

Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your family to Spots & Stripes Early Learning Center. We look forward to sharing in your child's growth, development and happiness during their early years!

There are few decisions more important for a parent than who will care for and love their children. We will strive to offer a warm and welcoming environment for all families. We are excited to learn with your children and help them to reach so many of their early milestones.

*The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about our policies and services. We hope you find it helpful. After you have read through the handbook, please sign and return the **Receipt of Handbook** located on the last page. If you have any questions or comments about the program, we welcome the opportunity to discuss them with you.*

We hope that Spots & Stripes will be an excellent match for your family!

Sincerely,

*Caitlin & Brandon Mitchell
Owners/Administrator*

Admission

Spots & Stripes Early Learning Center is licensed for 76 children – we welcome children between the ages of 6 weeks and 12 years old. There are no limitations to enrollment. We will make all reasonable and possible accommodations for children with disabilities as specified under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

We are open 12 months a year, Monday through Friday from 6am to 6pm, and Saturday, 5:30am to 9pm. We are closed on Sunday. We are closed for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, The Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the day after Thanksgiving (Black Friday), Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Based on enrollment during and around the holiday season, we may be closed for extra days. We are also closed one day in the spring for center-wide cleaning.

In the event of an emergency closing, all primary phone numbers in each child's record will be called and a guardian will be notified.

Licensing rules, license certificate, results of most recent licensing inspection, notice of enforcement action, stipulations, conditions, exceptions or exemption will be posted on the center lobby bulletin board. Center policies may all be found online or a hard copy can be found in the center lobby.

Before a child is enrolled, an orientation visit with parents and their child is required. Visiting the program allows both parent and child to become comfortable with our environment, staff, and schedule. Several information forms must be completed by the parent/guardian for each child. The Director will give these forms to the parents at the time of registration, and explain what forms are required before the first day of attendance, and which forms are required within 30 days of enrollment.

Children under four (4) years old are required to attend 5 days per week OR pay the 5-day rate and attend as needed. When a child enters 4K, a family is charged **a)** a full day if in attendance more than four hours or **b)** hourly if in attendance for less than 4 hours per day. Children under the age of 12 months will be allowed in center care for a maximum of 11 hours per day. **Scheduling variations may be available. Please call for more information.**

If a child does not arrive at their scheduled time without prior notification of the absence, parents will be called after one hour.

Parents are asked to provide bottles, diapers, wipes, formula, cot sheets and blankets for all children to which it applies. Meals and snacks will be provided to children of all ages, including infant food.

There will be no full-time animals or pets in the center. However, in the event that a pet or animal is being brought to the center for show-and-tell, etc., parents will be notified in advance.

Medical logbooks are updated regularly and kept in each individual classroom.

All staff members of Spots & Stripes are held to strict confidentiality, but are also mandated reporters and are required by law to report any kind of suspected abuse immediately. The program will protect each family's confidentiality and will not share information about a child or a child's family without authorization.

Administrative structure and delegation of administrative authority is as follows: Owner/Director, Assistant Director, Megan Warring, and Terra Buss (infant teacher). If for some reason, none of these authorities are in the center, arrangements will have been made and another staff member will have been delegated as temporary commander.

Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time of the day during hours of operation unless prohibited by a court order. If prohibited, this order must be on file at the center.

Our Philosophy

At Spots and Stripes Early Learning Center, children are our passion, our livelihood and our mission. We believe our children are the future – and only through the collaboration of our teachers, families and community, will we be successful. Our hands-on environment offers a challenging and rewarding atmosphere for children to excel through.

The classrooms are bright, inviting and constantly changing with the attitudes and needs of its students. No two children hold the same learning styles and our teachers respond to that. The experience of our staff provides knowledge through play, modeling and exploring. We believe in asking questions, making mistakes, trying new things and stepping outside the comfort zone.

We value respect. We value honesty. We value teamwork. Our teachers work in partnership with each family to identify individual goals and plans for the children. The play-based curriculum we implement provides a comprehensive program for children of all ages, including our youngest infants and toddlers. We are here to provide love, support and a loud "you did it!" at the end of every milestone – because.. *"Every child needs one person who is absolutely crazy about him."*

Discharge of a child

A two-week written or verbal notice is appreciated if a family would like to terminate their childcare arrangement with the program. Personal days may not be

used within that two-week period. We recognize not every child is fit for every situation. If for any reason, a parent feels the program was unsatisfactory, we will make every effort to attempt to solve the problem.

We reserve the right to terminate care immediately for the following reasons:

- Failure to pay fees
- Failure to submit required forms
- The child is demonstrating hazardous behavior
- The child is struggling to adapt regardless of guidance approaches
- Inappropriate, unwelcome or disrespectful behavior from parents, guardians or family members

The center may terminate care at will.

In the event that a child is asked to leave the center, a meeting will be scheduled and parents will receive a two-week written notice from the Director. There will also be documentation of the behaviors or circumstances leading to the child's dismissal. Assessments and opinions may come from the experiences individual teachers and staff members have had with the child(ren)/family, but ultimately the decision remains with the administration.

All actions will be taken by administration and staff to ensure a positive experience for every child. Parents will be notified before any dismissive action is taken if significant problems arise and/or continue in a classroom. However, once the decision has been made that the center is no longer a correct fit for a child or family, no appeal processes will be allowed.

Fee Payment

Tuition is billed and calculated weekly according the age of the child(ren) and will reflect the prior week's attendance. Parents are encouraged to register for automated tuition payments through our Tuition Express program, but are also welcome to pay with cash or check. If there will be a third party payment, as from an employer or the county, an alternate payment schedule may be arranged and detailed in a contract. There is a \$25 fee for returned checks. Tuition balances can be checked at the log-in computer.

After-Closing Fee: An initial \$30.00 flat fee once 6:00pm is reached, plus an additional \$2 per minute for every minute the child is on the premises past 6:00pm. This fee is per child. Excessive late pick-ups may lead to termination of care.

Each full-time child is allowed twelve (12) "Personal Days" per year, for which no fee is charged when the child is not in attendance. These days are replenished each January 1st and do not carry over into the next year. Personal days are prorated based on a family's enrollment date. Part-time schedules do not receive personal

days. Parents are responsible for payment of any nonattendance days beyond the number of personal days allocated. Parents need to indicate the use of personal days by filling out the “Personal Day Request” form located next to the office door.

Families will be charged tuition on the major holidays we are closed for (with the exception of Black Friday), and in turn, that additional funding will be used to reward our staff members with holiday pay. Your personal days MAY be used on holidays.

Supply Fee: An annual fee of \$20.00 per child, \$35.00 per family of two children, \$50.00 per family of three children will be added to each statement in January. This fee covers items such as paper supplies, cooking materials, classroom supplies, and art supplies.

There may be additional fees for field trips, lunches, etc., but prior notice will be given in each individual classroom.

Families may receive a one-time bonus of \$15 off weekly tuition for referring a new family to the center.

Child Education

See Philosophy.

We offer a play-based educational curriculum that goes beyond a typical “child care center”. We are a learning center provided developmentally appropriate practices for infants through our school age children. We firmly believe we are not babysitters; we are teachers working with you and your child to reach their full potential. Each classroom is responsible for documenting its own set of curriculum and lesson plans. These plans are based on the children’s interests and needs and are submitted and approved by the office administration on a monthly basis.

As part of the learning experience, all toys and educational materials are shared by the children in the program. The program has an ample supply of equipment and materials. We cannot assume responsibility for loss or damage to any personal possessions children bring into the center. It is acceptable for a child to bring a blanket or stuffed toy for rest time. Each child will be assigned a cubby/locker for their coat, boots, extra clothes, art projects, etc. Please check your child’s cubby/locker at the end of each day for projects, notes, and any soiled clothing to be taken home.

Each classroom’s daily schedule will vary based on the age and needs of the children, and can be found posted outside of each classroom. An example of a typical day is as follows:

5:30-8:00am Arrival of Children
 Quiet Activities
 8:00-8:30am Breakfast
 8:30-8:45am Bathrooms/Diapers
 8:45-9:45am Small Group Activities
 (This may include art, music, sensory time, etc.)
 9:45-10:30am Outside Time or Large Muscle Activity
 10:30-11am Bathrooms/Diapers, Story Time, Prepare for Lunch
 11-11:30am Lunch
 11:30-11:45 Clean up, Quiet Activity
 11:45-2pm Nap/Rest Time
 2-2:30pm Waking Up, Bathroom/Diapers, Snack
 2:30-3:15pm Centers
 3:15-4:15p Outside Time or Large Muscle Activity
 4:15-4:30p Bathroom/Diapers, Books & Puzzles
 4:30-5:00p Center Activities
 5:00-5:15p Snack
 5:15-6pm Quiet Activities, Pick-up

Evening Care on Saturdays

6:00-6:30pm Quiet Activities
 6:30-7:00pm Supper
 7:00-7:15pm Clean Up, Bathrooms
 7:15-7:45pm Large Group Activity
 (This may include an art project, reading time, sensory, etc. During the months with later daylight hours, outside time may also be an option.)
 Bedtimes may begin based on each child's individual schedule.
 7:45-9:00pm Small Group Activities, Pick-ups
 (This may include a movie, board games, etc.)

There are two playgrounds outside – a toddler playground (up to age 2 ½) and a preschool playground (ages 2 ½ and up). Each playground is equipped with developmentally appropriate equipment: sandboxes, push toys, trikes, climbers, chalk, etc.

We offer developmentally appropriate programming for children of all ages, making sure their needs and interests dictate the intentional planning in each room.

Infant & Toddler Planning

Self-esteem & Positive Self Image

- *Group activities such as games and songs where children's names are used*
- *Use of the child's name when speaking to the child*
- *Display of children's art work with names or of photographs of children at a child's eye level*

- *Activities involving books, pictures and other authentically representative learning materials*
- *Dramatic-play activities involving the use of mirrors, multi-cultural dolls*

Social Interaction

- *Cooperative play experiences that give children opportunities to interact*
- *Mealtime conversation (during bottle or table food feedings)*
- *Proximity to one another outside of cribs*

Self-expression & Communication Skills

- *Non-directed creative-art experiences*
- *Asking questions to elicit facial responses from children*
- *Activities which will allow a child to enlarge his/her listening*
- *Use of stories, poems, nursery rhymes, picture and child-made books*
- *Language development activities*
- *Auditory discrimination games and activities*
- *Meal time conversation*
- *Creative Expression*
- *Wide range of music activities*
- *Exploration of shape, color and texture*

Large & Small Muscle Development

- *Use of large muscle equipment such as wooden hollow blocks, balls, climbing*
- *Facilitate the understanding of how our bodies move and that develop coordination, balance, strength*
- *Use of equipment and materials requiring manipulative skill such as ribbons, grabbing toys in front of them, etc.*

Intellectual Growth

- *Science activities*
- *Sensory experience such as tactile, auditory, smelling activities*
- *Discrimination activities involving symbols, shapes, colors, serration, categorizing, matching, etc. Language development activities*
- *Opportunities to explore the environment and find developmentally appropriate challenges*

Literacy

- *Reading to children*
- *Use of flannel board stories*
- *Puppets*

- *Language development activities*
- *Labeling items in the classroom*

Preschool & School-Age Planning

Self-esteem and Positive Self Image

- *Group activities such as games and songs where children's names are used*
- *Use of the child's name when speaking to the child or participating in group activities*
- *Display of children's art work with names or of photographs of children at a child's eye level*
- *Activities involving books, pictures and other authentically representative learning materials relating to minorities as well as majority enrollment of the community, and cultural, ethnic and sexual difference*
- *Dramatic-play activities involving the use of mirrors, multi-cultural dolls, dress up clothes representing both sexes and other props*
- *Thoughtful verbal recognition of the child's ideas, expressions and contributions*

Social Interaction

- *Social-dramatic play such as housekeeping, store, truck or block role enactments such as astronaut, doctor, police officer*
- *Self-selected cooperative play experiences which give children opportunities to interact*
- *Mealtime conversation*
- *Selected activities in small groups as such cooking, science, nature, circle games.*

Self-expression and Communication Skills

- *Non-directed creative-art experiences*
- *Asking questions to elicit responses from children*
- *Encouraging children to participate in discussions and give attention to each speaker, including, planning for the day, field trips, etc.*
- *Providing opportunities throughout the day for children to converse and share ideas with others*
- *Activities which will allow a child to enlarge his/her listening and speaking vocabulary*
- *Use of stories, poems, nursery rhymes, picture and child-made books*
- *Language development activities*
- *Auditory discrimination games and activities*
- *Labeling of objects, feelings, actions, expressions*
- *Puppet play, flannel boards*
- *Creative dramatics*

- *Meal time conversation.*

Creative expression

- *Wide range of music, dance and movement activities*
- *Sand, water and block play*
- *Non-directive use of non-limiting materials such as clay, paint, crayons*
- *Woodworking*
- *Involvement with a variety of tools, materials, processes and techniques which involve the exploration of line, shape, color and texture*

Large and Small Muscle Development

- *Use of large muscle equipment such as wooden hollow blocks, balls, climbing equipment, wheel toys, etc.*
- *Group activities (musical or non-musical) involving physical activity such as marching, skipping, jumping, dancing, physical fitness activities, tumbling, running*
- *Games that facilitate understanding of how our bodies move and that develop coordination, balance, strength, endurance*
- *Use of equipment and materials requiring manipulative skill such as puzzles, small interlocking blocks, peg and lacing boards, etc.*

Intellectual growth

- *Science activities*
- *Sensory experience such as tactile, auditory, smelling activities*
- *Discrimination activities involving symbols, shapes, colors, serration, categorizing, matching, etc.*
- *Reading and math readiness activities*
- *Language development activities*
- *Practical life experiences such as putting on- clothes, tying shoes, sweeping, creating order in the room*
- *Activities involving problem solving and memory skills*
- *Opportunities to explore the environment and find developmentally appropriate challenges*

Literacy

- *Reading to children*
- *Use of flannel board stories*
- *Puppets*
- *Reading readiness activities such as letter, name, color and shape recognition*
- *Language development activities*

- *Book making activities*
- *Journaling and other writing opportunities*
- *Labeling items in the classroom*

We will never refuse to enroll a child based on gender, race, religion or disability; if it is new or unfamiliar, we are always ready and willing to learn.

Mealtime prayers, songs, stories or displays of religious kinds may be present during holidays, but not on a daily basis. Cultural diversity is expressed in the classrooms through books, music, dolls, artwork, etc.

During the summer months, classrooms may choose to have water days. Multi-teacher supervision will always be present for safety during water activities.

The older classrooms may take occasional walking field trips to the elementary or middle school gyms and/or playgrounds. Each trip will always be supervised by a teacher(s) and all groups will remain in ratio.

Transitions in the classroom are limited for the well-being of the children. They are used sparingly and smoothly when necessary to progress the day.

To compensate for low staffing and child attendance in the early mornings and late evenings, larger age groups of children may be combined.

Communication

Our teachers will maintain constant communication with parents through weekly-posted lesson plans, daily “What I Did Today” sheets, monthly newsletters and conferences held twice a year (or more regularly at a parent’s request).

The director will keep families updated with upcoming events, schedule changes, and any important information through the parent bulletin board near the center’s entrance.

We welcome suggestions, comments, and concerns at all times – either through the director or classroom teachers.

Child Guidance

Our program promotes a positive approach to managing the behavior of all children.

We believe in guidance, not discipline, to help children gain self-control, self-esteem, and respect for the rights of others. We create clear limits and expectations in each classroom to ensure children know what behavior is acceptable and what behavior is unacceptable. We use positive and responsive language that is respectful towards children, labels and validates their feelings, and clarifies rules and responsibilities.

We model the appropriate behavior we wish to see from the children and follow that with positive reinforcement, in hopes that said behavior will continue. The basic procedure used in all classrooms is positive redirection; redirecting unacceptable behavior to an acceptable alternative.

We understand that there will be times when a child will become distraught, fussy or won't quit crying. Our first action in these situations will be an attempt to determine the cause of the distress. It may be related to a basic need such as hunger or comfort, or it may be that the child just needs some extra time and attention. We understand that crying is normal, and that all babies will have times when they cannot stop crying. At these times, we will stay calm and will do whatever we can to soothe your child. Sometimes this may mean just allowing the child to cry for a few minutes and then trying again. However, there also may be times when we need your advice or assistance, and we won't hesitate to call you if we feel that it is necessary.

A "time away" may be used as a last resort when a pattern of negative behaviors is unable to be broken. It is an opportunity for a child to leave a stressful environment or situation with the comfort of a teacher and regroup. In circumstances that a parent or teacher is concerned with a child's continual negative behavior, a plan can be created through the program and families to address the problem. Time-outs or time away will never exceed five minutes or be used with a child under the age of three.

We implement a behavior tracking system that monitors chronic minor and major behavioral challenges in the classrooms. The system clearly lays out expectations for behavior, intervention plans for continuous behavior problems, and a schedule for suspensions and/or expulsions if necessary.

Many behavior issues happen when children are transitioned. To try to avoid this stress in the classroom, children be always be notified when a transition is coming (Ex: "A few more minutes of play and then it will be time to clean up" or "When we are finished with puzzles, it will be time to go outside") To ensure children will not be waiting in line for long periods of time, teachers can use songs, chants, and or other small games to keep the interest of their group until everyone is ready to proceed.

Classrooms are arranged purposefully with quiet activities placed on the opposite direction of more vocal or noisy activities. Materials are developmentally appropriate and rotated routinely to keep the attention of the children.

In the event that a child's behavior cannot be solved through the efforts of the classrooms teachers and administration alone, the parents may be asked to become involved in the hopes of finding a solution.

Actions that may be psychologically, emotionally or physically painful, discomforting, dangerous or potentially injurious are prohibited. Examples of prohibited actions include all of the following: spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking, slapping, twisting, throwing, or inflicting any other corporal punishment on the child, verbal abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family, physical restraint, binding or tying the child to restrict the child's movement or enclosing the child in a confined space such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle.

No child will ever be shamed, frightened, humiliated, or subjected to physical or verbal abuse by any staff member at any time.

Contingency Plans

Written plans for responding to all emergencies (fire, tornado, missing child, etc.) will be posted in each classroom with a map. Monthly fire drills will be practiced, along with tornado and severe weather drills in the months of April through October. Each classroom will also have its own first aid kit, as well as emergency supplies (flashlights, radio, snack, etc.) for power outage or other disaster.

In the event that an emergency evacuation would be required, the children will be escorted to a designated building and remain there until the center has been cleared as safe to return. Employees will bring along classroom binders equipped with emergency phone numbers and instructions for each child. Examples of an emergency evacuation would be loss of electricity, loss of heat, threats to the building or its occupants, etc. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately and children will remain with staff until they can be picked up.

In the event of a fire, all children will be evacuated to the Bloomer Middle School. In the event of a tornado, all children will be placed in the hallways and interior walls of the center, away from windows and exterior walls.

In the event of a missing child, the center will be put on immediate lock-down and the child's guardians and/or parents will be called immediately. Classrooms shall stay in ratio and extra staff members and administration will search all rooms of the building, as well as the playgrounds. If necessary, emergency services may be called.

In the event of loss of services, such as heat, electricity, or power, administration will work to restore the service. If this cannot be completed within 90 minutes, the center will be forced to close for the safety of its children and staff members. Parents, guardians or emergency contacts will be called and asked to pick up their children immediately.

Both in an emergency and in an everyday situation, if someone other than a child's custodial parent or guardian will be picking up the child from the center, prior authorization must be given in writing. Teachers will always check the identification of the person picking up the child. In the event that an authorized pick-up person appears impaired by drugs or alcohol, the child will not be released from the center and the emergency contact will be called. No child will be released to a person who is not a parent or guardian unless previously authorized.

Children are accounted for at all times of the day. When children arrive at and depart from the center, they are to be checked in and out both at the computer in the lobby and each individual classroom's sign in/out sheet.

A motor vehicle is immediately available at the center at all times in case of an emergency or the Bloomer Ambulance service is available within ten minutes.

We make every effort to create a safe environment for children. A first aid kit is kept in the office, kitchen, and in classrooms. However, accidents do occasionally happen with small children. In the event of a minor child or staff injury, appropriate first aid measures will be taken and a small incident report will be filled out. Both the parent (at the time of pick-up) and the director will be required to sign and receive a copy of the incident report.

If a child is injured while in our care and the injury requires medical attention, you will be contacted to pick up your child. If, for some reason we cannot reach you, the center will seek the appropriate medical attention. It is crucially important that all emergency numbers and medical information be kept current at all times. If you need to make changes to the information listed on the enrollment form, please contact the Center Director.

In an emergency, when immediate attention is needed, the Director will contact 911 and call for an ambulance to be sent, and then immediately call the parents. After the rescue squad has arrived, it becomes the paramedics responsibility to decide the next course of action. If they decide your child needs emergency treatment, they will take the child to the medical facility as indicated on the child enrollment form, and the parent will be responsible for the medical charges. The child's complete file containing medical history as well as emergency medical permission forms will be taken along.

Any injury requiring medical attention shall be reported by the Director to the Licensing Specialist within 48 hours of its occurrence. All staff are trained in CPR and First Aid.

Spots & Stripes Early Learning Center does not carry a general health and accident insurance policy covering children. Parents are responsible for all medical costs incurred with respect to their child/children while attending our program.

In the event that the Director or Assistant Director cannot be reached and there is an emergency, Bonnie Mitchell will act as an emergency contact and can be available within five minutes. Her contact information will be posted in all of the classrooms.

Health Care

SIDS

Each child under one year of age shall be placed to sleep on his or her back in a crib unless otherwise specified in writing by the child's physician. The child shall be allowed to assume the position most comfortable to him or her when able to roll over unassisted. Sheets or blankets used to cover the child shall be tucked tightly under the mattress and shall be kept from the child's mouth and nose.

Under no circumstances may a parent bring a sick child to the center if the child shows any signs of illness, or is unable to participate in the normal routine and care program.

Symptoms requiring removal of a child from care:

- A fever of 101° or higher
- Diarrhea (three or more)
- Vomiting
- Contagious skin or eye infection
- Profuse bodily discharge of any kind

In the event that a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent will be notified and expected to pick up the child within one hour. If the parents cannot be reached or have not arrived after one hour, the emergency contact will be called and asked to come pick up the child.

Children will be able to return to the center the next morning, regardless of the time they were sent home; so long as they are not showing any of the symptoms listed above and are able to participate in the typical routine of their classroom. If a child receives antibiotics, he or she may be able to return to the center if he/she has been free of other symptoms listed.

Parents must notify the center immediately if their child has come into contact with a communicable disease. The center will then notify the other parents in the child's classroom with a posted note, keeping the confidentiality of the ill child.

Mayo Clinic Health Center in Bloomer will serve as a source of emergency medical care.

Parents are required to complete health related forms including immunizations, physical exams and health histories for each child. Parents will also provide any medication needed by the child, including over-the-counter and prescription medicine. Written authorization is required for us to administer any medication. All medication will be stored away in a locked compartment away from the children. We cannot administer any medication that is not in its original container, is expired or is without an updated and signed medical form (found in each classroom).

We maintain high cleanliness and hygiene standards at our center. Our staff sanitizes and disinfects the diaper-changing table after each child. All toys and equipment are sanitized on a daily and/or weekly basis. Crib sheets for infants will be washed weekly unless needed more frequently. Cot sheets and blankets for toddlers through preschoolers will be sent home to be washed at the end of each week unless needed more frequently. We practice frequent hand washing both as a staff and with children of all ages; always before and after all meals and toileting, as well as many times throughout the day.

Each teacher is responsible to log in their classroom's medical book in the event of an injury, medication distribution, bite or if ever an event occurs that the staff feels should be documented. The director will review log books every 3-6 months.

If a dose of medication is ever missed or given incorrectly, the parent or guardian will be contacted immediately and is responsible for the actions from that point forward.

Wet and soiled diapers are to be changed promptly. Children under 2 years of age must be changed every two hours. Soiled diapers are wrapped inside a latex glove used during changing and placed in the garbage can with the lid closed. Wet and soiled clothing, sheets, blankets, etc. is placed in a plastic bag and sent home with the child.

Latex gloves are used when changing soiled diapers or during interactions with blood among other situations. These gloves are wrapped inside each other and disposed in the garbage can with the lid closed.

As children transition classrooms, it is the responsibility of the teachers to verbally or in writing relay important confidential information regarding a child's special health needs to everyone responsible for the child's care.

Biting

Biting can be one of the most frustrating and prevalent problems in a childcare setting. Even in a quality program, biting can and will occur where infants and toddlers are being cared for. Every child and situation is unique and some may bite more than others.

Children bite for many reasons and as soon as a child begins to show behaviors as a biter, our staff will address the issue and attempt to extinguish the behavior quickly. It can be frustrating for the parents of a child who has been bitten, however, confidentiality is practiced with biting and we are unable to tell a parent who has bitten their child.

There is no "cure" for biting but our teachers diligently work to maintain a consistent routine, develop and maintain rituals, and find effective ways of calming children after energetic activity or during transition times (using calming music, relaxed/calming physical contact, etc.) This may serve to relieve the conditions that lead to biting episodes. Experts also recommend avoiding grouping biters and previous victims together to the extent possible.

Biting can be difficult to stop but there are things that can be taught to curb the occurrence. Emphasis will be placed on teaching toddlers to develop and use their expressive communication skills instead of biting, so that they can learn to "use words" to express their feelings. For example, if another child is taking a toy away from a child who has a history of biting, our teachers can teach the potential biter to say "stop," "mine," etc., and tell the child "We don't bite people, we bite food" or "It hurts when you bite".

Most children soon stop biting. After all efforts have been exhausted to try to control the behavior, it may seem necessary to remove the biting child from the program, either temporarily or permanently.

Nutrition

Food service personnel will take part in a four-hour training and orientation.

The program provides breakfast from 8-8:30am, lunch at 11:00am, an afternoon snack around 2:00pm, and a late night snack at 5:00pm for all children who are able to eat table food. On Saturday evenings, supper is also served at 6:30pm. Teachers sit at the table and eat with the children, modeling good nutrition, manners and eating habits. Infants are fed on their own individual schedules (the center provides baby food and snacks; because of the many different needs, habits and preferences of infants, the parents are asked to provide formula/breast milk).

Monthly menus are posted on the parent board near the center entrance, as well as inside each classroom. If a child has food allergies, the center must be notified in writing. Each meal and snack served shall meet the US department of Agriculture Child Care food program minimum meal requirements.

Menus for meals and snacks provided by the center shall:

1. Be posted in the kitchen and in a conspicuous place accessible to parents.
2. Be planned at least one week in advance, dated and kept on file for 3 months.
3. Be available for review by the department.

4. Include diverse types of foods.

Any changes in a menu as planned shall be recorded on the copies of the menu kept on file and posted for parents. Enough food shall be prepared for each meal so that second portions of vegetables or fruit, bread and milk are available to children.

Cooks, staff members, child care workers and substitutes having direct contact with the children shall be informed about food allergies and other allergies of specific children. Staff shall sit at the table with the children during mealtime. Meals shall be served with time allowed for socialization.

If a child requires a special diet due to medical or health reasons, a written doctor's note is required. If provided, the center will make arrangements for the meals. If a child requires a special diet for personal reasons other than his/her health, the parent is then required to supply the meals for the child.

Parents are welcome to bring special treats or snacks for birthdays and special occasions; however, due to the increase in childhood allergies, we ask that these treats are store bought or brought with a list of ingredients. Please check with your child's individual teacher(s) concerning classroom allergies or food sensitivities. If snacks are provided by parents for all of the children, a record of the snack served shall be posted in an area accessible to parents.

The kitchen will be cleaned thoroughly on a daily basis and a deep-clean will take place at least once a month.

Leftover food is stored in the refrigerator for a maximum of three days and then disposed of.

Transportation

Field trip transportation and shuttling to and from the schools (for 4K and St. Paul's Catholic School students) will be provided by the Bloomer School District bussing company. In the months where weather permits, children will be walked to the elementary school by a staff member. In the months where weather does not permit, children will be transported in a pre-approved vehicle by a pre-approved staff member. After school, children will ride the bus to our second licensed location, the Fountain Church, located at 1320 N Industrial Dr, Bloomer, where our staff member will meet them.

Teachers shall maintain an attendance list of all children attending a field trip or using the bus to go to and from school. To ensure no child is left unattended in the vehicle, head counts will be taken before and after children enter the vehicle by the teacher transporting them to the bus. If all children are not accounted for, staff will be expected to walk the bus and double check and document findings.

Parents will be notified at least one week in advance of an upcoming field trip including date, time and destination. Parents will be expected to complete permission form and submit it to the office, allowing their child to attend.

In a field trip setting, teachers shall be equipped with the child's emergency information and a first aid kit. Teacher to child ratios will always be maintained on field trips, if not held to higher standards. If at any point, a child is missing, the director shall be immediately notified and parents/guardians will be called. At the end of a field trip, teachers will do a thorough inspection of the bus to look for children and belongings.

Teachers are to take at least one cell phone with them on all field trips to ensure transportation goes smoothly and reaches its destination. The Bloomer Elementary and Middle School staff will contact the center in the event that a child is missing at a before or after school drop off.

The driver in charge of transportation will have experience driving a school bus, be over 21 years of age and have a copy of his/her driver's license on file at the center. We maintain all safety regulations similar to the Bloomer School District bussing company.

**Spots & Stripes ELC
Receipt of Handbook**

I verify I have received an orientation if needed to the program and the Spots & Stripes Early Learning Center Parent Handbook. I have read and agree to abide by all of the regulations, policies, and procedures. I understand that this handbook is a guideline and it should not be construed as a contract between SSELC, parents/guardians, or any other person. Spots & Stripes is committed to reviewing its policies continually and reserves the right to change policies at any time.

Parent/Guardian

Date