



Parent/ Caregiver Handbook

YEAR-ROUND



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Welcome!

We are excited to have you join our ODC Network community! Our programs serve children with a range of ages from 6 weeks to Kindergarten entry in a nature-based program built on the power of play. Learning and exploration are emphasized through interactions with the natural world each and every day – and in all seasons! We're glad to have you here!

History

The ODC Network has a rich history of positive impacts in the West Michigan area. Here is a link to our website to take a closer look at our history. [About - ODC Network](#)

Mission

The mission of all ODC Discovery Preschools is to provide a quality early childhood experience that prepares young children to be active, independent learners who will have a lifelong connection to the natural world.

Philosophy

We believe that children are natural learners, eager to explore and create. ***The teaching staff promotes early learning by:***

- Ensuring each child is given loving and consistent care every day and appreciating and celebrating the unique individuality of all children and families.
- Providing a natural environment that enables and encourages discovery, experimentation, and the opportunity to see the results of one's actions.
- Structuring a program and consistent daily routine that includes many opportunities for children to be outdoors connecting with nature while learning through play, reflecting the research that supports the advantages of these experiences for cognitive, physical, social emotional and language growth.
- Encouraging problem solving and reflection by asking open-ended questions and providing information in response to children's ideas, observations, and questions.
- Teaching children the skills needed to express themselves, positively interact with each other, and learn to work in a group.

Programs

The ODC Network has long believed in the benefit of early childhood education and, particularly, a nature-based, child- and family-centered approach. Since 2013, the ODC has developed 4 childcare centers offering care to thousands of children and families. These programs have functioned in a preschool model, operating the typical hours and schedule of a preschool.

Listening to the needs in the community of West Michigan, the ODC Network took the initiative to expand into the full-time, full-year childcare space serving children 6 weeks up to Kindergarten entry. With doing so, it has been our mission to redefine and uplift the childcare experience to the highest standard. With that, we have developed two programs that both can be found at our different facilities.

Early Explorers

Welcome to Early Explorers – our dedicated program designed for children aged 6 weeks to 2.5 years old. It's an extension of our Discovery Preschool experience, tailored to meet the unique needs of our youngest learners. Operating five days a week, year-round, and with extended hours, Early Explorers ensures convenience and flexibility for your family.

In this nature-based education environment, we are committed to delivering the highest quality of care. Early Explorers lays the foundation for your child to embark on a journey of exploration and discovery in the world of nature. Here, we nurture your child's early development through enriching experiences and a supportive atmosphere.

Discovery Preschool

Welcome to Discovery Preschool- our cherished initiative that has been a cornerstone of our offerings since 2013. In an exciting new development, we have expanded the reach of our Discovery Preschool experience to encompass the traditional childcare domain.

As part of this expansion, select Discovery Preschool sites will now operate five days a week, year-round, with extended hours for added flexibility. To align with the State of Michigan's Childcare Licensing Rules, we have broadened the age range for our Discovery Preschools, catering to children aged 2.5 to Kindergarten entry, typically up to 5 years old.

Join us in providing your child with a nature-based education environment that fosters growth, curiosity, and a love for learning at our Discovery Preschool programs.

Admission

Enrollment

Parents can apply for enrollment of their child at one of our sites by completing the required online application. Please contact the Office Assistant or Site Director to receive the link to the online application.

Parents are required to complete all required enrollment documents prior to their child's first day. Child Information Records must be updated annually or when changes occur. All requested fields on the child information record must be completed. All children are also required to have a complete up to date health appraisal and immunization record on file at the center. If a family is choosing to not immunize their child, they are required to provide a waiver form through the county Health Department.

Hours of Operation and Center Closures

Hours of operations are site specific.

The center will be closed on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve (center closes at 12:00 p.m.)
- Two Staff Training Days- to be determined each calendar year

The center's hours and holiday schedule are set and posted annually, but may change at any time.

If the ODC Network closes for any unforeseen circumstances (severe weather conditions, power outage, health pandemic, etc...), our team will send a message and/or email to notify families.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is due the Friday in advance for the week of services. A late fee of \$20 will be automatically added to the family account if tuition is not received on Friday of each week.

Program	Age	Schedule	Weekly Rate	Daily Rate
Early Explorers	6 weeks - 2.5 years	Monday-Friday	\$425	\$85
Discovery Preschool	2.5 years - 5 years	Monday-Friday	\$425	\$85

Payments will be made electronically using your bank account, debit card or credit card. You can set up recurring auto payments or make one time payments. There are no tuition adjustments for daily absences due to weather, holidays, illness, or unforeseen center closures.

Once an account is more than one week in arrears, the child/children may not return until the account is paid up to date, including the current week. Repeated failure to pay tuition by the due date is grounds for termination of care from ODC Network.

Late Pick Up Fee

We recognize that everyone has busy schedules and at times things can happen that cause delays, however a late pick up fee of \$1 per minute will be charged to your account when students are picked up late. If you are more than 30 minutes late to pick your child up the charge will be \$50.00. If a child has not been picked up within one hour past closing time and emergency contacts have not responded, ODC Network may contact Children's Protective Services for guidance. More than three late pick ups in a month may result in termination of care.

Schedule Changes

Approval from the ODC Network is required for Schedule Changes. Parents seeking approval for a schedule change must submit a written request to the Site Director. A minimum two-week notice is necessary for changes in enrollment days or times. Schedule changes will only be deemed final upon the signing of a new enrollment agreement. If the requested schedule is unavailable and/or denied by the ODC Network, parents will need to maintain their current schedule.

Drop Off and Pick Up

Building positive relationships and creating a daily routine for your child requires your cooperation with our pick up and drop off policies.

We require all children to start and end their day by being properly checked in/out. At arrival, please communicate anything that needs to be known for the day to your child's teachers (medication, early pick up, alternative pick up, any health concerns, etc). We believe it is best for the child and parent to develop a consistent routine at drop off time. Teachers in the classroom will assist with welcoming the child and getting them comfortable in their surroundings.

Attendance

A consistent schedule and daily routine gives children a predictable day. Children feel more confident and secure when their daily activities are predictable and familiar. Regular attendance at our programs are important for your child to build relationships with their teachers and other children. It is the parents responsibility to communicate with our staff if their child will be absent. If your child will be absent or arriving late, send a message or email by 9am to your child's teacher explaining the reason for the absence (fever, teething, staying home, etc.).

Picking Children up from School

No child is permitted to leave or be taken from school by anyone other than an authorized adult (listed as approved on the Child Information Record). If you must have someone else pick up your child, please email the Office Assistant with the individual's first and last name. We will require photo identification from that adult when they arrive to pick up your child.

Grievances

Our program strives to provide a positive environment for all. However, at times a concern may arise. If you have any questions or concerns you cannot resolve with the teacher directly, please bring the concerns to the attention of the Site Director who will work through concerns with you.

Withdrawal Policy

Parents/caregivers must adhere to the responsibilities outlined in this handbook. Open communication with the ODC Network's staff is needed to address and resolve any issues that may arise collaboratively. A written notice of two weeks is mandatory for the withdrawal of a child for any reason, with tuition to be paid in full before the child's last day. Unnotified absences exceeding two weeks may result in dis-enrollment.

In cases where a child's enrollment is linked to a corporate partnership and the parent employed by that corporation ceases to work there, the child's enrollment may be terminated immediately. In that event, please reference the corporate partnership agreement in place.

ODC Network reserves the right to dismiss a family at any time for non-compliance with the policies outlined in the Parent Handbook, the center, or failure to make timely payments.

Learning Structure

Curriculum

At the ODC Network, we believe that children learn best through play and exploration that is strongly embedded in a nature-based approach. Each day, children spend a significant amount of time outdoors involved in active learning, both structured and self-directed. Recent [research studies](#) have affirmed the value of active outdoor exploration in building children's problem-solving, self-regulation, organizational, and language skills, in addition to the health benefits.

The *Creative Curriculum*® serves as the foundational structure for our comprehensive early childhood program, acknowledged by Michigan as a high-quality initiative promoting school readiness. Our team has adapted this curriculum by integrating a nature-based approach, aligning the units of studies with natural elements that correspond to the seasons in Michigan. Our educators are trained to implement this curriculum through a child-led, play-based, and nature-focused perspective.

Assessments

At the ODC Network we work to make informed decisions each day to help your child learn and grow in a supportive nurturing environment. *Teaching Strategies Gold*® is the assessment tool used by our programs to make and record developmental observations that provide evidence of a child's growth. These records are then used to inform teachers in developing learning opportunities for children and are also shared with parents at scheduled conference times.

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is another assessment tool that we use. It is a developmental screener filled out by both parents and teachers twice a year and it provides key insights to a child's growth and development. Parents will receive instructions from their child's teacher for filling it out.

Daily Routine

A predictable structure or schedule is important for young children, helping them to know “what is next”. We also value “teachable moments” and spontaneous opportunities for learning. The basic structure of the day will form the backbone of our work, providing predictability while enabling flexibility.

****Please note, the schedules below are typical days but they will be altered to meet the developmental needs of children and the specific location of each site. For instance, the needs of infants and toddlers to eat on demand and children ages 0-18 months to sleep on demand will be a priority. Diapers will be changed every two hours or as needed. These classrooms will exhibit more flexibility with their schedule due to those needs.**

Typical schedule for Early Explorers (children ages 6 weeks to 2.5 years):	Typical schedule for Discovery Preschool (children ages 2.5 - 5 years old):
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7:30-9:00 Arrival/ Connection and Play Time• 9:00-9:30 Diapers, Wash Hands, & Snack• 9:30-10:00 Small Group & Diaper Check• 10:00-10:30 Large Group Time & Getting Ready for Outside• 10:30-11:45 Outside Time/Hike• 11:45-12:15 Wash Hands & Lunch (Diaper Check)• 12:15-3:00 Nap/Quiet Time• 3:00-3:30 Diapers & Free Play• 3:30-4:00 Wash Hands & Snack (Diaper Check)• 4:00-5:30 Outside & Pick Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7:30-9:00 Arrival/ Inside Choice Time• 9:00-9:15 Large Group• 9:15-9:45 Wash Hands & Snack• 9:45-10:15 Hike• 10:15-11:15 Outdoor Choice Time• 11:15-11:30 Small Group #1 (Outside)• 11:30-11:45 Clean-up/ Wash Hands• 11:45-12:15 Lunch/ Nap Time Preparation• 12:15-2:45 Naptime: Individual Quiet Reading or activities until all students wake up or by 2:45pm• 2:45-3:15 Quiet Choice/ Connection Time• 3:15-3:30 Small Group #2• 3:30- 3:45 Wash Hands & Snack• 3:45-4:00 Prepare to go Outside• 4:00-4:30 Hike• 4:30-5:30 Outdoor Choice Time and Pick Up

Parent Communication

Daily communication with parents will take place at pick up and drop off. In addition, parents will be sent a daily log of their child’s activities electronically. The daily log will include food intake, sleeping patterns, elimination patterns, developmental milestones, changes in behavior and moments of learning throughout the day.

A monthly newsletter will also be sent to parents. Any additional information will be communicated through email or the electronic communication system. Thank you in advance for committing to reading these communications and partnering with us in the care of your child(ren)!

Ratios and Supervision

ODC Network follows all licensing rules for staff to child ratios. The maximum number of children per teacher is as follows:

Infants and Toddlers (6 weeks-2½ years of age), 1 teacher for every 4 children

Young Preschool (2½-3 years of age), 1 teacher for every 8 children

Preschool (3-5 years of age), 1 teacher for every 10 children

Outdoor Time

Your child will spend a large amount of their day outdoors. Outdoor time includes a daily hike and/or time on a nature-based playscape built by the ODC. For younger children a stroller or a wagon may be used to transport them on a hike. Teaching staff will consider the weather and adjust the amount of time accordingly. As a rule, though, the children spend a significant amount of time outdoors everyday, in all weather. Appropriate dress is important; children need to bring the appropriate gear each day for outdoor play.

Learning through Play

Play is a vital part of a child's social, emotional, language, physical, and cognitive growth during the preschool years. Children learn best through play-it's their work! When you visit our classrooms you will see the children engaged in many different kinds of play:

- A baby playing peek-a-boo is learning social emotional skills and concepts like object permanence.
- Toddlers engaging with large rocks, sand piles, or a stack of pillows learn to balance, climb and roll as they develop gross motor skills.
- A child working hard to put a puzzle together may be learning how to problem solve and enhance his/her fine motor skills.
- Children playing a game together are learning to take turns and cooperate. They are developing language skills in communicating the rules to one another.
- A child climbing and using natural materials to build is building his/her large motor skills and using creativity.

Attending our programs is a great opportunity for your child to experience various forms of play. Whether alone or in a group, your child's learning is fostered when there is a connection to something that interests them. We invite you to visit your child's learning environment and witness children learning through play each and every day!

Walking Field Trips

Classes may take walking field trips in the beyond (outside of the building or fenced/licensed areas). Parents sign a written permission form for walking field trips (daily hikes) upon enrollment. The written permission form must be signed annually. Teachers take two-way radios or cell phones on these excursions to allow contact with the office in the event of an emergency.

Clothing & Outdoor Gear

Engaging in nature-based learning can be a delightfully messy endeavor! It is crucial that children come prepared for outdoor play by wearing appropriate attire. Comfortable and protective shoes, conducive to running, jumping, and climbing are essential. Please note that flip flops and slides are not suitable for our general outdoor programming.

Considering the ever-changing weather and the transition between outdoor and indoor activities, dressing in layers is advisable to ensure your child's comfort. Outdoor play is a daily activity, so be prepared for your child to participate regularly. Each child should have a backpack containing spare clothes, extra diapering essentials, and inside shoes.

For those rainy days, rainsuits are a necessity. You may be able to rent one from ODC Network on an annual basis. If you are interested in the rental option, kindly reach out to your Office Assistant or Site Director. Alternatively, parents are welcome to purchase their own rain suits for their children.

Clothing needs for each season include:

Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
Rubber Boots	Winter Boots	Rubber Boots	Rubber Boots
Coat	Winter Coat	Coat	Light Jacket
Rainsuit	Snowsuit/Snow Pants and Rainsuit	Rainsuit	Rainsuit
Sunglasses	Sunglasses	Sunglasses	Sunglasses
	Winter Hat		Hat
	Neck Warmer /Scarf / Gaiter		Sandals that have a back
	Waterproof Mittens		
	Wool Socks		

Photography and Recording Technologies

Parents may take photographs/videos of their child ONLY. Photographs/videos may only be taken outside of the learning space. For privacy and safety reasons, no other children may be visible in any photos or video taken by parents or volunteers without their parent permission.

During the year, photographs and video will be taken by staff members ODC Network for the purpose of documenting the events and activities of the program.

These images may be included in print or electronic materials (e.g., newsletters, brochures, and website). Your child's name (first or last name) will NEVER be associated with the images included in any of these materials.

Parents complete a permission form at enrollment for photos and videos of their child to be shared or to opt out.

Animals

Animals play a large part in our curriculum and there will be animals visiting throughout the year. If you would not like your child to pet or interact with the animals, please contact your child's teacher. All children will wash their hands after touching any learning environment animal. All learning environment pet tanks/bedding will be cleaned once a week by learning environment staff. Please notify your child's teacher of any animal/other allergies your child may have, or other concerns you have regarding animals. Please do not bring pets at drop off or pick up time.

Parent & Teacher Conferences

The partnership between parents and teaching staff is important for a child's well-being, growth and development. Conferences will be made available for parents/caregivers twice a year (fall and spring) for each child. They are designed for teachers to listen to parents, celebrate the child, and set goals for the upcoming months. Teachers share observational data gathered through [TS Gold](#) and [ASQ - Ages and Stages Questionnaire](#), child created examples from the school day, and opportunities for home and school to work in partnership.

Classroom Transitions

We value a smooth transition to the next classroom, based on developmental readiness and availability. Your child can take all the time they need to adjust, and we offer visits to the new classroom to help them get comfortable. Classroom ratios for ages may impact the transition process, but we'll work with your family to ensure a successful move. Our goal is to make the transition as stress-free as possible for both you and your child.

Holidays and Birthdays

We do not celebrate holidays in the traditional sense. Our program will focus on changes in seasons and events in the natural world. Birthdays are acknowledged by staff and students, however, birthday treats/gifts are not permitted.

Discipline and Guidance

Discipline Policy

ODC Network implements Conscious Discipline as the comprehensive, multidisciplinary self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning, school culture and discipline as its foundation surrounding discipline and guidance. Through this program, we use safety, connection and problem solving as positive discipline strategies instead of external rewards and punishments. It is based on brain research that indicates our internal states dictate our behavior.

Teachers will help students label their emotions, provide language support, and implement structures to create a school community. We view all behaviors as communication and believe conflict is an opportunity to teach.

Children will learn about their feelings and emotions, learn how to label them, and strategies to help support their different feelings. Teachers will work closely with parents to ensure a positive experience that is the best for each child and family.

You can find more information on Conscious Discipline at consciousdiscipline.com

Director of Support Services/ School Counselor

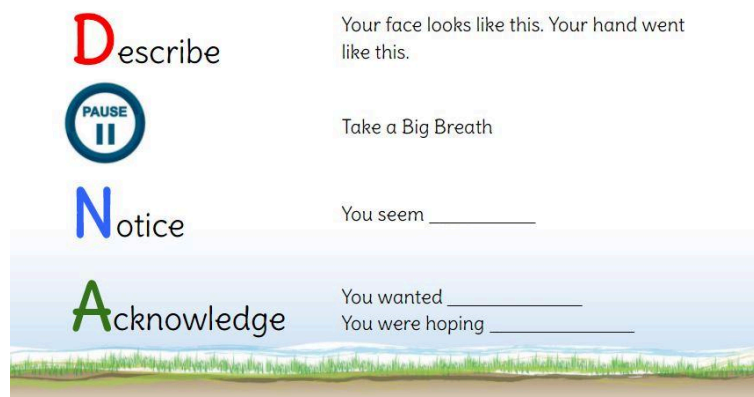
At each site, a unique position has been created for the Director of Support Services and School Counselor. These dedicated professionals work closely with students, families, and teaching teams to ensure positive behavior and mental health support. Their responsibilities encompass various tasks, including but not limited to providing developmentally appropriate interventions to create a positive experience within our schools. They also facilitate parent engagement classes and establish connections with local services within the appropriate school districts.

In instances where a pattern of behavior emerges, such as a child causing harm to themselves or others, or if a child's behavior significantly impacts their education or that of their classmates, a collaborative meeting will be initiated. The Director of Support Services, School Counselor, and, as necessary, the Site Director will meet with the child's family to develop a tailored behavior plan to address the specific needs of the child and their environment.

Early Explorers: We will focus on utilizing the teacher's ability to model composure and self-regulation to teach skills that promote problem solving techniques. Brain research shows that self-regulation is a higher-order skill linked to the maturation of the prefrontal lobe. The prefrontal lobes house the executive skills. These skills allow us to set and achieve goals, focus our attention despite distractions, get along with others, offer empathy and problem solve. Without self-regulation, none of these skills can fully mature or come online. School success, life success and relationship success are all at risk without this basic skill. With our earliest learners, research shows that self-regulation is dependent on co-regulation with a trusted caregiver/adult. Our teachers use connection activities to build that trusted caregiver relationship. Then teachers model co-regulating techniques to begin to teach self-regulation.

Discovery Preschool: We will utilize redirection, modeling, and Conscious Discipline problem solving techniques. The staff will work closely with parents to ensure a positive school experience that is the best for each child and family. In extreme situations where behavior is detrimental to the learning atmosphere on a continuing basis, teachers will work with the parents on a plan to help the child function more appropriately in the learning environment.

All programs: Our Teachers will use Conscious Discipline's strategies such as the DNA process (and more) with children during emotionally charged conflict situations.



1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions
2. Quickly identify a child's brain state (Survival, Emotional, Executive). Then identify if you start with describing (brain stem) or move to noticing (Limbic)
3. Name children's feelings: "You seem _____ (sad, mad, frustrated, etc.)"
4. Gather information: "Something must have happened." If you do not know what occurred or Acknowledge with "You wanted/were hoping _____"
5. Restate the problem
6. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together
7. Be prepared to give follow-up support

		Conscious Discipline Skills		
Step 1: I Am	Step 2: I Calm	Step 3: I Feel	Step 4: I Choose	Step 5: I Solve
I have a big feeling. I can go to the Safe Place, get the We Care Bag or find a trusted adult.	I breathe by choosing calming strategies.	I name my feeling by choosing the feeling image.	I choose to befriend my feelings to see the problem that I was facing from a different way.	I take responsibility and work towards solving my problem.

Corporal Punishment

In accordance with state law, the use of corporal punishment shall not be permitted. No employee, volunteer or contractor employed or engaged by the ODC shall threaten to inflict physical pain upon a student as a penalty or punishment for a student's offense. If any employee inflicts unreasonable, inappropriate or unlawful force upon a student, he or she may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Health and Wellness

Immunizations

We encourage families to vaccinate their children. Immunizations are effective in controlling the spread of disease. Your vaccination decision affects not only the health of your child, but also your family, your child's friends, their families, families your child attends school with and your community.

Students must be up to date on vaccinations at the time of enrollment. An immunization record is a required form for enrollment. If you have chosen to waive vaccinations for your child, you must obtain a vaccine waiver from your county's health department.

If you have chosen to waive vaccinations for your child and there is an outbreak or report of a vaccine preventable disease in our school or community, your child may be required to stay out of school. This could be for 21 days or longer. Time out of school depends on multiple factors, including the disease, incubation period, means of spread, and the nature of the outbreak. Your child's lack of vaccination puts all other children at risk and could contribute to the spread of a vaccine preventable disease. You are still responsible to fulfill your enrollment agreement and make any payments due during this time.

Illness

Consistent attendance is encouraged for your child to get the best school experience. However, there are times when it is best for a child NOT to be at school. *Please make sure your child is fever free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.*

If your child has one or more of the following symptoms, ***please do not send them to school:***

Staff and volunteers will also not attend if these symptoms are present:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| -A temperature of 100 degrees or higher | -Runny nose |
| -A low grade fever and acting ill | -Chronic cough |
| -An infectious disease | -Pain |
| -Vomiting or upset stomach | -Diarrhea |

We request that you inform the school staff if your child has been exposed to or contracts a contagious disease. Please use the Procure Parent App to report when your child will not be in school due to illness.

Accident, Injury, Incident and Illness Notification Policy

Should your child become ill, sustain an injury, or if an incident occurs impacting your child - you, the parent/guardian, will be contacted first and as soon as possible following the illness or injury. This contact will be made by phone (please be sure that your contact information is always current). If necessary, we will request that you come to the preschool to pick up your child. We ask that the child be picked up within 1 hour of the phone call. If we are unable to contact you, we will contact the person you have listed as your emergency contact on the Child Information Record. If we are unable to reach you or the emergency contact by phone, we will keep your child at school and care for them until we can reach you or the emergency contact. However, if your child requires immediate medical assistance and we are unable to contact you or the emergency contact, we will call for emergency assistance (e.g., 911) and continue to try to reach you.

While waiting to be picked up, the sick or injured child will be moved away from the rest of the group, supervised by a staff member, and made comfortable until the parent arrives.

If a sick child or adult has handled toys or other items in the learning environment, the items will be washed, rinsed and sanitized before being used by other children or adults.

For minor injuries that do not require a child to be excluded from participation, parents will be notified by a staff member via telephone or email before the end of the day.

You will be notified if a child, staff member or volunteer has contracted a contagious disease. Notification will include the name and symptoms of the communicable disease.

Biting

Biting is common among young children. Most children will outgrow this behavior by the time they are 3 or 4 years old. We realize that biting can be a big concern, and we strive to minimize the behavior whenever possible. Our teachers are trained to recognize triggers and how to prevent and decrease incidents.

Parents of both children will be notified by an incident report that a biting incident occurred during the day. The staff may not discuss the other child involved in the incident due to confidentiality. If you have any concerns regarding a biting incident regarding your child, please talk to your child's teacher or Site Director. Excessive biting may lead to termination of care.

Health Care Plan

Licensing regulations require us to provide you with a copy of our Health Care Plan.

Many communicable diseases can be prevented through appropriate hygiene and sanitation practices. Contamination of hands, toys, and other equipment in the room appeared to play a role in the transmission of disease in child care settings. Illnesses can be spread by:

- Human waste, such as urine and feces
- Body fluids, such as saliva, nasal discharge, eye discharge, open skin sores, and blood
- Direct skin to skin contact
- Touching a contaminated object
- The air, in droplets that are a result of a sneeze or cough

Since many infected people carry communicable diseases without symptoms, and many are contagious before symptoms, caregivers protect themselves and the children by carrying out, on a routine basis, universal precautions and sanitation procedures. The following policies are implemented at our programs:

Handwashing

Staff must wash their hands:

- When arriving at school if the day begins with indoor activities
- Before preparing or serving food or drink
- After handling animals or insects
- After sneezing or blowing nose
- When hands are dirty
- Before administering medication
- Before and after giving first aid
- After changing a diaper
- After using the restroom

After washing hands, it is important not to touch anything (such as a child, chair, doorknob, etc.) before handling food. If you are using gloves to prepare food, you still wash your hands before putting on the gloves. After any contact with a child's bodily fluids: including blood, vomit, sputum and mucus (from wiping noses) your hands must be washed.

Children must wash their hands:

- When arriving at school if the day begins with indoor activities
- Before eating
- After diapering and toileting
- After sneezing or blowing the nose
- After outdoor activities
- After handling animals or insects
- When hands appear dirty

How hands should be washed:

1. Wet both hands.
2. Apply a small amount of liquid soap.
3. Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds to work up a good lather.
4. Be sure to wash between fingers, under nails, and all hand surfaces from the tips of the nails to beyond the wrists.
5. Rinse hands well under a stream of warm running water.
6. Leave water running while you dry your hands. You do not want to turn off the "dirty" faucet with your now clean hands.
7. Dry your hands well.
8. Use the towel to turn off the faucet.
9. Dispose of the towel in the trash.

Teaching the children: Time should be taken to teach children the correct hand washing technique as described above.

- When to wash hands.
- How to wash hands (demonstrate correct hand washing).
- Observe the child hand washing.
- Correct his/her technique as necessary.

Handling Bodily Fluids

Staff will use universal precautions (i.e., protective gloves) when handling potential exposure to blood, including blood-containing body fluids and tissue discharge. Treat all situations involving potential contact with blood, body fluids, or medical waste with caution.

- Wash hands after contact with any bodily fluid substance or articles contaminated with a bodily substance. Use liquid soap from a dispenser; not bar soap.
- Wear protective gloves on both hands for anticipated direct hand contact with blood, body fluids, medical waste or contaminated objects or surfaces. Wash hands immediately after removing protective gloves.
- When anticipated exposure occurs, remove contaminated substances by washing hands and other skin surfaces immediately and thoroughly. If splashed in eyes, nose or mouth; flush with water immediately. Notify the supervisor immediately. It is recommended that medical help be sought within 2 hours of exposure. Employees are not to risk their personal health by waiting to see treatment if they feel that immediate treatment is needed. Any approval that the employee feels that they need from their supervisor is to be “assumed” in exposure situations.
- Treat all linen soiled with blood and/or body secretions as infectious. Soiled linens and materials should be handled as little as possible and with minimum agitation. All linen should be bagged in a red-labeled biohazard bag at the location where it is used.
- Trash must be placed in covered containers bagged in impervious bags; secure tops when filled, double bag only if breakthrough is anticipated.
- Areas, surfaces, or articles that are soiled with blood or other body fluids must be cleaned with detergent/disinfectant

Cleaning and Sanitizing of Equipment

Staff shall complete regular cleaning and sanitizing of equipment, toys, and surfaces. All toys that are dirty or have been in a child’s mouth will be put in the dirty toy bin in the classroom and washed properly at the teacher’s convenience. Cleaning procedures should be conducted according to the timeline posted in the classroom and anytime a child contracts a communicable disease. We use a three-step process for cleaning: Wash, Rinse, Sanitize.

Medication and Health Services

No medication shall be given at our programs except on written order by the child's doctor. Parents/Caregivers must also complete the “Medication Permission and Instructions” Form (updated annually if medication is given on an ongoing basis). The medication will be stored according to the label instructions and in the original container. The container **MUST** have the pharmacy label indicating the physician’s name, child’s name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication. All medication is to be stored out of the reach of children and returned to the child’s parent or destroyed when the parent determines it is no longer needed or it has expired. All medication is to be given according to the label directions. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the American Academy of Pediatrics have both recommended that cold and cough medications **NOT** be used with children under 6. It is for this reason that we require a written order from the child’s physician prior to administering any medications.

Allergies

Please communicate any allergies your child may have to the Office Assistant and Site Director in writing, including an allergy or medical plan from your child's physician. If a child has a chronic medical condition where medication may be needed, teachers will bring the child's medication with them in the case of an emergency. Staff will have a child's medical plan in the emergency backpack to reference as needed. Each classroom will also have a comprehensive allergy list for every child in the center with an allergy.

Sleeping

At our programs, infants and toddlers will be allowed to sleep on demand up to 18 months old. During sleep time, infants will sleep only in approved cribs, with their heads uncovered and cribs free from soft objects. Approved sleep sacks are allowed and they will be supervised by sight and sound, and checked regularly. However, children with medical conditions that require alternative sleeping arrangements must have a signed physician's statement on file. Older children are not required to sleep, but still will be offered the opportunity to sleep/rest. If older children decide not to sleep they will be offered quiet activities during nap time.

Diapering and Toileting

We ensure the physical well being of each child. Diaper changing will occur as needed as well as diapers being checked at a minimum of every two hours. Parents are required to provide diapers, wipes, creams, and any other diapering items. If a family chooses to use cloth diapers, each diaper must be covered with an outer "waterproof" covering which is not to be re-used until washed and sanitized by the family. We will support children in potty training when the child is developmentally ready and the parent communicates a potty training plan. Children who are potty trained will be supervised when using the bathroom and will be allowed to use the bathroom at will.

Meals, Snacks and Food Service

Meals and snacks are served family-style and will include healthy choices such as fresh whole fruits and vegetables, veggie straws, cheerios, etc. Milk and water are provided to drink. No items are cooked at our programs. Raw fruits and vegetables will be thoroughly washed before being served. Items stored in the refrigerator will be labeled with the date the item is placed in the refrigerator. Staff and volunteers will wear food grade gloves when serving or preparing snacks. All tableware, utensils, food contact surfaces and equipment will be thoroughly washed, rinsed and sanitized after each use. Tables will be thoroughly washed, rinsed and sanitized before and after they are used for snacks. Multi-use tableware and utensils will be washed, rinsed and sanitized in a dishwasher after each use.

Snacks will be provided by our staff in the morning and the afternoon.

Lunch is provided by Holland Public Schools at 11:45 am Monday-Friday.

The monthly snack and lunch calendars will be posted and shared with parents. Parents will be notified of substitutions through the Procure app and/or posted on the licensing bulletin board.

Meals will be created in accordance with the minimum meal requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program. All Outdoor Discovery Center Network preschools will comply with rule 400.8330(3) to ensure children with special dietary needs receive meals/snacks in accordance with the child's needs.

Bottle Feeding

Bottles are given on demand and individualized as needed. Bottles will be labeled with the child's first and last name, date, and contents (formula/breast milk). Teachers will record the time served on the Procure app. Additional information will be provided at time of enrollment.

Pest Management

Pesticide application may occur during the year, if there are pest issues in the learning environment. You will receive an advanced notice of these applications through two means (email home and notice posted at the entrance of the school). The notice will inform you of the target pest, information about the pesticide, location of pesticide, and date of application. Pesticide would only be applied to the concerned area during non-program hours.

Staff & Volunteers

Hiring of Staff

The staff of all ODC Network preschools are carefully chosen to provide an environment of care and connection in a nature and play based setting. Potential employees are selected from applicants using the following processes:

- Resume and Application review
- Interviews with members of the leadership team
- Reference and credential checks
- Passing all required background checks

We are proud to introduce you to our team through this link to our website:

Click [Team - Outdoor Discovery Center](#), then choose [Early Childhood](#)

Volunteers

Parents/Caregivers and other family members are welcome to become volunteers.

Before being scheduled, ALL persons wishing to volunteer must complete a Volunteer Application and Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Form. Volunteers will sign in and out in the office. Volunteers are supervised by preschool staff at all times and will not be alone with individual children, unless the volunteer is the child's parent or guardian.

All volunteers are screened through the Public Sex Offenders Registry (PSOR). Any individual registered on the PSOR is prohibited from volunteering.

Volunteers are mandated reporters in Michigan. This means that all volunteers, as well as staff members, have a responsibility to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. More information and a guide for volunteers is included in this handbook.

Licensing Information

Each of our sites maintain a licensing notebook on the premises that includes all licensing inspection and special investigation reports and related corrective action plans for the last 5 calendar years, and a summary sheet outlining the documents contained in the notebook. This notebook is available for parents to review during regular business hours. Licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, and corrective action plans from at least the past 3 years are available on the Child Care Licensing Bureau's website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.

Breastfeeding Policy

We support the parents' right to breastfeed their child(ren) and will provide privacy options for this purpose. Our programs will provide privacy screens in a quiet and safe location within our school buildings upon parent request.

Safety and Security

Confidentiality Policy

Students' personal information is protected under the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA). This includes any learning or disciplinary needs of students or any data gathered as part of the referral process; this information is confidential and may not be shared or discussed outside of the learning environment. Assessment data (e.g., developmental screening results) will only be shared as "group results" and only with parental consent. If you, as a parent or learning environment volunteer, are ever asked about a student, simply communicate that you cannot discuss or share information about students. If you have a question about confidentiality, please talk with the Site Director.

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student, or former student, who has reached the age of 18 or is attending any school beyond the high school level. Students and former students to whom the rights have transferred are called eligible students.

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review all of the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of materials in education records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to inspect the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies. Parents and eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records believed to be inaccurate or misleading.

If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record commenting on the contested information in the record.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's record. However, the law allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to the following parties:

School employees who have a need to know;

- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Certain government officials in order to carry out lawful functions;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- Individuals who have obtained court orders or subpoenas;
- Persons who need to know in cases of health and safety emergencies; and state and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

For additional information or technical assistance, you may call (202) 260-3887 or TDD (202) 260-8956 or contact:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

Child Protection Policy/ Mandated Reporting

All staff and volunteers are mandated by law to report any suspected case of child abuse, neglect, child sexual abuse or sexual exploitation to the Department of Human Services. Any reasonable suspicion will be reported including a child telling a staff member about abuse, witnessing the abuse, a parent's statement of abuse, or any physical or behavioral signs of abuse. A copy of this law may be obtained from the Site Director.

Non-discrimination

The ODC Network does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, height, weight, marital status, handicap, disability, or limited English proficiency in any of its programs or activities. The following office has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

Travis Williams, Chief Executive Officer
ODC Network, 4214 56th Street, Holland, MI 49423

Inclusion

ODC Network welcomes all children and is committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences that support the full access and participation of each and every child. We believe that each child is unique and work in partnership with families and other professionals involved with the child to provide the support every child needs to reach his/her full potential.

ODC Network Diversity Policy Statement

The ODC Network (ODCN) strives to incorporate the principles of racial and ethnic diversity as one of its core organizational values. Achieving and engaging diversity among our Board of Directors and staff is critical for our organization in order to represent and serve the West

Michigan community(s) of which we are a part. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day to day working practices with all our customers, stakeholders, team members, and community members.

We will provide equality of opportunity and will not tolerate discrimination on grounds of: a sex, gender identity, marital status, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, age, disability, HIV positivity, or political beliefs – or any other grounds.

We will demonstrate our commitment by:

- Promoting equality of opportunity and diversity within the West Michigan communities in which we work and with all our partners and workforce;
- Aiming to build a workforce which reflects our customer base, within the diverse West Michigan communities in which we work, with the aim of having parity of representation across our Board of Directors and staff;
- Encouraging recruitment from groups currently under-represented in our organization;
- Treating our customers, stakeholders, partners and team members fairly and with respect;
- Promoting an environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment, and addressing behavior which contradicts our policy;
- Recognizing and valuing the different individual contributions that people make;
- Providing support and encouragement to staff to develop their careers and increase their contribution to the organization through the enhancement of their skills and abilities;
- Building Board membership requirements and best practices that guide and promote our Board of Directors to accurately reflect and represent the demographics of our Ottawa and Allegan County community as a whole.

Every person working for, on behalf of, or in representation of the ODC Network has a personal responsibility for implementing and promoting these principles in their day-to-day dealings with customers, stakeholders, partners, team members and the community.

Diversity is not an end in itself, but a means of insuring that our organization is responsibly and adequately reflecting the West Michigan community which we serve. Accordingly, the ODC Network shall regularly review the objectives outlined in this policy and make every effort to ensure that the organization is meeting our mission and the desired goals and values represented in this Diversity Policy.

ODC Preschools Home Language Statement

At ODC Preschools we believe that every family and student brings value and unique experiences into our learning communities. Students and staff who are linguistically and culturally diverse bring their own unique value into our community that has the potential to enrich the experience of other students and educators. Students and staff who are multilingual contribute to the vibrancy of our nature-based programming by sharing their experiences, culture, skills, interests, and home language with peers.

Research shows that multilingual children benefit from continuous use of their home language at all levels of English language development (Schwartz, 2014). Much of multilingual children's language development, like other children, happens through engagement in play-based activities with peers (Huerta & Riojas-Cortez, 2014). In order to best support the language development of all students in our care, ODC Preschools is committed to encouraging the use of students' home language in the classroom setting.

ODC Preschools will strive to support students' home language by:

- Fluent staff members speaking students' home language in class

- Using greetings or simple phrases in the home languages of students
- Reading multilingual texts in students' home language
- Labeling the classroom items in the students' home language
- Providing learning experiences and materials that showcase all students' identities and cultural backgrounds

Unforeseen Circumstances Policy

When unforeseen circumstances arise that may impact children's health and well-being, we will make every effort within our control to mitigate any risks to children's health. To do this, we will look to local, state, and national authorities for guidance as well as outdoor- and nature-based organizations who may have faced the situation before. We will communicate with families as soon as possible when an issue arises and keep families informed as the situation develops.

Emergency Policies and Safety Drills

Our staff are committed to providing a safe learning and work environment. Unfortunately, natural and manmade disasters do occur. Such emergencies are best met by preparedness and planning.

A system of emergency preparedness has been developed that addresses the following goals and/or objectives:

- a. The health and safety of students and staff are safeguarded.
- b. The time necessary for instructional purposes is not unduly diverted.
- c. Minimum disruption to the educational program occurs.
- d. Students are taught self-reliance and trained to respond sensibly to emergency situations.

All threats to the safety of our facilities shall be identified by appropriate personnel and responded to promptly in accordance with the plan for emergency preparedness. We shall conduct at least four (4) evacuation/fire drills (fall, winter, spring and summer), and two (2) tornado drills between the months of March and November. Staff will practice lockdown drill procedures three (3) times per year at a time when children are not present.

Emergency procedures for fire, tornado, serious accident or injury and crisis (such as natural disasters, intruders or bomb threats) are posted on the parent bulletin boards. If evacuation is required due to a natural or man-made disaster, parents will be notified of the event by phone and/or text message. The location and method for reuniting families will be included in the message. Students with special needs (such as mobility issues) will be assisted or accommodated according to individual plans determined by the staff and parents.

Licensing Incident Reports

A State of MI, Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Incident Report will be completed anytime an accident or illness occurs at the preschool causing a child to seek medical attention. The staff member who attended to the sick or hurt child will be responsible for completing the report.

Minor Incident Reports

Teachers will complete Minor Incident Reports electronically that document an injury that does not require children to seek medical attention (skinned knee, bumps, etc.). These forms are reviewed by parents and the Site Director.

Procedures Related to Concerns

ODC Network strives to provide a positive environment for all. However, at times concerns may arise. If you have any concerns, please bring them to the attention of your child's teacher. If you are unable to resolve your concerns with your child's teacher, the Site Director and/or the Director of Support Services may be contacted. If you feel we are in violation of a licensing regulation, reports may be made to the state of Michigan's Child Care Licensing Bureau. A copy of the regulations is available on the Parent Information Bulletin Board.

Drug, Smoke, Vape and Weapon Free Zone

Every ODC Network Discovery Preschool campus is a drug, smoke, vape-and weapon free zone. Please extinguish cigarettes and properly discard smoking products, including chewing tobacco, prior to entering any ODC property. Help us stay in a drug, smoke, vape and weapon free zone by informing anyone that will be escorting your child to and from school of this policy. According to state law it is illegal for any person to carry weapons, concealed or otherwise, in a preschool/daycare facility.

Family Code of Conduct

Family members with enrolled children are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures set forth by the ODC Network. Through collaboration, we aim to foster a positive environment where children can flourish, learn, and thrive. Failure to comply with ODC Network policies or practices may result in restrictions or denial of access to the center.

Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to:

Swearing or Cursing

- The use of offensive language is not acceptable within the ODC Network premises.

Threatening Behavior

- Threats towards other parents, employees, or associates of the ODC Network are strictly prohibited.

Tobacco Use

- Smoking, vaping, or chewing tobacco is not allowed on the premises.

Physical Punishment

- Engaging in physical punishment of your child while on the property of the ODC Network is strictly prohibited.

Policy Violation

- Violating any policies or procedures established by the ODC Network is grounds for disciplinary action.

Social Media Conduct

- Posting negative comments regarding the ODC Network on social media sites is not in line with our community values.

We appreciate your commitment to maintaining a positive and supportive environment for all members of the ODC Network community. Your cooperation ensures a safe and nurturing space for our children to learn and grow.

Thank you for your understanding and adherence to these guidelines.

Emergency Procedures

******ADD SITE SPECIFIC EMERGENCY PROCEDURES BELOW!!**

[Emergency Procedures - Seedlings Discovery Preschool](#)