

**Gateway EduCare Infant Center,
Preschool, and Afterschool
Program
353 E. Donna Dr
Merced, CA
(209)725-7935**



Parent Handbook/Policy Book

Revised March 9, 2023

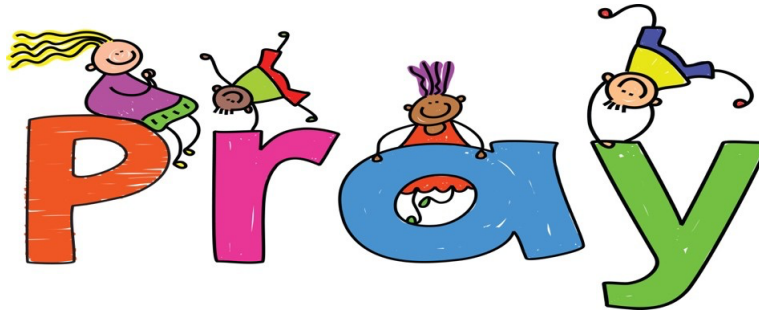
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EDUCARE'S MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the EduCare Center, through a collaborative effort by families, EduCare and community, that all children will thrive in supportive, nurturing environments, develop age-appropriate skills and strive to become productive citizens of our community. By supporting local initiatives, providing advocacy for families, participating in and providing outreach opportunities, EduCare will assist individuals toward strong, healthy family systems where each member can develop and grow personal faith in Christ, recognizing Jesus as the one who loves them unconditionally, and that He wants to know them personally. Families have access to obtain and utilize both physical and relational available resources (as noted in Outreach Section pg. 4).



PHILOSOPHY

We believe that each child is a unique individual, and that childhood should be treasured, not hurried. We believe that all children have the right to an environment that will enrich his/her life by providing developmentally appropriate educational and play experiences. We believe in developing trusting relationships with children through a predictable and consistent environment. We recognize our responsibility to love your child as you would and provide for their emotional as well as physical needs. We believe that early intervention is the key to school readiness.



OUTREACH/COMMUNITY

Gateway Church Mission Statement

“Ordinary people being transformed by an extraordinary God”

Gateway Church provides many resources and ministries to the community, including:

- Pastoral
- Marriage and Family
- Single's
- Library
- Blended Families
- Divorce
- Recreational
- Children's Ministry
- Junior High Ministry
- High School Ministry
- Celebrate Recovery
- Parenting Education Opportunities
- New classes form throughout the year
- Class posting change throughout the year

Please look for flyers on EduCare's lobby counter for new classes or special occasions. For more information contact the church office at 209-723-4283.

INFORMATION AND REGULATION

The Gateway EduCare Infant Center and Preschool is a non-profit organization and is licensed by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division. The Center is operated by an EduCare Board and a state qualified Director and Assistant Director. The Center operates as a combination under two separate licenses, an infant center license #243808215, a preschool license # 243808216 offering service for children between the ages of 6 weeks until *first grade enrollment (* limited space available), and a school age license #3810001. The facility, staff, and program meet the state guidelines as determined by Title 22 Regulations.

The Center is staffed with teachers and associate teachers who meet licensing standards and are striving for continued education. They are carefully selected and placed according to their gifts. All teachers by law are fingerprinted and have a criminal record clearance. EduCare recognizes the California State Department of Social Services Title 22 Regulations Section 101170 Criminal Record Exemption for minor violations. Those exemptions are granted for minor violations (not child related) for employees who have indication of good character as based upon licensing regulations. EduCare will recognize the employees previous work experience, with long term good character, in a childcare setting prior to approval of employment in addition to our hiring guidelines. This document will be made available upon request of the parent. Random drug testing may occur to ensure that your child is placed in an optimal setting through both their environment and their caregiver. At all times there are several staff members trained in Pediatric CPR and First Aid. Our staff supports the Christian Church and strives to develop their personal relationships through daily growth, Bible studies, and regularly attending church.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Gateway EduCare Center does not fraternize or discriminate against children and their family of any race, color, creed, nationality, ethnic origin, or religion. We give each child the rights and privileges of the programs and activities made available at our center.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information given to the center for the child's family file (enrollment and financial information) will be limited to purposes directly connected with the administration of the center. No other use of this information will be allowed except for uses that involve the welfare of the child or parent.



GATEWAY EDUCARE CENTER ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. Stephanie Dunn

Center Director
Civil Rights Coordinator

Mrs. Adriana Mata

Food Program Coordinator
Administrative Assistant

GATEWAY CHURCH

Al Schaap

Senior Pastor

EDUCARE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Matt Jonkman
Kevin Borges
April Holloway
Shelly Ferriera
Jessica Conas
Merry Tern

PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING CONCERNS

The Gateway EduCare Center reports to the EduCare Board. The EduCare Board is the final decision maker. Administration does not independently make decisions. EduCare has a chain-of-command to voice parental concerns or praises. The chain-of-command is as follows:

1. Discuss issue with your child's teacher
2. Discuss issue with the Director
3. Take issue to the open session of EduCare Board Meeting

4. If the issue is of a private matter you must submit it, in writing with a signature, and request a closed session prior to the Board meeting. The Board will reply, in writing, at the next scheduled meeting. All EduCare Board meetings are on the 4th Monday of each Month at 4:00 p.m. (except for a holiday, in which case the meeting will be conducted on the following day).

*Please note that all correspondences without a signature or sent anonymously will not be recognized and will be discarded.

Please be patient with your questions and concerns as we strive to keep all communication channels open.

ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT

We are sure that you have researched education and care for your child. The EduCare Center strives to go above and beyond the standard and minimum requirements for childcare centers and holds itself and its staff to exemplary standards for the care of your child.

All children 6 weeks –entrance into the first grade* are eligible for enrollment at the Gateway EduCare Center. EduCare has open enrollment and the school year begins June 1st and ends May 31st. A child becomes eligible when he/she has a birth date, has been notified of space availability, and submits a completed enrollment packet. Upon notification of space availability, a start date will be determined. You must begin on the start date or within 2 weeks of notification, whichever comes first. Tuition will begin on your start date. Once enrolled, any items requiring updates will need to be completed and turned in by their due date. If items are not in by their due date, the child may not attend until items are completed and given to administration. A complete enrollment packet includes both parents' information and signatures, unless special circumstances exist. (Review Custody information on pg. 9) The Enrollment packet includes the following:

- Enrollment fee (\$125 annual per child-nonrefundable. \$30 for School Age)
- Identification and Emergency Information Form (LIC 700)
- Pre-admission Health History-Parent's Report (LIC 702)
- Current Physician's Report & TB – due within 30 days of enrollment (LIC 701)
- Copy of up-to-date immunizations
- Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment

- Parents' Rights Receipt
- Personal Rights Receipt
- Infant Needs and Services Plan (for children enrolled in Infant Program)
- Video surveillance and Photo Authorization slip
- Signed Admission Agreement
- Red emergency cards
- Meal Benefit Form
- Permission Slips for Sunscreen, Buggy/Walking Trips, & Teeth Brushing
- Infant Sleeping Plan (LIC 9227)
- Biting Policy
- Parent Handbook
Receipt

*Annual priority registration will be given to all children currently enrolled in the Center. All other registration will be accepted on a first come/first serve basis. A child that is born will have priority if the child before them on the waiting list is not yet born (or in the 6-week waiting period.)

***Registration** begins for the following school year to currently enrolled children on April 1st or the first Monday after. Registration for all others interested will open April 15th or the first Monday after. Please note: We are a year-round program.

WAITING LIST

When an available space opens, families on our waiting list will be notified. The waiting list is based on a first come/first served basis. Following notification, the family who first contacts EduCare by bringing in the registration fee will receive enrollment. EduCare does not hold a space and a client must begin within 2 weeks of acceptance or the start date determined by administration. A child's name will be removed from the list three business days after contact has been made for enrollment and there is no response.

ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP PROCEDURE

The sign-in/sign-out app Procure is considered a legal document and is reviewed by licensing at annual licensing visit. Each parent is required to bring his/her child into the center and sign them in on the Procure app with a full signature. Failure to sign your child in and out will result in a \$25.00 fee each time you do not sign your child in or out. Consistent failure to sign your child in and out may result in termination from the center as we could receive a site violation and civil penalty for this.

A child will only be released to a parent or guardian with the exception of names listed on the child's emergency card. Persons picking up your child must be at least 18 years old. You must notify us if there are changes that need to be made to the card! It is the parents' responsibility to let us know in writing if another person is picking up your child. Please notify all people who may pick up your child that they will need to provide a valid driver's license or picture ID at the time of pick up. **There are no exceptions.** A child will **not** be released unless identification is provided. Also, please be aware that if a parent has not been met by the staff, you may be asked to provide identification, too. Although your child will probably recognize you, this is a safety precaution that we don't want to avoid. If you are late picking your child up a late fee of \$1.00 for every 1 minute after closure will apply and is payable at the time of pick-up or prior to your child's next day of attendance. After three late "pickups" your child's spot may be terminated.

If you do not show up: Failure to pick up your child is within one hour of closing is considered abandonment and the police will be called to take your child to a receiving home. This will only happen if we cannot locate you and no one on your emergency card can be reached.

CUSTODY

EduCare is legally obligated to release a child to a parent unless a valid custody order or protective restraint order is in place. THESE DOCUMENTS MUST BE ON FILE AT THE CENTER AND MUST BE A VALID COURT ORDER.

Single parents can complete the Enrollment Packet without father or mother information if the birth certificate documentation states "Father/Mother Unknown".

HOURS OF OPERATION

The EduCare Center enrolls and operates year-round June 1st – May 31st

Infant Program:

Full Day Only: 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
 Half-Day: 7:00 a.m.-12:30p.m.
 Or 12:30 p.m. -6:00 p.m. (Limited space available)

Preschool Program:

Full Day: 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
 Half day Preschool: 7:00a.m.-12:30 p.m.
 Kindergarten Enrichment 12:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

After School Program:

AM Care 7:00 a.m.-8:45 a.m.
 PM Care 2:15-p.m.-6:00p.m.
 Break Schedule 7:00a.m.-6:00p.m.

TUITION

New Rates Effective February 1, 2023

Preschool: 2 years to first grade enrollment (*and fully potty-trained)

5 day full day	5 day half day	MWF	T,Th	
\$980	\$890	\$865	\$830	

*A child is considered potty trained when they are in underwear and accident free for one month. Children Transitioning in the final stages of potty training will be charged the preschool rate considering the child has no More than two accidents per week and parents show active participation in the potty-training process. This means No pull ups! Maximum potty-training age is 4 unless child has a documented medical diagnosis (see Termination Policy).

Preschool: 24-36 months (Not potty-trained)

5 day full day	5 day am only	5 day pm only	2 days T,TH	3days M,W,F
\$1,280	\$1,280	\$1,280	\$985	\$1,030

Infant: 6 weeks-24 months

5 day full day	5 day am only	5 day pm only	2 days T,TH	3days M,W,F
\$1,280	\$1,080	\$1,080	Not available	Not available

After School Program 6 yrs.- 12 yrs.

AM Care Only	PM Care Only	AM/PM Care	Spring/Christmas Break
\$130	\$330	\$350	\$150 (in addition to)

15% discount for additional children enrolled (Discount applies to the lower tuition amount.)

Tuition

The monthly tuition is calculated in quarters. If your child starts school in the 1st week, you will be charged the full tuition, 2nd week 75%, 3rd week 50%, and 4th week 25%.

Annual Registration Fee:

A \$125 non-refundable registration fee **per child (\$30 for After School Program)** is due upon enrollment and each year thereafter. This is an annual fee. Initial enrollment between June 1st and May 31st is \$125.00; a student entering our program mid-year after December 1st is \$75.00. The purpose of this fee is to hold a spot in our program and to provide supplies and curriculum for the classroom and the children. Registration

for the following year will not be accepted for enrolled families carrying a tuition balance until balance is paid in full.

Payment:

Payments accepted by **check, money order, or on the Procure App only**. Payments are to be made by the 1st of each month in advance (after the 5th day of the month, a \$25.00 late fee will be assessed). Tuition statements are automatically generated on the Procure app, and it is the parent's responsibility to look up the amount due when paying with a check or money order. Failure to follow this policy may result in termination of enrollment. An additional fee may be charged if credit card is used to make a payment on the Procure app.

Vacation/sick credit:

7 days of either vacation or sick absence will be credited per year after (6) months of enrollment. To request credit, you must submit this in writing to the Director or the Accounts Manager prior to your vacation period. Sick day credit must be requested within 30 days of child missing day(s) of care. Vacation may not be used in lieu of termination notice. Families contracted with Access do not qualify for vacation credit.

Returned Checks:

A \$12.00 fee will be charged with the first time returned check or failed payment on the Procure app. If a second failed payment is received a fee of \$30.00 will be charged, and thereafter, you will then need to make payments by money order only.

ACCESS

EduCare is not contracted with ACCESS. You are responsible for your child's tuition fee. Full payment is due for the month ahead on the 1st of each month. You will receive a billing statement each month for the tuition due on the Procure app. When we receive payment from A.C.C.E.S.S., we will credit your account for the amount received. **You are responsible for any remaining amount due. You are billed and are responsible for paying for every day your child is contracted to be in our center, whether they attend that day or not.** If we have not received your payment by the 5th of the month your enrollment will be terminated.

It is your responsibility to sign-in and sign-out on EduCare's Sign-in app **and** Access's Sign-in/sign CareConnect app daily with your FULL signature and time in and out. Failure to comply may result in a \$25.00 fee, and consistent failure to sign you child in and out will result in termination. All timesheets are submitted on the CareConnect app by the 2nd of each month and require your signature for submission. ACCESS does not pay when your child is not here. You must complete the sign-in app also recording when your child is absent with reason accurately for full contracted payment from ACCESS.

If your contract with ACCESS changes from full day to part day, you are responsible for the remaining balance. We will only accept part day if space is available **and** within EduCare's part time schedule (see pg. 10).

CAL WORKS

EduCare is not contracted with Cal Works. You are responsible for your child's tuition. You will receive a billing statement each month for the tuition due on the Procure app. When we receive payment from Cal Works, we will credit your account for the amount received. **You are responsible for any remaining amount due upon exit/termination. You are billed and are responsible for paying for every day your child is contracted to be in our center, whether they attend that day or not.**

It is your responsibility to sign-in and sign-out on EduCare's Sign-in app with your FULL signature and time in and out and CalWork's sign-in/sign-out sheet daily with your initials and time in and out. Failure to comply will result in a \$25.00 fee. Consistent failure to sign your child in and out will result in termination. You must complete the sign-in sheet accurately for full contracted payment from CalWorks. It is your responsibility to have Cal Work's sign-in sheets signed by Director before CalWorks date due.

If your contract with CalWorks changes from full day to part day, you are responsible for the remaining balance. We will only accept part day if space is available **AND** within EduCare's part time schedule (Hours of Operation).

ILLNESS POLICY

General rule: Ask yourself, "If my child is healthy, would I want them around children who have the symptoms my child has?"

Young children are susceptible to any new germs. Therefore, it is very important that you do not bring your child to the center ill. We want to keep all of your children healthy.

If your child becomes ill at school, the parents will be notified immediately. If we are unable to reach the parent, we will call the numbers provided on the emergency card. We recognize the inconvenience this causes to working families. The child will remain in the isolation room until he/she is picked up. If the child is not picked up within one hour of the phone notification, a \$7.00/15-minute late fee will be assessed to your bill.

Illnesses that prevent your child from attending childcare and conditions of return:

- Any fever 100.4 degrees or above. Must be fever-free without medication for 24-48 hours before returning to the center.
- Extreme signs of illness: lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, or difficulty breathing.
- Diarrhea: 3 or more bouts, strange color or mucus, uncontrollable by diaper or toilet use, temperament of child not related to teething. Children must be diarrhea-free for 24-48 hours.
- Vomiting: more than one time in the last 24-48 hours, for infants more than the child usually spits up. Child must be able to eat a regular diet to return.
- Mouth sores: A doctor's note is required stating it is not contagious. This includes fever blisters.
- Pink eye/Conjunctivitis: Child may return after 24-48 hours of prescription medication, a doctor's note, and no more oozing.
- Impetigo: until treated and cleared.
- Lice: when there are no more nits (dead or alive). We enforce a NO NIT policy.
- Chicken Pox: after 5 days and all the pox are scabbed over.
- Unusual rashes: when cleared by doctor as not contagious.
- Yellow or green mucus from nose, ears, eyes until clear. If persistent, we may request a doctor's clearance.
- Any and all other indications of your child's behavior change or not feeling well.

***Parents, if you take your child to their wellness checkup and they receive shots of any kind, we ask that you keep them home for the remainder of the day to monitor them for any side effects. Your child may return the following day, please send their updated immunization records as well so we can make a copy.**

Failure to respect the illness policies and if there are continual days of bringing a child to the center ill may be grounds for EduCare to terminate your contract.

MEDICATION

Prescription medication may only be administered by a Gateway EduCare authorized administrative staff and must be accompanied by completed medication forms. Prescription medications need to be in the original container or box prescribed in your child's name on the prescription label. Over-the-counter medications will only be administered for any medical-doctor documented cases (allergies, etc.). All medications will be administered at 12 noon only unless your child is sleeping at that time or medication needing to be administered due to allergic reaction or asthma related illness. If it is needed at other times during the day, the parent must make arrangements to administer it.

NEBULIZER TREATMENT

If a child requires a Nebulizer, the parent/guardian must fill out a Nebulizer Care Consent/Verification Form LIC 9166. The Center Director has this form available for the parents. The Center Director and the Administrative Assistant are to be trained in administration of medication by the parent. The parent must also provide the Center with written instructions from their child's physician. These instructions include:

- Specific indications (such as symptoms) for administering the inhaled medication in accordance with the physician's prescription
- Potential side effects and expected response
- Dose form and amount to be administered in accordance with the physician's prescription
- Actions to be taken in the event of side effects or incomplete treatment response in accordance with the physician's prescription. This includes actions to be taken in emergency
- Instructions for proper storage of the medication
- The telephone number and address of the child's physician

EMERGENCY MEDICAL RELEASE

EduCare will seek emergency treatment without parental consent in a life-threatening situation. All Parents must leave emergency numbers on their emergency red card. Please list at least three emergency contacts per child. We will attempt to contact the parents first in any emergency situation, and then try the emergency contact people listed on the child's red card. EduCare will arrange emergency transportation to the nearest emergency medical facility, if necessary. At no time will any staff person transport a child unless accompanied by the parent or guardian. An ambulance or other such vehicle will transport the child if necessary. EduCare may also contact the child's physician listed on their red card. By signing the receipt of this parent handbook, parents assume responsibility for any emergency expenses and authorize EduCare to follow the emergency procedure listed above.

COMMUNICATION CONSENT

Parents/Guardians give consent to Educare personnel (teacher and/or supervisor) to communicate with their students outside provider (psychologist, psychiatrist, therapist, medical doctor, tutor, etc.) visiting Educare to help their child, for the benefit and growth of the child. An IEP, 504, or any other specialized plan for children must be shared with the child's teachers, and the Director.



SYMPTOMS OF COMMON ILLNESSES

Please seek physician's advice for any medical diagnosis and treatment

Colds: A cold is a viral infection of the nasal passages, sinuses, and throat. A runny nose is the major symptom. Sneezing is common with colds, and coughing is usual. The cough comes from irritation of the throat, caused by the infecting viruses and this occurs, particularly in younger children. Temperature is usually below 102, but may go higher, especially if the child is under three years old. Because the child may have difficulty breathing, it can be helpful to place a pillow under the mattress at the head of the bed/crib to keep them in a slightly raised position.

Ear Infection: Usually a child will have fever, fussiness, or crying when ears are touched. The child should see a doctor who will diagnose and prescribe antibiotics.

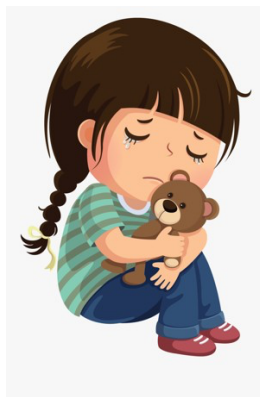
Diarrhea: This is the medical term for liquid bowel movements. The color of diarrhea stools may vary from light brown to green. Sometimes, the stools are mainly liquid or mushy but of normal yellow or brown color. Flecks of blood in mucus, or partially digested food may appear in the movement. Hand washing after diaper changes is especially important to prevent spreading any infection to the rest of the family. This definition of diarrhea does not apply necessarily to the movements of young infants, whose stools may vary considerably inconsistency and still not be abnormal.

In infants, the turnover of water in the system is far greater than in older children. They must drink more per pound of body weight to meet their needs; their “reserve” during water deprivation or loss is much less. There is danger of dehydration if the diarrhea is severe or prolonged.

Please seek physician’s advice regarding the “BRAT” diet.

The “BRAT” diet is as follows: (Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, and dry Toast) or Pedialyte for a baby who has not started solid food. The “BRAT” diet recommends not giving milk or formula for 24 hours. In the second 24 hours give half-formula and half Pedialyte. At the end of this 48-hour period, resume a regular feeding pattern. If the stool has not begun to appear normal at the end of this process, call the doctor.

Measles: A viral illness, which is not as common today due to vaccination programs. It is one of the most contagious illnesses. Incubation period is 10 to 12 days. Symptoms are like a bad cold, slight hacking cough, redness, and watering eyes, low grade fever. By the fourth day, fever of 104-105 degrees and a rash of faint red spots appear on the sides of upper neck, hairline, and back of cheeks. Within hours, the rash spreads over the entire face, neck, upper arms, and upper part of the chest. During the next 24 hours, it covers the rest of the body. The child should be encouraged to drink fluids. Contagiousness begins with the onset of symptoms and extends until 5 days after the rash has begun, when the child is no longer contagious.



SEPARATION PROCESS AND ADJUSTMENT

Normally, leaving a child is harder for the parent than the child. Any trained childcare provider has experienced the immense pain a parent suffers as their child begins to cry

during departure. In most cases, the child stops crying minutes after their parent leaves and begins to adjust. However, occasionally, there is a child who has difficulty adjusting. The center has two policies regarding this. The first is that we strongly encourage your child to attend 1 full week once they are enrolled without absence. This allows the child to adjust to the new routine. (Mommy or daddy leaves, mommy or daddy always comes back.) Unless your child is ill, there is no exception to this. It is mandatory for all children enrolled.

Even infants can sense our feelings. Have confidence in your decision. You have placed your child in an environment that is going to create healthy, happy, well-adjusted children that will be able to function in any social setting, most importantly, Kindergarten. You should have no guilt in leaving your child. He/she is in a safe, fun, stimulating, loving environment. State standards for our children are growing more difficult each year. The earlier they begin learning and developing school habits, the better off they will be.

You are invited to contact the Center Director or visit the center at any time to check on your child. If your child does have separation problems, please respect your child by only having them go through the process once per day. There is a video monitor in the Director's office for the Infant Center and all classrooms' doors have windows for viewing.

We will never allow your child to cry for a long period of time without contacting you.

The second policy is for those children who may have difficulty adjusting. It is very important for the parent to not place blame on themselves, the child, or the center. We will make every attempt to help your child adjust, however, in some circumstances; the child may not be emotionally ready for the stimulation a center setting provides. If a child has not adjusted after a two-week time period, it may be recommended that the parent try a different environment for care, such as a family home daycare, etc.

Please understand that a calm environment is in the best interest of all children enrolled and every effort will be made to help. The center reserves the right to make that decision and the enrollment fee would be reimbursed. Please note this is not something that is taken lightly, and the Director will touch base with you at the end of the first week if there is cause for concern.

CURRICULUM

The Creative Curriculum can be viewed at: www.TeachingStrategies.com

Bible ABC Curriculum can be viewed at: <https://craftyclassroom.com>

We are in contract with Merced County's Quality Counts Program

The Infant & Toddler Program:

Our adopted curriculum is the top research-based curriculum in the nation known as "Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos". The fundamental educational goal for infants is an open-ended curriculum plan to ensure that each child will develop at a rate appropriate to their age and individual development. Specific teacher-directed play activities will match the areas in your child's developmental assessment profiles. A huge part of an infant's development is allowing them to explore their world without interruption. There is also a primary emphasis on Christian Education/Character Development and teaching children from a very young age about Jesus. Each infant will be assigned a primary caregiver that will meet the individual needs of the child. All lesson plans will also be individualized to meet the needs of the infants enrolled in the classroom.

Preschool (3-year-olds):

EduCare preschool will implement "Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers." The curriculum for the preschool will be based on thematic units that cover the developmental areas of cognitive learning, large and fine motor skills, music, character development, bible stories and application, social development, creative arts, and vocabulary enhancement. There is also a primary emphasis on Christian Education and teaching children from a very young age about Jesus. Children will learn by discovery and play throughout areas of interest in the classroom and the playground.

Pre-k (4- & 5-year-olds):

"Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers", and Bible ABC Curriculum. Our program reflects ten principles: integrated curriculum where children engage with the world around them, standard-based instruction to help set clear and appropriate goals for children learning across content areas, age-appropriate materials for stimulation, cultural and linguistic diversity of each child's background and interest, balance of exploration to encourage children's curiosity, oral and language development, focus on literacy, math, social/emotional development and family involvement. There will also be a more refined approach to character development that promotes teamwork, citizenship, problem-solving, kindness, honesty, respect, self-discipline, responsibility, and perseverance. This program follows kindergarten entrance guidelines to help ensure that your child is ready for kindergarten. There is also a primary emphasis on Christian Education and teaching children from a very young age about Jesus.

Kindergarten Enrichment after-school care provided and included in the curriculum.

After-School Program (1st grade – 6th grade):

This program runs parallel with the Merced City Elementary School calendar.

Transportation will NOT be provided. Childcare is offered during the traditional school year, closed during holidays, winter, spring, and summer breaks. Tuition will only be discounted for “Winter Camp”, no other holidays. Walking escorts will be available for neighborhood schools to our program. Children will be provided with a snack, quiet study time, help with homework, and a loving Christian environment.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES/CHILD ASSESSMENTS

Child Assessment – Ages and Stages Questionnaires Screening Tool and Progress Reports

Infant/Toddler Center:

At least quarterly, parents need to take time with their child’s teacher to update his/her infant needs and service plan or toilet training plan. This also allows designated conversation time so that we know we are meeting your needs. Caregivers and parents will meet twice a year to set and review individual goals for their infant. All infants will be assessed with the ASQ tool and daily observations recorded and added to their educational file.

Daily communication will be made for the parents regarding diapering, napping, and feeding through the Procure App.

Preschool/Pre-k:

ASQ screening tools will be completed twice a school year. Informal observations and notations will be recorded in teacher observation protocol as observed. Parents of children beginning Kindergarten the following school year will receive an exit assessment. All kindergarteners exiting our program will receive a portfolio of their growth and progress from the beginning of their education at EduCare.



NUTRITION & FOOD PROGRAM

The center will provide all children with Breakfast (8:30am), Lunch (11:30am), and Afternoon Snack (2:30pm). **No outside food is allowed into the Center.** Infants are fed on demand. *(For food service purposes, an infant is a child not yet walking.)*

We are a peanut free school. Some children have very severe allergies, which could pose harm to them when they use their sense of touch and taste to explore their environment. Severe allergies can lead to a potentially life-threatening reaction.

Menus: Menus are posted monthly on the Parent Board and in each classroom. All menus follow the serving portion recommended by Title 22 licensing division. A child who is still hungry will be served more. These portions are available for you to view on the menu page.

Cost for Meals: EduCare is contracted with the State of California food program. EduCare will abide by all state regulations and menu production standards. Reimbursement is based on parent/family income. All parents are to complete and return income statements annually included in the CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form. Parents/Families that are “base” rate will pay a parent fee of \$35.00 a month for infants and preschool. Parents of children in the after-school program will pay a fee of \$10 per month. For parents that are eligible for “reduced” or free meals according to the state income guideline, the food program will remain free of charge. Families with financial hardship may submit a request in writing which will be addressed on an individual basis. (Children who are registered part-time afternoons *may* be exempt from fee).

Payments: All payments for meals are due by the 1st of each month. Each parent will be billed along with their tuition.

Food Allergies: Children with special diets such as food allergies may opt out of the food program. Children must have a signed physician’s request on file in the center stating the information regarding the child’s allergy. Children who opt out of the food program may bring a sack lunch that requires ***no refrigeration or heating***. All children will be served “family style” and join in the meal together, including teaching staff. All Children will pray a thank you for their meal to Jesus. Parents may join in at mealtime

any day of the week. Please make a request to your child's teacher so we may make accommodations for you.

Donations: Parents may occasionally be asked to donate a food item for special occasions. Items must be store bought and sealed in their original package. Packages that are open, torn, dented, or damaged in any way will not be accepted.

Food Introduction: Infants will be introduced to food according to their individual feeding schedule (Needs and Service Plan) and the Center's menus and policy. Infants will not be served solid foods until the age of 4 months with doctor's recommendation, or parent authorization.

Birthdays: Birthdays are an important part of a young child's life. Celebrating a birthday makes a child feel special, important, and loved. Parents are welcome to participate and bring in a special treat for their child. We ask that you avoid cakes, cupcakes, and sugar packed items. Mini Muffins, fruit and whipped cream, rice crispy treats or any other healthy alternative is welcome.



Dental

As childcare providers, we are in a unique position to assist with oral health for children in our care. Our goal at EduCare is to educate parents and children about the importance of brushing teeth.

Each day the classroom teachers and aides will assist the children with brushing their teeth after lunch. Every child will need to bring a marked **plain colored** toothbrush **with cover** and a small tube of toothpaste. Infants without teeth will need to provide an infant toothbrush or tooth brushing rubber finger. A copy of our tooth brushing policy is attached.

TOOTH BRUSHING POLICY

Action

- Review permission form with parent.

- Give permission for child to participate in tooth brushing program.

- Teaching staff will place pea sized amount of toothpaste on sanitary surface (bottom of clean cup/ clean paper towel).

- Each child will use his/her toothbrush to scoop closely toothpaste off bottom of surface onto toothbrush.

- Where children require assistance with brushing, teachers will wash their hands between brushings. Where a child has bleeding gums, the teacher shall wear gloves.
Teacher
- After brushing is complete, child will spit toothpaste into sink with running water, then fill cup with water and rinse.
Teacher

- Rinse toothpaste and return toothbrush to holder.
Teacher

Action by

Center

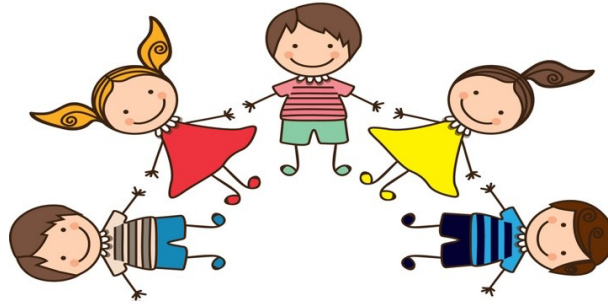
Parent

Teacher

Teacher
monitor to
swallowing of
toothpaste

Teacher will
continue to
monitor and
assist
child if
needed.

Adapted by Gateway EduCare



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DISCIPLINE POLICY

The Administration has the sole right to determine when a child's behavior is cause for removal from the program. Please see termination policy for details. Ideally termination for behavior will be the last resort after a behavior plan has been put in place and proper steps have been taken.

Discipline Policy and Procedures:

Discipline is not punishment. It is a time for the child to gain control of themselves with the caregiver's assistance. This is called a renewal period. Our goal is to allow the child the opportunity to make choices and have natural and logical consequences to behavior. We do this by following these standards:

1. I will not hurt myself.
2. I will not hurt others.
3. I will not hurt things.

Staff to child discipline shall be:

1. Positive redirection: We say, "Please walk", instead of, "You don't run." Which may label or belittle the child.
2. Redirection: If a child kicks another child, we give him/her a ball which is ok to kick.
3. Active listening: We allow the child to express his/her feelings. If a child shouts, "I hate you", we say, "I'm sorry you are sad, but I still love you."
4. Natural and logical consequences: If a child colors on the wall, we give him/her a cloth to clean it up.
5. Renewal Time: When the above steps have been followed and a child continues the behavior, the child may be removed from the environment that is causing the behavior. Children should not be told, "You are in time out" and there should never be a time out spot. We may call the parents to come for the child and try again the next day.

Infants and toddlers are all experiencing autonomy. This is a normal stage. Discipline is to be consistent and repetitive. Children need staff and parents to be consistent in

discipline at school and at home. Please seek advice if you need assistance in discipline techniques.

****It is not permissible to hit or spank any child including your own at the Center. This is a state law. Verbal abuse is also prohibited. The Center is required, by law, to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. ****

NAPPING

Infant Center:

All infants nap on demand. Each infant is provided a sanitized crib or cot. Yellow room children do nap from 12:00 - 2:30 each day. Parents are to bring (1) labeled blanket for their child and (1) standard crib size sheet. We will launder these each weekend for you. You may take your child's bedding home to wash yourself if you wish. The Center provides a comfortable cot for your child to sleep on.

Preschool:

Nap time begins at 12:30 each day. Children nap until they wake up or a maximum of three hours. (Typically, naptime is 12:30-2:30 each day) All children are required to nap at this time. Children who do not usually nap will rest for a 30-minute time period (what our regulations require) and then they may get up for quiet activities. Parents are to bring (1) labeled blanket for their child and (1) standard crib size sheet. We will launder these each weekend for you. You may take your child's bedding home to wash yourself if you wish. The Center provides a comfortable cot for your child to sleep on.



WEANING

Our Center will not begin to wean your child from a bottle until the age of 18 months or the child shows drastic signs of wanting to wean him/her. Many parents find the opportunity to have their child without a bottle or pacifier for 8 hours while in childcare as a great time to wean. After all, the parent doesn't have to be there to see all of the consequences of weaning a child who is not ready. Weaning a child from a bottle, blanket, or pacifier when another major event is taking place such as a new childcare, a separation, a move, etc. is strongly discouraged. Many children's emotional needs are met through the security of a bottle, pacifier, or blanket. These things should not be taken away. Weaning should occur at home first and then, gradually, at childcare until the child is weaned. We do not allow children to wander with their bottles. They must be

sitting or being held. This is a safety precaution, and we encourage parents to enforce this at home.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is to be provided solely by the parent or guardian or authorized person for pick up. Children under 2 years of age shall ride in a rear-facing car seat unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds OR is 40 or more inches tall. The child shall be secured in a manner that complies with the height and weight limits specified by the manufacturer of the car seat. Children under the age of 8 must be secured in a car seat or booster seat in the back seat.

Children who are 8 years of age OR have reached 4'9" in height may be secured by a booster seat, but at a minimum must be secured by a safety belt.

DRESS CODE

Please send children in comfortable play clothes which are easily removed without help. (Snaps, zippers, and elastic waist bands work best.) **No Belts!** Shoes that fasten securely should be worn. We have a no shoe policy in our purple and blue rooms. Shoes are still needed for outdoor play for blue room children that are walkers.

Diapers: At least 7 diapers are to be provided daily. We recommend bringing a package at a time to store in your child's cubby. You must also provide baby wipes. Once notified that your child is out of diapers, you must return the following day with a new package. If not, the center will assess a fee to your account of \$15/package. Each time this occurs there will be a \$5 increase per package.

Latex Gloves: Staff will wear latex gloves as a safety precaution during each diaper change.

Toilet training children: 5 pull ups each day or 4 pairs of underwear with a change of clothes. Underwear may be worn during the training stages **only with rubber pants.** NO EXCEPTIONS.

When you begin to potty train your child at home, your child's teacher will share our potty-training policy with you.

Shoes: Dress shoes with flat soles are not allowed. No opened toe shoes or thongs, this is a tripping, running, and playing hazard. All shoes must have a backing and be closed toe.

Jewelry: For the safety of all our children no jewelry will be allowed. Jewelry may break into small pieces and pose a choking hazard. Infants can be strangled in necklaces and

bracelets can be caught on toys. The Center will not be responsible for lost or stolen jewelry. Jewelry will be removed from your child if sent and placed in a pocket of your diaper bag, or at the front desk. Exceptions will be made for babies with pierced ears who have earrings to prevent the holes from closing. **EARRINGS MUST HAVE SAFETY SCREW BACK. POST ONLY. NO HOOPS. HOOP EARRINGS WILL BE REMOVED.**

Summer/Spring attire: Water activities are available, and your child will probably get wet. During the summer, our Center will have water days. Please send sunscreen (if you do not prefer the one, we provide) and a labeled towel and swimsuit for your child. Please sign a Sunscreen Permission Slip to allow the teacher to apply sunscreen. We maintain a temperature indoors of 70 degrees, so if your child is cold natured, please provide a light sweater.

Winter attire: We still go outside in the winter. Children need fresh air. Please be sure to send appropriate winter outerwear for your child. Our center runs the heat to maintain a comfortable temperature. Multiple layers of clothing are unnecessary and inconvenient for diapering.

*Our center is a hands-on center, and your child will get messy. Please do not send them in clothing that you wish to keep clean and unsullied.

EXITING POLICY/TERMINATION

Exiting Policy:

To withdraw your child from the program, the parent must provide a written 30-day notice. After the written notice is received your account will be prorated for that month. The account must be paid in full. Accounts not paid by exit may be subject to collection by a collection agency.

Termination:

The administration has the discretion to terminate care for any child to serve the best interest of the child, other children, staff, and the center. It is our goal to work with families, however, some circumstances may end in termination.

Examples of causes for termination:

- Failure to comply with the regulations of this policy book
- Failure to pay your childcare bill within the next billing date (unless arrangements are made)
- Child behavior that has been dealt with appropriately that remains unresolved (i.e., biting and severity of bites, increase of behavior)

- Failure to pick your child up on time (determined on a case-by-case basis)
- Parents being disrespectful to staff
- Stealing
- Use of foul language
- Spanking your child while on site
- Illnesses that do not receive acceptable treatments (continued illnesses)
- Any other situations beyond our scope of expertise





EMERGENCY/SAFETY PROCEDURES

Fire:

In the event of a fire;

1. The alarm will sound
2. All children will be taken to the nearest exit
3. Children will meet at the designated area and their teacher will take roll call.
4. Proceed to InShape. Parents will be called to pick their children up

*Routine practice drills are conducted for training in the event of a real fire.

Earthquake:

In the event of an earthquake, an instructor will simply shout the word "Earthquake". Staff will lay child with head vertically to the wall with their body over the child, protecting them from falling debris.

*Routine practice drills are conducted for training in the event of a real earthquake.

Flood:

Parents will be called to pick children up in the event of a flood.

Utility Interruption:

By law, a facility without electricity, phones, or water may not operate more than one hour. Parents will be called for pick up.

Bomb Threat:

In the event of a bomb threat, we will relocate to the InShape Sports Club. Parents will be immediately called to pick up their children until the area is cleared by the appropriate officials.

Additional Emergencies:

Provisions have been made for additional security. EduCare has developed a Lock-Down procedure in the event of intruders or special circumstances. Our doors are to remain locked at all times. Only parents and staff with a number code may enter our Center. All guests and visitors need prior approval from Center director and will be escorted through the Center.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

In the world we live in today, your child's safety is our top interest. Specialized locking doors and video surveillance allows for peace of mind. In addition, parents can view tapes to see how their child is doing upon request and within a reasonable amount of time.

The Center has security cameras stationed throughout for the safety of the children and our staff. They will be aimed at general use/class activity areas. Each family receives a permission slip with the child's enrollment packet which, when completed, will be kept in the child's records.

CHILDCARE CENTER SMOKE-FREE POLICY

Smoke-Free Policy:

Due to acknowledged hazards to young children arising from exposure to secondhand smoke, it shall be the **policy** of Gateway EduCare Infant/Toddler Center and Preschool to provide a smoke-free environment for staff, children, and parents. This **policy** covers the smoking of any tobacco product and applies to both employee, and non-employee participants, and parents at The EduCare Center.

If there is a designated smoking area, it will be located out of the children's sight, away from the main entrances to the building, and at least 20 feet away from the main entrance. All smoking trash, including butts and matches, will be extinguished and disposed of in appropriate containers.

Staff and volunteers will serve as role models by not smoking in the presence of children, parents, or participants.

1. There will be no smoking in any area of the childcare **center** at any time.
2. There will be no smoking by staff or volunteers when children are present. This includes both indoor and outdoor activities.



ITEMS FROM HOME

Please do not send items from home, such as toys, unless it is on your child's scheduled share day. The center will not be responsible for lost or broken items.

BIRTHDAYS

Each child's birthday will be recognized. You may make arrangements with your child's teacher for how you want to share the special day. Please **do not bring cupcakes, cookies, or sweets which** conflict with our nutrition program. We encourage whole fruit popsicles or muffins. See your child's teacher for ideas. If you are handing out invitations, please do not allow the child to do so. Invitations should be left in the sign in and out folders from parent to parent. This assures no hurt feelings to a child who may not be invited.

WHAT TO BRING CHECKLIST

Infants

Labeled:

4 identical bottles

Pacifier

Wipes

Diapers

1 box of tissues (monthly)

2 sets of clothes, socks included

Blanket and crib sheet

Toddlers

Picture of Mom and Dad
Diapers
Wipes
2 sets of clothes, socks included
Blanket and crib sheet
1 box of tissues (monthly)

Preschoolers

2 sets of clothes, socks included
Blanket and crib sheet
1 box of tissues (monthly)
1 Tube Children's Toothpaste and Toothbrush Cover

GENERAL CENTER CLOSURES

*A detailed list of the dates below will be handed out to parents at the beginning of each year and will be posted on the Parent Board

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Jr Day
President's Day
Good Friday
Easter Monday
Memorial Day
Staff In-Service Day
Labor Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving & Day After
Christmas & Day After
New Year's Day

SIGN LANGUAGE

Wouldn't you love it if your infant or toddler could tell you exactly what he/she wanted? Think about how much less frustration there would be on your part and the child's. At the EduCare Center, we believe that teaching children to sign along with vocabulary allows them to communicate before they can actually speak words. We are giving you a list of common words that we may use in the center, so when you see your child doing funny things with their hands or body, you will know they're talking to you!

BABY SIGN LANGUAGE POLICY

Baby sign language has radically affected the lives of many families. Most children begin to communicate through speech at 15-18 months of age. With the use of sign language, families are now developing closer bonds with their children as they begin to communicate as early as 8-12 months of age! Therefore, we will be implementing the use of "Baby Signs" into our curriculum for infants and toddlers at the Gateway EduCare Center.

The Baby Signs Program teaches babies to use simple, easy-to-do gestures for communicating with their parents and caregivers. These gestures or "signs" represent an item or concept, like "eat," "all done," or "cat."



EAT



ALL DONE



CAT

Using signs gives babies a way to "talk" with their parents and caregivers, before they can talk. Babies can communicate about the world around them, long before they have mastered their verbal speaking skills!

Our goal is to help the children use gestures and/or words to respond to "whom" and "what" questions about people, objects, and actions. Such as:

1. Initiate gestures and/or words to identify themselves and others.
2. Initiate gestures and/or words to identify objects and actions.
3. Imitate gestures and/or words initiated by the teacher.
4. Combine two or more gestures and/or words to form a phrase.

Unlock the thoughts, observations and wants of your child's mind with the gift of Sign Language!

Sample Gestures

- Mommy:** Tap thumb on chin with fingers spread
Daddy: Tap thumb on forehead with fingers spread
Baby: Make rock-a-bye motion.
Love: Make hugging motion.
Eat: Bring hand to mouth and tap lips
Drink: Bring "c" hand to mouth in a short arc
Milk: Open and close one or both fists
Cereal: Form "O" with thumb and index finger.
Juice: Place one fist on top of the other and twist.
Cracker: Use elbow to hit ("crack") palm.
Cookie: Twist fingertips in palm like a cookie cutter.
More: Tap fingertips together
All Done: Place palms down and move back and forth.
Please: Make circles on chest.
Thank You: Pull fingertips of one hand away from chin.
Diaper: Pat hip.
Dirty: Place right hand under chin; wiggle fingers.
Pacifier: Suck on thumb and index finger.
Bib: Tap chest with finger.
Gentle: Stroke back of other hand.
Hot: Make blowing motion with lips.
Cold: Clutch elbows and shiver.
Hurt: Touch index fingers together.
Stop: Shove palm forward.
Help: With fist on palm move palm upward.
Sleep: Rest head on hands
Sit-down: With palms down lower hands.
Up: Point finger up.
Play: With thumb and little finger up twist hands.
Book: Open and close palms.
Ball: Trace ball shape with hands.
Dog: Pant with tongue out

Cat: Trace "whiskers" on cheek.
Bird: Flap one or both arms out to the side.

Gateway Educare Infant Center and Preschool Biting Policy

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. The safety of the children at Gateway Educare is our primary concern. Our biting policy addresses the actions the staff will take if a biting incident occurs and the consequences if the issue is not resolved.

Toddlers bite other toddlers for many different reasons. A child might be teething or overly tired and frustrated. He or she might be experimenting or trying to get the attention of the teacher or his peers. Toddlers have poor verbal skills and are impulsive without a lot of self-control. Sometimes biting occurs for no apparent reason. Gateway Educare teachers are trained in dealing with these common, yet serious, incidents and will encourage the children to “use their words” if they become angry or frustrated. We will always maintain a close and content supervision of the children at all times.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs at Gateway Educare.

- The biting will be interrupted with a firm “No Thank you... we don’t bite our friends!”
- Staff will stay calm and will not overreact.
- The bitten child will be comforted.
- Staff will remove the biter from the situation. The biter will be given something to do that is satisfying.
- The wound of the bitten child shall be assessed by the child’s teacher and cleaned with soap and water.
- The child who bit will be spoken to on their level in a loving, but firm manner. We will explain that “You cannot bite your friends because it hurts them. We do not hurt our friends.” The child’s parents will be called to come pick the child up for the day.
- The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident. The child who bit will be sent home for the rest of the school day. Appropriate forms will be filled out (Incident Report). Note: If a bite requires medical treatment, the licensing consultant must be contacted by the next business day. See Child Care Requirements Licensing Guidelines Section 1101 (4)- General Health Requirements. Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.

When your child has bitten another:

1. Classroom staff will work together with parents and try to reach the cause as to deter future biting- charting location, other students, attempted bites, time, other behaviors, staff present, and circumstances. Staff will “shadow” children who indicate a tendency to bite, to head off biting situations before they occur. As a class, teachers will teach verbal and non-verbal non-biting responses to situations and reinforce appropriate behavior. We may also ask you to supply a teether on a lanyard to give the child an alternate to “bite”.

2. After a second biting incident, teachers will meet with parents to go over a behavior improvement plan. They will discuss our biting policy and prepare them for the possibility of paused enrollment. We will work closely with the child, in hopes to guide them quickly past the stage.

3. After a third biting incident, the student will be placed on a two week pause from Gateway EduCare and will be allowed to return. If biting continues, child may be put on 30 day pause or termination may occur if deemed in the best interest of the child, Gateway Educare, and the other children. Re-enrollment for the child into Gateway Educare may be considered six months after termination.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Gateway EduCare Center

I have received, read, and understand all the requirements in the Parent Handbook/Policy Book and Biting Policy. I understand these policies can be amended at any time, and I will receive amended changes in writing.

Parent's Printed Name

Parent's Signature

Child's Printed Name

Date

Director's Signature

Date