

CARING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

Reason this policy is important: Child care programs provide public accommodation and therefore must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Child care programs should be committed to meeting the needs of all children, regardless of special health care needs or disabilities. As the numbers of children with chronic health conditions such as asthma, allergies, and diabetes increases, as well as the number of children with emotional or behavior issues, the ability of programs to plan for and include all children is critical. Inclusion of children with special needs has been shown to enrich the child care experience for all staff, and children and families of enrolled children.

Procedure and Practices, including responsible person(s):

1. Children with special needs will be accepted into our program under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
2. All families will be treated with dignity and with respect for their individual needs and/or differences.
3. _____ will be responsible for ensuring that confidentiality about special needs is maintained for all families and staff in the program.
4. _____ will ensure that when a child with a special need is identified on the Child Care Application Form, the family will be given a Special Health Care Plan and Emergency Information for Children with Special Needs Form to be filled out by the family and health care provider collaboratively with a member of the child care program staff.
5. Children with special needs will be given the opportunity to participate in the program to the fullest extent possible. To accomplish this, child care program may consult with agencies/organizations as needed, provided parental permission is granted (Authorization for Release of Information form). Inclusion of program staff on IFSP and IEP case conferences is desired to ensure the child care program provides the most supportive environment possible.
6. All staff will receive general training on the benefits of inclusion of children with special needs and training on specific accommodations that any child in their classrooms may need. The knowledge of parents and health care professionals involved in the care of the child with special needs will be consulted to determine accommodations and or therapy requirements.
7. The individual written plan of care for children with special care needs will be followed in all emergency situations. _____ is responsible for making sure the plan shall be updated annually, at a minimum.

When the policy applies: At all times

Communication plan for staff and parents:

Staff and volunteers will receive a written copy of this policy in their orientation packets before beginning work at the facility. All parents will receive a written copy of this policy in the parent handbook and a copy of this policy will be posted on the parent bulletin board in each classroom. Parents, staff, and volunteers will receive a written copy of any updates.

References:

- Model Health Policies 2004 <http://www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org>
- *Caring for Our Children* – <http://nrc.uchsc.edu>

Reviewed by: _____ Director/Owner

_____ Health Professional (physician, nurse, health department, EMS, Health consultant)

_____ Staff member

_____ Other (parent, advisory committee, police, CPS)

Effective Date and Review Date:

This policy is effective _____ and will be reviewed annually or as needed.

*This format is adapted from and used with permission of: National Training Institute for Child Care Health Consultants, UNC, 2000.