropriate program will ensue and the child will be terminated from the program. **In this case only, billing will cease on the first day of termination.**
- d. If the program is determined not to meet the individual needs of a child and/or family by the Director, staff and parents, a meeting will be arranged to determine referral services. If no reasonable solution is determined, termination will result.
- e. Non-payment of tuition: The Director will meet with family members or parents to discuss the problem and set up a reasonable payment plan. If no reasonable solution is determined, termination will result. **(Please consult Payment Policy in Parent Handbook).**

#### **FULL DAY/FULL YEAR PRESCHOOL VACATION POLICY**

**\*\*Students enrolled (5) five day 9 or less – 11 hours per day for a full year may request two (2) weeks of non-paid vacation per year.**

**\*\*Students that are enrolled for 4 (four full days ( 9 or less – 11 hours per day year-round) are entitled to a 1 (one) week non-paid vacation per year**

A written notice, two weeks in advance is required, non-compliance to the written notice will result in payment charged for vacation weeks.

**Please note: This policy only is in effect for our Full Day/Full Year families.**

#### **SCHOOL-AGE VACATION POLICY**

**\*\*School-age children that attend for the full year and full time (9 or less – 11 hours daily for the summer) are entitled to a 1 (one) week non-paid vacation per year.** A written notice, two weeks in advance is required.

**Please note: This policy is only in effect for year-round/(full time summer) school age children**

**\*\* Vacation time may only be requested after one full year of enrollment.**

#### **VISITATION POLICY**

The Caring Place has an open-door policy. Parent's may drop in and visit or observe their child and staff at any time. Families that are interested in enrolling their child and

want to view the center may do so without an appointment. However, if you feel that you would like to schedule a specific time to view the center or meet with the Director and staff, an appointment may be made with the Director.

### **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

In the event you elect to withdraw your child from **The Caring Place**, a written notice, two weeks in advance is required to avoid future charges. Included in the letter must be the reason for withdrawal. The letter will be kept on file at the center for future reference. The Director will be available if necessary to discuss the matter.

### **PARENTAL RIGHTS**

A summary of parental rights, as mandated by the Department of Early Education and Care is included. You may view the complete set of regulations by request to the Director.

**Parental Visits:** (7.05 [12]) Parents are encouraged and invited to visit the center while the child is enrolled.

**Parental Input** (7.05 [13]) Parents are invited to present input to the center regarding the program. Suggestions will be considered and a response given to the parent.

**Reports to Parents** (7.05 [14]) A written report will be prepared every six months, for each child who is enrolled. The parents will receive a copy. Parents are encouraged to meet with the staff if there are any concerns.

**Parental Conferences** (97.05 [15]) Individual conferences may be arranged.

**Confidentiality and distribution of records** (7.05 [19]) Information contained in a child's record shall be privileged information and confidential.

The child's parents, upon request, have access to their child's record at reasonable times.

No one shall have access to a child's records unless we have written consent from the parents.

**Charge for copies** (7.05 [20]) 0 The center shall not charge an unreasonable amount for copies of any information contained in the record.

**Amending the child's record** (97.05 [21])

- a. A child's parents have the right to add information, comments.
- b. A child's parents have the right to request deletion of information contained in the record. If the parents are of the opinion that adding information is insufficient, a conference will be scheduled.

**Transfer of records** (7.5 [22]) Upon written request by parents, a center shall transfer the child's record to the parents or designated other.

**Availability of information to the DEEC** (7.05 [24]) The Early Education and Care may inspect information required by its regulations. Materials may not be removed from the center's office. **All information is confidential.**

**Meeting with parents** (7.05 [6]) Parents will meet with the Director prior to admitting the child.

- a. At the meeting, the parents will receive the program statement of purpose, procedures, policies, philosophy and health care requirements. The parents may ask questions and view the Parent Handbook.
- b. The parents and child are encouraged to visit the classroom and program prior to enrollment.

Family involvement is appreciated and welcomed. Some specific ways that families may be involved is through donations from the Caring Place Wish List. Parents or family members may assist with special projects or activities throughout the year.

Families are encouraged to share their cultural heritage through recipes, dress, presentations, books and music.

There are many other ways that a family may help and give of their time, talent, and resources. Please feel free to offer your ideas. We appreciate the continued cooperation and support.

### **THE CARING PLACE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Behavior management and guidance shall be directed to the goal of maximizing the growth and development of the children and for protecting the group and individuals within it. The Caring Place will use behavior management in a consistent, reasonable and appropriate way based on understanding of the individual needs and development of the child.

#### **SPECIFICALLY:**

- a. corporal punishment, including spanking, shall never be used.
- b. no child shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment; humiliation or verbal abuse.
- c. no child shall be denied food as a form of punishment.
- d. no child shall be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.
- e. verbal directions shall be done in a positive manner.
- f. discussion of a child shall be done respectfully at all times with the avoidance of discussion in front of other parents.
- g. when verbal redirection does not affect the desired goal, the child may be asked to take some "time away"; in our center this shall be done by the child sitting in a chair and looking at a book or using a manipulative alone. Staff will speak quietly to the child at this time and until he/she feels ready to rejoin the group activity.

- h. when a child becomes especially disruptive or aggressive, causing a problem to the entire group, the teacher may choose to have the child sit with the Director, where a conversation between the child and Director about the behavior will take place.
- i. A child shall not be re-punished for previous problems.
- j. if a child has a continuing problem, the child's parents/guardians will be notified, either in writing or through a telephone message, and a meeting will be arranged to discuss their child and positive methods to help the child, staff and family through this problem.
- k. if necessary, proper referrals to outside agencies may be recommended.
- l. in severe cases, where the child becomes uncontrollable and a physical threat to him/herself, other children or staff, parents/guardians will be notified to remove the child from the center for the remainder of the day.
- m. The Caring Place has a no-violence policy. Any child that harms another child or staff member physically will be immediately removed from the situation and the parents or guardian will be contacted to remove their child from the program. The child must remain out of the program for the following day. If the aggressive/violent behavior continues, a Director/parent/guardian conference will be schedule. If no agreeable solution is found, or the behavior does not improve, the child may be terminated from the program.

### **Staff**

The Caring Place employs staff that has a background check and a clear CORI (Criminal Offense Record Information) check. Full time teachers have BA degrees in: Early Childhood Education with a certification that includes children with special needs, or a related field of study, or an unrelated field of study and early childhood experience and related college classes, Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. The Curriculum Coordinator possesses a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education. Other staff employed at The Caring Place is at various levels of education, all working on college degrees.

Staff conducts a yearly self-evaluation and receives a written evaluation conducted by the program director.

All staff attend monthly staff meetings, workshops or professional development programs that keep them current in the field of Early Childhood Education, health and safety issues, community resources and working with diverse learners.