



CURIOUS CRITTERS

EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Parent Handbook

2024-2025

PHILOSOPHY

We believe that children thrive in an environment which values their own uniqueness, while providing support and opportunities to grow emotionally, socially and creatively. By building on each child's strengths, interests and curiosities, we guide each child to explore the world around them as well as develop new abilities and form close relationships.

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

All families meeting the admission requirements will need to complete the following enrollment forms before the start of school:

- Emergency Contacts and Release
- Parent Consent for Screenings
- Authorization for Treatment of A Minor
- Health and Developmental History
- Certificate of Immunization Status
- Media Release Form

CHILD RECORDS

All of the child/family records are kept in a locked, confidential file at the site, in accordance with FERPA requirements. Only authorized staff have access to these files. Files are monitored by the teacher to ensure that all required documents are in place and current.

PAYMENT AND FEES

A non-refundable fee of \$40 is due with your enrollment application. This startup fee is for supplies and to reserve your child's spot in the class of your choice. Tuition is DUE on the 1st day of each month. Your grace period will be the first 3 business days of each month. A \$5.00 late fee per day will apply after the first three working days of each month. Payment Method: a check made out to Curious Critters or electronic payment through Brightwheel. Tuition will NOT be refunded for days missed. If not paid within 10 days of the beginning of the month you may be dismissed from the program and won't be able to return.

2 Days/Week: \$200/month

3 Days/Week: \$300/month

ATTENDANCE

Consistent attendance at school is an essential element in the success of children enrolled in Curious Critters Early Learning Center and serves as a benchmark for school readiness. Staff will regularly inform families of the benefits of regular attendance and support families to promote each child's regular attendance.

WITHDRAWAL

You **MUST** give a two-week written notice of withdrawal. If in the middle of the month you will only be granted a partial refund **WITH** a two-week written notice. If for any reason you are unable to pay your monthly tuition, it is better to withdraw your child immediately than to be dismissed from the program due to lack of communication or funds.

RECEIVING AND RELEASING CHILDREN

Program staff will ensure that parental rights are respected unless restricted or limited by a court order. The residential parent/guardian(s) is/are responsible for decisions about day-to-day care and control of their child. The residential parent/guardian will complete the Emergency Information and Release Form listing who is authorized to drop off and pick up their child. When custody of the child is shared by parents, each parent will complete the form indicating release people for the days the child resides with that parent. Staff will receive and release children only to individuals on the Emergency Information and Release Form and will check photo identification. Should a person not on the release list (including non-residential parent) attempt to remove a child from the center, staff will inform the person attempting to pick up child that they are not on the Emergency Information and Release Form. Staff will then notify residential parent/guardian.

Each parent/guardian or authorized individual will be responsible for bringing his/her child to the center and picking the child up at the appointed time. There will be a \$5.00 late fee for every 15 minutes late. If late more than 5 times you may be dismissed from the program. Children must always be brought into the center, not left at the entrance. Parent/guardian(s) or authorized individuals are required by State law to record the time of arrival and departure on attendance record with a signature (not just initials). Other adults who have been authorized to drop off or pick up your child must show photo identification to the Teacher in order for your child to be received and/or released.

If a parent/guardian or authorized adult arrives at the center under the influence of drugs or alcohol to pick up a child, and staff are concerned that the adult appears to be unable to ensure the safety of the child, staff will discourage the adult from assuming responsibility for the child. Staff will suggest adult contacts an individual from the child's Emergency Information and Release Form. If the authorized adult insists on taking the child, staff will call 911 and Child Protective Services will be notified.

VISITATIONS AND VOLUNTEERING

Parents and guardians are welcome and encouraged to visit all center areas used by their child and participate in the program any time that they are in operation. No parent/guardian will have unsupervised access to children or will be left alone with a child other than their own and will not be counted in the staff-child ratio. Parent participation in any center activity will be planned with and supervised by the staff of the center. Other than staff, no one will have unsupervised access to a child without written authorization from the parent (a therapist, for example).

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

According to RCW 26.44.030, Curious Critters Early Learning Center staff must report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the police or child protective services.

ILL CHILD

Children must be kept home if they are unable to participate in daily center activities, including outdoor activities. Children may return to the center when the condition is no longer contagious (either based on health professional's recommendation or as listed in Appendix A.)

MEDICAL POLICIES

- A. A health history is to be submitted by each child's parents upon admission. The health history is to include an immunization history, allergies, and any conditions of the child, which may be adversely affected by the childcare experience, or which may have an adverse effect upon other children.
- B. Children who have been ill and have not been in attendance should not be returned to the center until they are free of a fever, diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours.
- C. Children who arrive at the center with signs of a serious communicable disease or high fever will not be permitted to participate in the program.
- D. Parents will be asked to fill out an Emergency Information and Release and Authorization for Treatment of a Minor. These forms will allow the staff and/or advisory physician to provide emergency medical care for their child.
- E. If a child becomes ill or injured while attending the center, the staff will notify the parents or person(s) listed on the Emergency form.
- F. If a child is injured while in custody of the Center, emergency first aid shall be administered immediately by a qualified staff member (having a valid first aid card). First aid shall be administered according to the Recommended Procedures for Sickness and Accidents

Occurring at School distributed by the Health Services Division of the Department of Social and Health Services and/or the Standard First Aid and Personal Safety Practices published by the American Red Cross. 911 will be used when necessary at the discretion of Curious Critters Early Learning Center Staff.

G. If a child is in need of transport to a health facility, the emergency medical system will be contacted. The parent will be informed as soon as possible of all actions taken to protect and safeguard their child's health. All center personnel shall have tuberculosis screening before beginning work in the Center. All center personnel shall obtain a valid first aid card and infant/child C.P.R. training.

H. Contagious Diseases - If a child contracts a contagious disease (including but not limited to chicken pox, conjunctivitis, mumps, measles, viral infections, lice) or is exposed to one, the parent is to inform us immediately. We will then post a notice to alert other parents. The sick child must remain at home until danger of infecting others is over. Incidents of contagious disease should be reported immediately to the Clallam County Health Department (417-2274).

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICINE POLICY

To ensure the health and safety of all program children and staff, the administration of all prescription and over the counter medications will need to be administered outside of the program.

DISCIPLINE APPROACH

Our objective is to develop a warm, supportive, and responsive environment in which children feel good about themselves and others while they are away from home. The program seeks to enhance children's ability to learn about themselves, their feelings, others, communication, moving and doing, and acquisition of thinking skills. We take a positive approach to guiding behavior, teaching children how to make their needs known appropriately, how to take turns and play with others, and how to resolve differences. The teacher acknowledges children's successes and positive behavior, redirecting when necessary, and helping them find solutions to their problems. We model positive respectful behavior in all of our interactions.

Children in the center shall be treated at all times by staff in a manner that is reasonable, humane, and respectful of the child as an individual. We do not engage in any methods of discipline which are physically or emotionally harsh and abusive to children. Physical punishment, verbal ridicule or shaming are not considered appropriate disciplinary methods in the center at any time. Any form of corporal punishment is not permitted on the premises of the childcare center, including by parents. Staff provides responsible supervision at all times in order to prevent situations in which children may injure another or be injured.

If a child is in a situation in which he/she is causing self-injury, injury or abuse to others, or damage to equipment, our staff may use limited physical restraint or remove the child from the play area. Children return to the play area as soon as they are ready to re-join the group. Children are not placed in total isolation from the group but are in view of the staff at all times. In the event that a child must be physically restrained it will be done in the most limited way possible, and an incident report will be completed and provided to the parent. If a child persists in behavior that interferes with learning or is harmful to the child or others, they will be dismissed from the program with no refund.

EXPULSION & SUSPENSION

To ensure that all children regardless of behavioral challenges have access to high quality early learning that benefits their growth and development. Expulsion and suspension can have detrimental effects on the child's social emotional development and learning outcomes. Curious Critters Early Learning Center will partner with families, consult with specialists, help the child and family obtain additional services as appropriate, and take all possible steps to ensure the child's successful participation in the program.

FOOD SERVICE

It is important to send children to school after feeding them breakfast/lunch depending on class times. Children are able to focus and learn better when they have a full stomach. Make sure what you are giving them before class is nutritious and can help their brains grow, foods with higher sugars can lead to distracted and hyper children. We will provide a small snack each day. Snacks will meet USDA regulations and will have two components, (i.e., fruit or veggie and then a grain or dairy)

ITEMS FROM HOME

We have a variety of toys for the children to use while they are here. We ask that personal toys be left at home unless specified for approved show-n-tell.

CELEBRATIONS

We will celebrate birthdays and holidays at the center. You have the right to refuse participation of birthdays and holidays. If you wish not to attend on holidays, you may be reimbursed for those days with written exemption.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are planned as part of children's learning. Parents will be notified in writing prior to the trip. Each child must have signed consent on Agreement Form in order to participate in field

trips. Preschool children may use public transportation. Parent Volunteers with valid driver's license, current insurance and non-smoking may transport children on field trips. The center will arrange for enough volunteers (including parents) to ensure a ratio of 1:5 for preschool. Parents are welcome to participate.

PARKING LOT

It is your responsibility to bring your child to school safely. Please watch for other cars and children coming and going. Always hold your child's hand when coming and going. Never let your child walk across the parking lot by themselves. All gates must be kept closed and latched after coming and going at all times. Children are not to open the gate for you, that is your job to ensure safety of all children.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

There are a few ways of finding out about inclement weather.

- Listen to KONP Radio station on AM 1450
- Watch the local news channels
- Check the Port Angeles Schools web page at www.portangelesschools.org
- Check our Facebook Page Curious Critters Early Learning Center

We will follow the School Districts Snow Schedule. If there is a closure, we will close too. If there is a TWO-HOUR late start, we may choose to do a two hour late start as well.

DISASTER PLAN

The center has a written disaster plan located in the classroom which addresses staff response for natural disasters and other emergencies. These emergencies include earthquake plan, fire plan, dangerous intruder plan and storm/power outage. Disasters can be scary for children and their families. We want you to know that we will do all we can to keep your child safe and healthy while in our care. Each of our centers has a specific plan which will be implemented in case of a disaster. Each plan has specific steps to take and roles and responsibilities for the staff for each type of disaster.

Depending on the nature of the disaster children may be kept at the center or evacuated to a safe place for shelter. If we do evacuate, our plan will require that we post on door the evacuation location. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible after the disaster.

CLOTHING

Since your child will be involved in a variety of indoor and outdoor activities throughout the day, we recommend that they wear durable, comfortable, play clothes which allow freedom of movement. Children should always bring a coat to school. The weather changes very quickly. Please provide an extra set (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) of clothing for your child in case she/he gets messy or wet. These can be stored in their cubbies.

1. Please provide sturdy shoes, hats, and mittens for your child to wear during the wet and cold weather. Light jackets and hats for the warm weather.
2. Children should not wear open-toed shoes or sandals because we are outside daily. We have found that tennis shoes or sturdy shoes provide more protection for the children's feet.
3. Extra clothes (shirts, pants, socks, undershirts). We do accept donations of outgrown clothes.
4. PLEASE LABEL ALL ITEMS.

ACTIVE SUPERVISION POLICY

Keeping children safe is a top priority in our programs. The Program requires that no child shall be left alone or unsupervised while under their care.

Active supervision requires focused attention and intentional observation of children at all times. Staff position themselves so that they can observe all the children: watching, counting, and listening at all times. Staff will also use their knowledge of each child's development and abilities to anticipate what he/she may do, then get involved and redirect them when necessary. This constant vigilance helps children learn safely.

1. Position Staff:
 - Staff carefully plan where they will position themselves in the environment to prevent children from harm.
 - Staff place themselves so that they can see and hear all the children in their care.
 - Staff make sure there are always clear paths to where children are playing, and eating so they can react quickly when necessary.
 - Staff stay close to children who may need additional support.
 - All field trips will be adequately staffed using a staff and parent volunteer ratio of at least one adult for five children.
2. Scan and Count:
 - Staff are always able to account for the children in their care.

- Staff continually scan the entire environment to know where everyone is and what they are doing.
 - Staff will verbally count the children frequently, especially during transitions times.
 - Staff will keep head count board up to date at all times.
3. Listen:
- Children must be in auditory range at all times.
 - Staff will listen closely to children to identify signs of potential danger.
 - Staff will ensure that all safety auditory devices are in working order at all times (i.e. door alarms or bells that alert staff to the door opening).
 - When staff hear the activation of safety devices, they will do a scan of the environment and conduct a verbal head count.
 - All doors will remain closed while class is in session.
4. Anticipate Children's Behavior:
- Staff will recognize when children might wander, get upset, or take a dangerous risk.
 - Staff will conduct a daily health check on each child to help them anticipate child's behavior.
 - Staff will communicate with the other staff members in the classroom which children might be needing extra support. Staff will also communicate with each other when leaving the floor and/or moving away from the group to help support children in the bathroom area.
 - Only one child will be in the bathroom at any time. Should a second child need to use the bathroom when already occupied, a staff member will position themselves to allow monitoring of the children.
5. Engage and Redirect:
- Staff will engage with children both inside and outside.
 - Staff will offer children support to solve problems.
 - Staff will step in and redirect behaviors that could lead to a child getting hurt.

We are dedicated to providing a warm, nurturing and stimulating environment for your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to talk to the Teachers. Your ideas and opinions are appreciated.

(360) 504-2137

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Facebook Page Curious Critters Early Learning Center