

EarlyVentures Learning Center



Handbook

EarlyVentures Learning Center
201 Orchard St.
Northfield, MN 55057

507-645-1216 (Butterfly Room)
507-645-1215 (Firefly Room)
507-645-1248 (Ladybug Room)
507-645-1222 (Caterpillar and Bee Rooms)



COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION
Learning and Recreation For Life

Northfieldschools.org

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CHILD CARE PROGRAM PLAN

Philosophy

EarlyVentures Learning Center will provide professional, quality care to meet each child's physical, emotional, social and developmental needs while in our center. We do this by allowing the child space to grow, to be themselves, and to enjoy their time with other children and staff. We strive to provide the best possible care your child can receive.

Goals

It is the goal of the center to provide a warm, loving, healthy, safe and stimulating environment for children while under supervision of staff all times. All aspects of the child's development are considered as their needs are met. We strive to keep parents actively involved in the care of their own children while pursuing their own goals. We invite parents to review our program plans at any time and contribute their ideas to the program supervisor.

Enrollment Policy

EarlyVentures Learning Center is licensed to care for 68 children. The center is licensed for 14 infants, 14 toddlers, and 40 preschoolers. An infant is a child at least 6 weeks old but less than 16 months, a toddler is a child at least 16 months but less than 33 months, and a preschooler is a child who is at least 33 months old but has not yet attended the first day of kindergarten.

Days and Hours of Operation

EarlyVentures Learning Center operates 52 weeks per year, Monday through Friday. The center is open daily from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM. Our center will be CLOSED on the following days:

Labor Day	New Year's Day
Thanksgiving Day	Memorial Day
Friday after	July 4 th
Thanksgiving	At least 2 days before the start of the summer session
Christmas Eve	One week before the start of the fall session
Christmas Day	
New Year's Eve	

EarlyVentures Learning Center reserves the right to close on days preceding or following these holidays. Release day opening decisions will be made based upon a minimum child enrollment and school district policies.

Program Options

The childcare center is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services to care for children ages 6 weeks to the first day of kindergarten. It is staffed by a combination of site leaders, teachers, assistant teachers, and aides to meet required staff/children ratios at all times. The center offers four separate classrooms to meet the diverse needs of EarlyVentures children.

INFANT: (Ages 6 weeks to 15 months) A loving atmosphere where intellectual and physical development is stimulated with music, literacy, language, muscle development, and exploration of the environment using age-appropriate equipment. A staff ratio of at least one adult to 4 children is maintained.

TODDLER: (Ages 16 months to 35 months) The curriculum is designed to cover areas of physical activities, language arts, creative thinking, socialization, communication, and self-sufficiency skills with emphasis on exploration and discovery. A staff ratio of at least one adult to 7 children is maintained.

PRESCHOOL: (Ages 36 months until the first day of kindergarten) Opportunities are provided for large muscle activities, dramatic play, community exploration, and socialization as well as the above named activities. A staff ratio of at least one adult to 10 children is maintained.

RATIOS

EarlyVentures follows the Department of Human Services Child Care Center Rule 3 guidelines for staff to student ratios.

Infants will never exceed a 1:4 ratio

Toddlers will never exceed a 1:7 ratio

Preschoolers will never exceed a 1:10 ratio

FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Fees

EarlyVentures is a non-profit program operating on revenue collected from tuition. This program is not funded from the ISD #659 general fund. Parents must contract with EarlyVentures Learning Center for services needed and follow a weekly payment schedule. We reserve the right to drop a child from the program when payment is delinquent. Families will also be responsible for any and all additional collection fees accumulated while recovering monies on delinquent accounts. The rates vary depending on age and schedule options.

Registration Fee

There is a non-refundable registration fee which must be submitted at the time of initial enrollment. There is also a registration fee for each school year session and each summer session. Registration fees will be discounted for those that are also enrolled in Hand in Hand preschool. The fees help defray the cost of processing enrollment forms and immunization records, and most importantly, for the center's supplies.

Payment

Payment of your childcare account must be made in full each week. EarlyVentures strongly encourages all families to consistently check their accounts online. Paper statements will only be mailed one time per year unless otherwise requested in writing to the Ventures main office. Voucher co-pays are due bi-monthly on the 1st and 15th of each month. Parents on childcare assistance will be responsible for any and all costs not covered by vouchers.

SICK CHILD/ABSENCE

Please notify EarlyVentures if your child is ill or will be absent. Parents will be billed for all scheduled days. Please remember if your child is at EarlyVentures they will need to be well enough to participate in all activities including outdoor play.

CHANGE OF SCHEDULES

A permanent change of schedule requires a two week written notice and a \$50 change of schedule fee will be charged to your account.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Parents must sign their child(ren) in each morning upon arrival in order to transfer responsibility of care from the parent to authorized EarlyVentures staff. Once the child is signed in, parents may bring the child to the group, allowing for EarlyVentures staff to facilitate the parent's departure.

Upon departure, parents must sign the child(ren) out and let the EarlyVentures staff know that he or she is leaving. Once the child is signed out, he or she is no longer the responsibility of EarlyVentures staff. All children must be picked up by 6:00 p.m.

If you will be late, you MUST notify EarlyVentures. Parents will be charged \$1 for every minute late according to the classroom's clock. Multiple late pick-ups can result in termination of care.

Late Pick-Up

EarlyVentures closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. as staff's day end at this time as well. All children MUST be picked up by 6:00 p.m. If you will be late, you MUST notify EarlyVentures. Parents will be charged \$1 for every minute late according to the classroom's clock. (If you receive childcare assistance, you will be personally responsible for this charge.) Every attempt will be made to contact parents and authorized persons. 911 will be notified at 6:30 p.m. if a child remains at the center. Multiple late pick-ups can result in termination of care.

EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURES

Emergency Closing or Early School Dismissal

- If school is closed for the day because of severe weather, EarlyVentures will be closed that day.
- If school has a delayed starting time, EarlyVentures will have a two-hour late start time of 8:30 a.m.
- If school is dismissed early, EarlyVentures will close at 2:30 p.m.

Notification

- Kare TV (Channel 11)
- KMSP TV (Channel 9)
- KSTP TV (Channel 5)
- WCCO TV (Channel 4)
- WCCO Radio (830 AM)

Online Alerts

- Kare 11 School Alert- On this site, you can sign up for email alerts indicating when your district is closed.
- KMSP (Fox 9 News)- School Closings
- KSTP 5- School Alerts

WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM

Once registration forms are received, we require a two week notice, as your spot has been secured and staff have been put into place. Written notification of withdrawal from our program must be received 2 weeks in advance. If there is no notification, a two-week change will automatically be assessed. These costs will appear on the final bill.

PARENT INFORMATION

Important parent communication will be sent via email, Precious Status, or as a hard copy that can be found in your child's cubby. There may also occasionally be signs or posters advertising upcoming early childhood or family events. Please make sure to check cubbies daily.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children will be released only to their parent/guardian or authorized pick-up indicated on your emergency card or registration form. Staff will ask for picture I.D. from persons not familiar to them. If anyone other than the authorized persons will be picking up your child, you must turn in a signed and dated note to staff PRIOR to the scheduled pick-up time.

ENROLLMENT FORMS

EarlyVentures must have the following forms on file for each child:

1. EarlyVentures Contract for Services
2. Emergency Card
3. Immunization Record
4. Health Care Summary (completed by your child's doctor)
5. Infant Dietary Instructions
6. Health Updates

*Children may not attend EarlyVentures until all forms are completed and up-to-date.

It is your responsibility to keep us informed of changes in your child's file. (i.e. changes in employment, phone number, address, authorized contacts, etc.) Please submit these changes in writing.

CONFERENCES AND TOURS

Parents may request a conference with either the Ventures coordinator or the site leaders before their child is enrolled in the center. The conference will help familiarize families with the program, EarlyVentures policies and procedures, and the center's space, including their child's classroom. Staff will also ensure that the family's paperwork is complete and up-to-date as well as answer any questions.

Conferences on the child's progress in the program will be offered to the parent twice a year. A written assessment will be provided that will report on a child's academic, physical, social, and emotional development. These conferences may be done by phone if it is more convenient for the family.

OUTSIDE CHILD CARE SERVICES

While EarlyVentures cannot prohibit employees from providing child care services outside our typical program and hours, it is strongly discouraged. EarlyVentures will not be responsible for any acts or omissions of an EarlyVentures employee should they provide families with outside services.

BIRTHDAYS

Families are more than welcome to provide a treat to share with the class to celebrate their child's birthday. Please let EarlyVentures staff know in advance, though, so they can plan accordingly. Any food that is brought in as a treat **MUST** be factory packaged and must not have been already opened. Sending a birthday treat is **NOT** necessary.

In order to be fair to all children, we request parents handle party invitations outside of the program. It is **NOT** EarlyVenture's staff responsibility to hand out invitations.

INSURANCE

EarlyVentures Learning Center is insured through the ISD #659 insurance carrier. The center does not operate any vehicles for the transportation of children. Staff is not authorized to transport children in their personal vehicles under any circumstances.

CHILDREN'S ATTIRE

Children should be adequately dressed for indoor and outdoor activities EVERY day. Winter outdoor play will require jacket, snow pants, boots, hat, and mittens or gloves. All belongings should be labeled with the child's name. A lost and found is available within the childcare center for parents to check periodically. EarlyVentures Learning Center will not be responsible for lost or missing items.

An extra set of clothing should be sent with children or left at the center. All items children bring should be labeled with the child's name and left in the child's cubby. Dirty clothes will be sent home each day. When extra clothes or winter outdoor clothes are needed and are not available, parents will be notified and required to bring them.

All children in diapers will be checked each hour and changed as needed. Parents are required to provide diapers and wipes for their child. Parents will be billed \$1.00 per diaper change when diapers have not been provided from home.

Please have shoes at the center each day for your child. No boots, stocking feet, slippers, flip-flops, or bare feet in the classrooms.

HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATION

A medical record will be maintained for each enrolled child. A health care summary and immunization record must be on file for each child. These forms must be completed and turned in to EarlyVentures BEFORE the child can attend. The center will provide all necessary forms that must be signed by a physician. Children moving up to the next classroom must have immunization records updated by their physician. Children under 24 months must have yearly exams.

MEDICATION POLICY

Whenever a child requires oral or surface medication, including over the counter medications, parents must fill out a written authorization form. A separate form is needed for each medication. The form includes: child's name, name of drug, quantity to be dispensed, time to be dispensed, doctor's authorization, and any special handling needed. Medication must be in the original container with legible information. Any container that does not meet these requirements will be returned to the parents. The staff member who administers the medication will indicate the date and time a medication was given, print their name, and sign the form. These records will be kept in the child's file. Written authorization is required by parents for the administration of syrup of ipecac.

CHILD CARE CENTER HEALTH POLICY

Diapering procedures: Each child must have their own supply of diapers. The center has extras only for emergencies. The following is the diapering procedure that we follow:

- Put clean paper on the changing table.
- Wet 3 or 4 paper towels, if the parent has not supplied the child with diaper wipes.
- Wash the child's bottom and apply a fresh diaper.
- Dispose of the diaper and paper in the diaper pail.
- Take the child to the sink and wash their hands and face with warm running water and soap.
- Dry the child.
- Staff must wash and dry their own hands after each child with warm running water and soap.
- Note on the chart: child's name, time of day, wet, dry or BM.

Toileting: Children must be fully potty trained and able to use a typical toilet independently by the time they reach four years of age. Should a child that is four years or older have a poop accident, parents will be called and asked to pick up their child. Should a child that is four years or older have a pee accident, they will be asked to change in to their spare set of clothes. Soiled clothes will be put in a plastic bag for parents to take home. Should children that are four years or older have more than one accident in a day, parents will be called and asked to pick up their child. If a child continues to have frequent accidents on a daily basis, EarlyVentures may terminate care until the child is completely potty trained. Written warning will be given to parents before this action takes place. Children may not move up to an upstairs preschool room unless they are fully potty trained.

Medical Conditions: Lesions, open wounds, potentially infectious sores, or skin conditions that may discharge on a child's body will need to remain covered while they are attending childcare. This policy is strongly enforced to protect others from the potential of exposure to bodily fluids. EarlyVentures will change bandages or re-apply them as necessary. Parents may be required to supply bandages or dressings that are needed.

Naps and Rest: Infants will be placed on their backs for all naps. Parents that do not wish to have their child placed on his or her back will need a signed physician approval form before EarlyVentures will accommodate the request. EarlyVentures will also require parents to sign a waiver stating that ISD #659 and its employees cannot be held liable. Prior to toddler and preschool naptimes, each child will use the toilet or be diapered and hands washed before going to the nap area. Small blankets and pillows may be brought from home and laundered weekly; no sleeping bags or bed pillows please. Adults will rock toddlers and comfort other children (rubbing heads, backs, etc.) as needed. After 30 minutes, all children that are still awake may go into another area for quiet play. As children awake, they will join the others in the play area.

Food storage: Milk and formula will be kept refrigerated at all times. As with other food, milk or formula not consumed by the child during normal feeding times will be disposed of. At the next feeding, fresh milk or formula will be offered. When parents bring bottles, they will be placed in the refrigerator until feeding time. A separate bottle is required for each feeding time. All bottles and infant food items must be labeled with the child's name. Food supplements and medications will be given to children only with a signed statement from the parent and the physician. Whenever a child requires oral or surface medication, parents must fill out a written authorization form. Parents shall provide the center with the child's diet plan, as recommended by their physician, and the eating habits of their child.

MEALS AND SNACKS

The center will provide morning and afternoon snacks. Hot lunch is available when school is in session and billed at the elementary school rate. Free and reduced lunches are available for those who qualify. A menu is available at the beginning of each month. These lunches are payable in advance and are billed separately from tuition. Children that prefer cold lunches should bring a bag lunch clearly labeled with their name. Pop and juice boxes will not be allowed in cold lunches. Milk is required as part of cold lunches. Milk will be available and will be billed separately. Foods that need to be microwaved will not be allowed except in the infant room. Cold lunches must meet USDA requirements. Supplements will be provided if necessary at a cost to the parent of \$0.75 per item.

SICK CHILDREN

If children receive over the counter medication before they arrive at EarlyVentures, parents must inform EarlyVentures staff. If a child becomes ill while at the center, staff will make arrangements with the parent for pick-up of the child. A parent is required to inform the center within 24 hours if their child contracts a contagious disease. EarlyVentures will post the information the same day that any contagious disease is reported. The health department will be notified of any reportable disease or illness.

A child with any of the following conditions or behaviors is considered a sick child and must be isolated from other children at the center. The family will be called immediately and the sick child will be isolated on their cot/crib until the parent can pick them up.

Conditions: A contagious illness or condition as specified in Minnesota Statute rule 3 part 4605,7040, or:

1. A child with chicken pox, until the lesions are crusted over.
2. A child who has had 3 loose stools since admission that day.
3. A child who has vomited since admission that day.
4. Any bacterial infection that has not completed 24 hours of antimicrobial therapy.
5. A child who has ringworm or scabies that is not treated.
6. A child who has lice that has not been treated or any nits remaining in the hair.
7. A child who has a 100 degree temperature or higher.
8. A child who has an undiagnosed rash or sore, discharging ears or eyes, or discharging lesions on their body.

Children must be fever-free for 24 hours before they can return to EarlyVentures. Sick children will be supervised at all times.

EMERGENCY AND ACCIDENT PROCEDURE POLICY

The center's source of emergency medical care is the Northfield Hospital. EarlyVentures will conduct a daily inspection of potential hazards.

1. Administering First Aid: All staff members will be trained in Red Cross First Aid and CPR. In the event of an accident, a staff member will evaluate the accident and decide on the appropriate course

of action. Minor accidents such as scraped knees, etc. will be washed with warm water and soap. A bandage will be applied. Parents will be informed of any such incidents upon pick-up. Accident reports will be filed any time it is necessary to call parents or if the incident requires treatment by a physician. A report must be filed with the Commissioner within 24 hours of any such injury or when there is the use of any emergency medical service by a child while in care.

2. Accident Prevention Procedures:

A. Injury: Equipment will be kept in good repair. All sharp items such as scissors and knives will be kept out of the reach of children. Blunt end scissors will be used by children.

B. Burns and Electrical Shock: All outlets not in use will be covered. Cords that are being used will be placed in outlets out of the reach of children. Use of electrical equipment in the children's play area will be kept to a minimum. Items that produce heat will not be allowed in the children's play areas. Water at the faucets will not be more than 120 degrees to prevent scalding. Flammable items such as gas or lighter fluid will not be stored at the center. Storage areas will be kept free of combustible material and trash. Furnishings will not be highly flammable.

C. Poisoning: All medication and toxic substances, such as household cleaners will be placed in/on shelves out of reach of children. All staff will be instructed on items that are toxic and on the proper storage of such items. Staff will know procedures for accessing the poison control center.

D. Aspiration or Choking: Food items will be chosen carefully and foods difficult for children to chew or eat will not be served. Toys will also be chosen for the appropriate age levels. Small and easily broken toys, balloons, and toys with loose parts will not be allowed. All staff will be trained in CPR.

E. Suffocation: Plastic bags and other materials that could suffocate will be kept out of the reach of children. The area will be checked regularly for items that may cause suffocation. These items will be removed from the area.

F. Traffic and Pedestrian Accidents: Corridors will be kept clear for easy exits and traffic patterns. Floors will be safely carpeted or tiled and the center will have adequate lighting.

3. Fire Prevention and Procedure:

A. Fire Evacuation Plan: The fire evacuation routes are posted in each room. They are located next to the doors and show the closest outside exit. The center will conduct routine fire drills to be prepared for any fire that could occur.

B. Fire Drills: All staff and children will participate in routine fire drills. The fire evacuation routes will be discussed and a record kept of all drills. A procedure to account for all children will be part of each drill. Staff will be trained to know who is responsible for which areas and the phone number of the local fire department.

C. Procedure in the Event of a Fire: Staff will know the location and proper use of a fire extinguisher and how to close off the fire area.

4. Natural Disasters:

A. Tornadoes: In the event of a tornado, staff will gather all children together and go to the designated tornado safety area. All children will be instructed to remain seated until danger has passed. The center will maintain a log of the dates and times of monthly tornado drills from April to September.

B. Blizzard: In the event that parents are delayed in picking up their children the center will remain open to care for the children until the parents arrive. EarlyVentures will follow ISD #659 school closing policies.

5. Missing Child: When staff is unable to locate a child, all children will be asked to sit in one room. A check by all available staff will be made of the center and surrounding area. If the child is not located, the person in charge will notify the Northfield Police Department and the child's parents.

6. Release of Children: Children will be released only to their parents or persons authorized on the emergency card. No one other than the authorized person will be allowed to pick up children from the center. If an unauthorized person attempts to pick up a child, parents will be notified, and 911 will be called if necessary.

7. Incapacitation or Suspected Abuse: In the event a person who is incapacitated or suspected of abuse attempts to pick up a child, the caregiver is directed to release the child only to those persons who are authorized. If the caregiver suspects an authorized person of being incapacitated or a suspected abuser, the child must still be released. The caregiver is then mandated to report the suspected neglect or abuse to the Northfield Police Department and/or the Rice County Human Services Department.

8. Abandoned Child: If a child is still at the center after the regular closing time, the staff person will contact the parents. If the parents cannot be reached, the staff will contact all other people listed on the child's emergency card to pick up the child. The center will remain open until the child is picked up. If a child remains at the center at 6:30 p.m., 911 will be notified.

9. Source of Emergency Medical Care: Northfield Hospital

10. Accident Reports: A log will be kept of all accidents that occur at the center. The written record must contain the name and age of the person involved; date and place of the accident; injury or incident; type of injury; action taken by staff; and to whom the accident, injury or incident was reported. This log will be reviewed at least semi-annually and steps will be taken to prevent accidents from re-occurring.

PERMISSION SLIPS

Field trips will be announced in advance and parents will be asked to sign permission slips for any trip taken by the center that would require transportation. Parents will be asked to sign a blanket permission slip for trips that are within walking distance from the center, i.e. parks, library or local businesses. Students training in the fields of childcare and education occasionally visit EarlyVentures for observation, practicum, or student teaching. Parents will be asked to sign permission forms

before their child participates in any formal observation. Parents will also be asked to sign a form before their child's picture is used for publicity.

SECONDARY PARKS

Our secondary parks are Odd Fellows Park, Way Park, and Cherry Park. Parks are within walking distance of Longfellow school.

PROGRAM QUALIFICATIONS

- Children that are four years old and older are expected to be toilet trained and to be able to use a typical toilet independently.
- Children must be able to independently participate in developmentally appropriate group settings with similar age peers.
- Children must be able to independently follow simple directions appropriate to the child's age.
- Children must have the ability to play and work cooperatively with similar age peers without adult facilitation.
- Appropriate to the child's age, children must be able to safely and successfully transition from one activity to another.
- Children must be able to be successful in a group setting that is consistent with the Department of Human Services staff to student ratios for child care.
- Appropriate to the child's age, children must be able to independently participate in the general education curriculum.

POLICY ON SERVICES TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

EarlyVentures is not designed to provide long-term 1:1 assistance for children. If a child receives 1:1 student support in the classroom or has a behavior plan developed, EarlyVentures must have a meeting with the family prior to the start date in order to determine the appropriate level of support needed. Information regarding a student's needs will not be used to prohibit a child's enrollment in EarlyVentures unless it is determined they will need significant assistance beyond our program capabilities.

Rationale: As a public institution, Northfield Public School's Community Services Division strives to provide equal access and opportunity for all people. However, since programs offered through Community Services are fee based, our program is equally obligated to provide affordable services for the broadest possible spectrum of the population. Unlimited access for children with special needs would significantly increase costs and could result in the complete elimination of multiple programs. Limiting access to only those children who can be included with no additional support, though, is clearly not in keeping with our mission as a public agency. Accordingly, this policy has been

developed after reviewing case law regarding program access of a community service for disabled individuals under the rehabilitation act. The purpose of the policy is to provide maximum access for children with special needs while preserving the affordable nature of the program for the public at large.

Pre-enrollment Conference and Release of Information: Parents of a child with special needs who wish to enroll the child in EarlyVentures are asked to contact the Ventures Coordinator. A pre-enrollment conference will be held to discuss the nature of the special need and the extent of support services which are needed. At this conference, parents will be informed of the Community Services policy of consulting with school staff and examining student files if the child is enrolled in the Northfield Public Schools. If the child is not enrolled in programs provided by the Northfield School District, parents will be asked to sign a release of information for other agencies/schools that are currently providing services for the child. These releases are not mandatory in order for services to be provided, but will result in a more complete individual service plan.

Provision of Additional Financial Resources: If it is determined that additional financial resources are necessary in order to make the program accessible and beneficial, the following procedures will be used.

1. Modifications which are necessary to make facilities accessible will be undertaken by the school district if they are economically feasible. These may include but are not limited to bathroom grab bars, wrist operated sinks, etc. If these modifications are not feasible, providing accessibility through use of mobility aides, etc. will be pursued. In these cases, the provisions included in Item 2 will apply.
2. Items which are considered personal support services are the responsibility of the specific program in which that particular child is involved, provided that they do not increase the cost of the service by more than 5%. If the cost does exceed 5%, additional costs will be the responsibility of the parent. Examples of personal support services may include, but are not limited to, transportation, mobility aides, behavior management aides, and/or nursing services for children that are medically fragile or have multiple handicaps.
3. Should it be necessary for parents to seek financial assistance to cover increased costs, EarlyVentures staff will be available to assist them in locating possible sources of help through community agencies and organizations.

Implementing and Monitoring the Individual Service Plan: The coordinator of a particular program in which the child is enrolled will be responsible for developing a service plan. This plan must be in place within 1 week of the date on which the child began using the service, and a summary of the plan will be reviewed with the parent and placed in the child's file. Site visits from special education staff or staff of other agencies that provide service to the child will be arranged to obtain input and suggestions. Consultation with classroom teachers will also be scheduled as appropriate. The Ventures Coordinator is responsible for obtaining this information, including it in the child's plan, and making sure that any staff members who work with the child are familiar with the contents of the plan. All individual service plans must be reviewed and approved in writing by the Ventures Coordinator and the parent of the child. Modifications in the service plan will be made as necessary with joint approval of parents and staff. Any changes in the plan will be documented in writing and placed in the child's file. Any information concerning the child that is written in the staff log will be shared with the parents in a timely manner.

Policy on Behavior Management: Children who have been specified as special education students or students whose behavior cannot be managed through the application of existing behavior guidance policies that are in place for the various programs, will be considered special needs children for the purpose of this policy. This definition will be applied whether behavior problems result from temporary individual stresses, mental impairment, as a result of neglect or abuse, or as a result of long term emotional and behavioral disorders. In cases when these behaviors are documented prior to the enrollment of the child, the procedures used will be the same as those described previously for serving children with special needs. If the problem surfaces after the child is enrolled, a conference will be scheduled in accordance with existing behavior management policies. The purpose of the conference will be the same as that of the pre-enrollment conference already described. Timelines for the development and implementation of an individual service plan will also be the same as those previously mentioned.

Termination of Services: If the staff determines that an individual behavior guidance plan is not effective and no other options are available, it is possible that service will no longer be provided for that child. Termination of services will be considered if the child constitutes a danger to other participants, him/herself, if behavior is so disruptive that it prevents the accomplishment of overall program goals, if the child cannot participate in a group setting with similar age peers, or if the child consistently requires more staff attention than is allotted in licensing ratios. The decision to terminate services will be the responsibility of the Ventures Coordinator.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE POLICIES

The center's daily scheduling, curriculum plans, classroom arrangement, and staffing pattern are designed to promote positive and enjoyable learning experiences, including respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children. To provide for the safety of all children, as well as the individual development of each child's self-help and self-control skills, staff maintain daily routines and provides appropriate limits for each group. These routines and limits are frequently discussed and defined with the children. Consistency, or knowing what to expect throughout the day, helps children develop a sense of trust and understanding of their environment and encourages self-control. The goals of child guidance are to help children develop safe and appropriate ways of interacting with others and with the environment and to develop internal self-control. Young children learn by experimenting, testing limits and experiencing logical consequences of their behavior.

EarlyVentures operates on the premise that young children are never "bad". Many discipline problems arise from too much excitement or over stimulation, rather than direct disobedience. Continual positive reinforcement will be used to encourage acceptable behavior. Staff work towards changing behaviors using positive techniques. These techniques include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Working with the children to develop rules that are stated at the children's developmental level.
2. Clarifying the consequences of not following rules before an incident occurs.

3. Having age-appropriate expectations for children.
4. Allowing children time to practice following new rules and acceptable alternatives to problem behavior in order to reduce conflict.
5. Reinforce desirable behavior by praising or rewarding the child. When the child realizes that attention comes from appropriate behavior, that behavior is more likely to continue.
6. Provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior.
7. Ensure that each child is provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior.
8. Redirect children away from the problem toward a constructive activity in order to reduce conflict.
9. Short breaks (timeouts), which are noted and logged.
10. Protect the safety of children and staff persons.

Biting: Unfortunately, biting is a natural development stage that many children go through and it is one of the most common and difficult behaviors in a child care setting. Biting can occur without warning and it provokes a strong emotional response from all involved parties. Biting typically tends to be a temporary stage, most common in children ages 13-24 months. Toddlers may bite for a number of reasons as they are in the process of learning socially acceptable responses to their environment and given situations. Toddlers often bite as a result of teething, frustration, over-stimulation, impulsiveness, excitement, lack of self-control, attempting to get attention, lack of verbal skills, or even hunger.

EarlyVentures staff work with all children to promote socially acceptable responses and behaviors. Biting is addressed in all classrooms, but a consistent curriculum is used more specifically in the toddler room. The curriculum includes a variety of age-appropriate books about biting and an assortment of games that help children learn what teeth are used for and when teeth should not be used. Group time often includes questions such as, "What do we put in our mouth?" And "What can we eat?" as well as having children practice "using their words." "No Biting" pictures are also posted in the room.

EarlyVentures staff also complete an annual training called "When Biting Happens" to review helpful tips on biting prevention as well as circumstances or situations that often provoke biting.

Should a biting incident occur at EarlyVentures, staff address the biter in a firm, matter-of-fact voice (not angry or yelling) saying, "No biting. Biting Hurts! Teeth are for eating food." Staff comment on how the other child is feeling. "Look, _____ is crying. S/He is crying because you bit him/her. Biting hurts." Staff may also have the biter comfort the other child by bringing them an ice pack. The biter is redirected to another activity or separated from the group and placed on a break. The child that has been bitten is comforted and the bitten area is washed with warm water and soap. An ice pack is applied. The biter sees the sympathy and comfort towards the bitten child. An incident report is filled out by staff and logged in the incident binder. Families of both the biter and the bitten are notified.

Should a child bite repetitively, staff will meet with the biter's parents to create a biting plan of action. Every biting occurrence, including attempted bites, will be charted and location, time, participants, behaviors, staff present, and circumstances will be indicated. Staff and parents will look for any patterns in the biting and both will consistently encourage the use of words to express feelings and emotions. Biting plans will be tailored to the individual child and appropriate steps will be implemented.

BEHAVIOR POLICIES

If staff's attempts at discipline do not work, the following will occur in the EarlyVentures preschool classrooms:

1. Parents will be notified, informing them of the reason for referral, previous action by staff, and the actions taken by the disciplinary personnel.
2. When a child's behavior is continually upsetting or dangerous to others or the staff, a conference will be called with the parents. A behavior plan will be developed. The plan will include specific details working towards eliminating the behavior problems. Suggestions may include, but are not limited to, environmental changes, incentive programs, more direct services and/or professional services, and referrals for behavior assessments.
3. If the problem is still not resolved, the following actions will occur:

Behavior Incident Reports: A Behavior Incident Report is completed when a serious disciplinary action occurs. Behavior such as violent outbursts, willfully hurting other children, throwing objects, inappropriate language, leaving the room/building/group, verbal or physical abuse of the staff, not listening to staff or following directions, creating an unsafe environment, or the inability to adjust to the program guidelines will be considered serious disciplinary concerns. Charges will be assessed for behavior leaves resulting in 1, 3, and 5 days off. Should a child receive a sixth Behavior Incident Report, charges will end with the last date of service, and alternate care must be found immediately as the child will not be allowed to return to the program.

1st Behavior Incident Report: Parents/guardians, site staff, and child will discuss the behavior to resolve the situation. Parents/guardians will be informed that "should a second Behavior Incident Report occur, a meeting will be scheduled to include the parent/guardian, child, site staff, and Site Leader."

2nd Behavior Incident Report: Parents/guardians will be contacted for a meeting to include the parent/guardian, child, site staff, and Site Leader. The process continues should a parent/guardian refuse to attend a meeting. Parents/guardians will receive a written warning that "should a third Behavior Incident Report occur, the child will need to take a one day leave of absence from the program."

3rd Behavior Incident Report: Parents/guardians will be notified by telephone or in person that the child will need to take a one-day leave of absence from the program on the next scheduled day. (Fees will be charged during this absence.)

Parents/guardians will receive a written warning that "should a fourth Behavior Incident Report occur, the child will need to take a three-day leave of absence from the program."

4th Behavior Incident Report: Parents/guardians will be notified by telephone or in person that the child will need to take a three-day leave of absence from the program beginning with the next scheduled day. (Fees will be charged during this absence.)

Parents/guardians will receive a written warning that "should a fifth Behavior Incident Report occur, the child will need to take a five-day leave of absence from the program."

5th Behavior Incident Report: Parents/guardians will be notified by telephone or in person that the child will need to take a five-day leave of absence from the program beginning with the next scheduled day. (Fees will be charged during this absence.)

Parents/guardians will receive a written warning that "should a sixth Behavior Incident Report occur, the parent/guardian will be required to find alternate child care immediately. The child will not be able to return to the program. Charges will end with the date of the sixth Behavior Incident Report.

6th Behavior Incident Report: Parents/guardians will be notified by telephone or in person that alternate care will be needed immediately, as the child will not be able to return to the program. Charges will end with the date of the sixth Behavior Incident Report.

EarlyVentures Prohibits the Subjection of a Child to Corporal Punishment: This includes, but is not limited to, rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, or spanking.

EarlyVentures Prohibits the Subjection of a Child to Emotional Abuse: This includes, but is not limited to, name calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family, and using language that threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.

EarlyVentures also prohibits:

1. Punishment for lapses in toileting
2. Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care as a punishment for unacceptable behavior
3. The use of physical restraint other than to physically hold a child where containment is necessary to protect a child or others from harm
4. The use of mechanical restraints, such as tying
5. No child may be separated from the group unless the following has occurred:
 - A. Less intrusive methods of guiding the child's behavior have been tried and were ineffective
 - B. The child's behavior threatens the well being of the child or other children in the program

A child who requires separation from the group must:

- A. Remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a program staff person
- B. The child's return to the group must be contingent on the child's stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation.
- C. The child must be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separation abates or stops

A copy of the center's behavior guidance policy as defined by the State of Minnesota - Department of Human Service, Division of Licensing, is on display at the center. A copy is also available from the program coordinator at any time. The policy defines the general requirements of behavior guidance, procedures for persistent unacceptable behavior and actions that are prohibited by either staff or children.

PETS

EarlyVentures will inform parents and obtain signed permission before any pets are housed at the center or any pets visit the center.

PARENT VISITS

Parents are welcome to visit the center at any time during the normal hours of operation. We encourage family volunteers in our classrooms. Please speak with the site leader for further information.

TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR DIVISION OF LICENSING

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your child's care, the telephone number of the Department of Human Services - Division of Licensing is 651-431-2000.

TOYS

EarlyVentures asks that all children leave their toys at home. If a child would like to have a small, soft toy for nap, that toy will be allowed. Musical or noise-making toys will not be allowed as they may disturb others that are napping. Children may also bring a toy from home when there is a scheduled "show and share" day. All other toys should be left at home or will be placed in the child's cubby to be taken home at the end of the day. Our center is fully equipped with an adequate supply of age-appropriate toys for the children and toys brought from home often create problems. EarlyVentures cannot be held responsible for lost, broken, or missing items.

MANDATED REPORTING/MALTREATMENT OF MINORS (SEE ATTACHED DHS DOCUMENTS)

Children need a safe, nurturing environment that allows them to grow, learn, and feel loved by their caretakers. In order to grow and learn, children's minimum needs for good nutrition, shelter, medical care, bathing, clean clothes, intellectual stimulation, appropriate discipline, love, a feeling of importance, and a safe, non-violent home setting must be met. When these needs are not met, a child cannot grow and learn as easily. If you are temporarily or permanently unable or unwilling to meet your child's minimal needs as just described, EarlyVentures staff is mandated by Minnesota State Law to file a report with a county child protection agency. It then becomes the role of Child Protection to work with your family to ensure that your child's needs are being met. Should you have difficulty in providing for your child's emotional or physical needs, or safety, you are encouraged to ask for help. Our staff will help you find a community resource that can offer assistance. Some 24-hour community resources which can help you when you find that you are experiencing more stress than you can handle, include:

Parents Anonymous 1-800-225-4073
Rice County Crisis Hotline 1-800-607-2330
Rice County Child Protection 1-507-332-6214
Rice County Crisis Nursery 1-507-332-6255

EarlyVentures expresses a commitment to provide an environment that encourages every child's safe growth and learning. If you feel that our staff is not meeting your child's needs, we encourage you to talk with the site leader. Should you feel your child's needs are consistently not being met, our staff will work with you to identify your child's needs and assist you in meeting them. As mandated reporters, EarlyVentures staff are required to make a report if there is reason to believe that a child is currently being neglected, abused, subjected to witnessing domestic abuse, or has been within the past three years.

INTERNAL REVIEW

When an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, EarlyVentures will complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and will take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review will include an evaluation of whether:

1. Related policies and procedures were followed;
2. The policies and procedures were adequate;
3. There is a need for additional staff training;
4. The reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
5. There is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of the children in care.

The internal review will be conducted by the Ventures Coordinator. If the Ventures Coordinator is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, the Director of Community Services will be responsible for completing the internal review.

Based on the results of the internal review, EarlyVentures will develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or EarlyVentures, if any.

NORTHFIELD SCHOOL BOARD POLICY REGARDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- I. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY** Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination, which violates Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2000e, et seq., and Minnesota Statute 363.01-14, the Minnesota Human Rights Act. Sexual violence is a physical act of aggression that includes a sexual act or has a sexual purpose.

It is the policy of Independent School District N. 659 to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from sexual harassment and sexual violence. The School District prohibits any form of religious, racial, or sexual harassment and violence. It shall be a violation of this policy for any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel of the School District to harass a pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel through conduct or communication of a sexual nature or regarding religion and race as defined by this policy. (For purposes of this policy, school personnel include school board members, school employees, agents, volunteers, contractors or persons subject to the supervision and control of the District.)

It shall be a violation of this policy for any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel of the School District to inflict, threaten to inflict, or attempt to inflict religious, racial or sexual violence upon any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel. The School District will act to investigate all complaints, either formally or informally, verbally or written, of religious, racial, or sexual harassment or violence, and to discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who is found to have violated this policy.

- II. SEXUAL HARASSMENT/SEXUAL VIOLENCE DEFINED** Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:
1. Submission to that conduct or communication is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of obtaining or retaining employment, or of obtaining an education
 2. Submission to or rejection of that conduct or communication by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual's employment or education
 3. That conduct or communication purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's employment or education, or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive employment or educational environment.
- A. Sexual harassment/violence may include but is not limited to:
1. Unwelcome verbal harassment or abuse
 2. Unwelcome pressure for sexual activity
 3. Unwelcome, sexually motivated or inappropriate patting, pinching or physical contact, other than necessary restraint of pupil (s) by teachers, administrators or other school personnel to avoid physical harm to persons or property;

4. Unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning an individual's employment or educational status;
5. Unwelcome sexual behavior or words, including demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment with regard to an individual's employment or educational status
6. Unwelcome behavior or words directed at an individual because of gender.

B. Racial Harassment-Definition: Racial harassment consists of physical or verbal conduct relating to an individual's race when the conduct:

1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment.
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.

C. Religious Harassment-Definition: Religious harassment consists of physical or verbal conduct which is related to an individual's religion when the conduct:

1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment
2. Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or academic opportunities.

D. Sexual Violence- Definition: Sexual violence is a physical act of aggression or force or the threat thereof, which involves the touching of another's intimate parts, or forcing a person to touch any person's intimate parts. Intimate parts, as defined in Minnesota Statutes Section 609.341, including the primary genital area, groin, inner thigh, buttocks or breast, as well as clothing covering these areas.

E. Racial Violence- Definition: Racial violence is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another because of, or in a manner reasonably related to, race.

F. Religious Violence- Definition: Religious violence is a physical act of aggression or assault upon another because of, or in a manner reasonably related to, religion.

G. Assault- Definition: Assault is:

1. An act done with intent to cause fear in another of immediate bodily harm or death
2. The intentional infliction of or attempt to inflict bodily harm upon another
3. The threat to do bodily harm to another with present ability to carry out the threat.

III. REPORTING PROCEDURES Any person who believes he or she has been the victim of religious, racial, sexual harassment, or violence by a pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel of the School District, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct

which may constitute religious, racial, or sexual harassment or violence toward a pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel should report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate School District official designated by this policy. The School District encourages the reporting party or complainant to use the report form available from the principal of each building or available from the School District office, but oral reports shall be considered complaints as well. Nothing in this policy shall prevent any person from reporting harassment or violence directly to a District Human Rights Officer or to the Superintendent.

A. In Each Building: The building principal is the person responsible for receiving oral or written reports of religious, racial, or sexual harassment or violence at the building level. Any adult School District personnel who receives a report of religious, racial or sexual harassment, or violence shall inform the building principal immediately. Upon receipt of a report, the principal must notify the School District Human Rights Office immediately, without screening or investigating the report. The principal may request, but may not insist upon, a written complaint. A written statement of the facts alleged will be forwarded as soon as practicable by the principal to the Human Rights Officer. If the report was given verbally, the principal shall personally reduce it to written form within 24 hours and forward it to the Human Rights Officer. Failure to forward any harassment or violence report or complaint as provided herein will result in disciplinary action against the principal. If the complaint involves the building principal, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the Superintendent or the School District Human Rights Officer by the reporting party or complainant.

B. In the District: The School Board hereby designates Denise Griffith as the School Districts Human Rights Officer to receive reports or complaints of religious, racial, or sexual harassment or violence. If the complaint involves a Human Rights Officer, the complaint shall be filed directly with the Superintendent. The School District shall conspicuously post the name of the Human Rights Officer including mailing address and telephone number.

C. Submission of a Good Faith Complaint or report of religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment, grades or work assignments.

D. Use of formal reporting forms is not mandatory.

E. The School District will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the School District's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations.

IV. INVESTIGATION By authority of the School District, the District Human Rights Officer(s), upon receipt of a report or complaint alleging religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence shall immediately undertake or authorize an investigation. This investigation may be conducted by School District officials or by a third party designated by the School District. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s)

against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the School District should consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationship between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.

In addition, the School District may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, pupils, teachers, administrators or other school personnel pending completion of an investigation of alleged religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence. The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable. The School District Human Rights Officer shall make a written report to the Superintendent upon completion of the investigation. If the complaint involves the Superintendent, the report may be filed directly with the School Board. The report shall include a determination of whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual and whether they appear to be violations of this policy.

V. SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION

A. Upon receipt of a report, the School District will take appropriate action. Such action may include, but is not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination or discharge. School District action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements, Minnesota and federal law and School District policies.

B. The result of the School District's investigation of each complaint filed under these procedures will be reported in writing to the complainant by the School District in accordance with state and federal law regarding data or records privacy.

VI. REPRISAL The School District will discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator or other school personnel who retaliates against any person who reports alleged religious, racial or sexual harassment or violence or any person who testifies, assists or participates in an investigation, or who testifies assists or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such harassment or violence. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.

VII. HARASSMENT OR VIOLENCE AS ABUSE Under certain circumstance, alleged harassment or violence may also be possible abuse under Minnesota law. If so, the duties of mandatory reporting under Minn. Stat. §626.556 may be applicable. Nothing in this policy will prohibit the School District from taking immediate action to protect victims of alleged harassment, violence or abuse.

VIII. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND TRAINING

A. This policy shall be conspicuously posted throughout each school building in areas accessible to pupils and staff members.

- B. The School District will develop a method of discussing this policy with students and employees.
- C. This policy shall be reviewed at least annually for compliance with state and federal law.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Reporting Form: All program participants and parents are encouraged and shall be given opportunities for observation, input, suggestions and involvement in the program. However, all complaints and special requests shall be made through appropriate channels. Any participant who believes they have a grievance with the program may fill out the form below. Use of the form is not mandatory. Please follow steps of action if needed report to:

1. Site Leader
2. Ventures Coordinator
3. Community Services Director
4. Superintendent of Schools
5. School Board

Name:

Program:

Date:

Brief description of what has taken place: (who, what, where, when)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

A written reply will be given to any written grievance within 10 days.

STAFF POLICIES

1. Children are to be supervised at all time. Children are not to be left in a room or on the playground alone, even for a few minutes. All ratios will always be met.
2. Staff members are to engage and interact with the children, not isolate themselves or converse at length with other staff members.
3. Discipline is to be dealt with in a positive manner. Talk to the child without raising your tone of voice. Try to determine the child's reason for the misbehavior. Consult the center's discipline policy for further details and follow accordingly. If separation from the group is necessary, a written report must be filed.

4. Children are expected to treat others with respect. They learn by example and their role model is you.
5. The staff is expected to sit with the children during snack and meal times.
6. All employees will be hired for a six month probation period. Employees will be evaluated following Northfield Public School's evaluation process.
7. EarlyVentures childcare center does not discriminate in its hiring practices. E.O.E.
8. Teachers and Assistant Teachers are required to have standard first aid and CPR training within 90 days of the start of work.
9. In-service training equal to 2% of the total hours worked is required by the State of Minnesota in order for a staff member to remain working.
10. ISD #659 is a smoke free district. Smoking is not allowed in any district building or on its grounds.
11. All records at the childcare center are to be kept confidential. This includes, but is not limited to: children's records, personnel records, accident and discipline reports. Staff will release records only to those people who have access as required by law.
12. As per DHS rule 17 Part 9543.1020, subpart 14, drug and alcohol use is prohibited. Individuals, subcontractors, and volunteers when directly responsible for children served by the program are prohibited from abusing prescription medication or being under the influence of a controlled substance or alcohol. This includes any level of use that impairs or could impair the person's ability to provide care or services.

RISK REDUCTION PLAN

EarlyVentures has developed a Risk Reduction plan in order to comply with Minnesota Statutes, section 245.66 subdivisions 2 and 3. Risk Reduction Plans are in place to assess risks among children in our environment and ensure there are procedures, policies, and staff trainings in place for all risks determined. Risk Reduction Plans are available on site at EarlyVentures.