

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT® FOR HEALTHY LIVING FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SIOUXLAND Y EARLY LEARNING HANDBOOK 2024-2025







GROWING YOUNG MINDS Abigail Van Dyke

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Welcome to the YMCA Early Learning Center where we nurture the joy of learning and growth in every child entrusted to our care. We are delighted to have you as part of our community and look forward to partnering with you in your child's early education journey.

At the YMCA Early Learning Center, we believe that each child is unique and deserves a safe, loving, and stimulating environment to explore, discover, and flourish. With our licensed childcare services tailored for children from 6 weeks to 5 years old, we are committed to providing a foundation that promotes social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

Within this handbook, you will find valuable information about our programs, curriculum, policies, and procedures designed to ensure the safety, well-being, and holistic development of all children in our care. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with its contents, and feel free to reach out to us with any questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you for choosing the YMCA Early Learning Center. We are honored to be a part of your child's early years and look forward to embarking on this journey together.





OUR VISION & PHILOSOPHY

About Us

At the YMCA Early Learning Center our mission is to foster a nurturing and stimulating environment where every child feels valued, supported, and inspired to explore, learn, and grow. We are dedicated to providing high-quality early childhood education that promotes social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Through play-based learning, individualized attention, and partnerships with families, we aim to empower each child to reach their full potential and become confident, curious, and compassionate individuals prepared for future success.

At the YMCA Early Learning Center, character development is foundational to our programming. We are committed to instilling the core values of Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibility into every aspect of our curriculum. Through a nurturing environment and dedicated staff, we empower children to integrate these principles into their daily lives, fostering their growth as compassionate and responsible individuals.

History

Established in 2021, the Norm Waitt Sr. YMCA launched its Early Learning Center with the inauguration of two preschool rooms: one at our YMCA location and another at Dakota Valley Elementary School. Recognizing the growing demand for childcare services, we extended in 2023 by introducing a second preschool classroom at Dakota Valley and an infant/toddler room at our YMCA facility.

Vision

We are committed to addressing the significant need for childcare in the Siouxland area with ambitious goals and visions. In response to this demand, we are expanding our facilities to introduce the Early Learning and Youth Development Center at the YMCA. This expansion will enhance our capacity with additional classroom space, expanded enrollment opportunities, and enriched learning experiences for both our early learning and youth programs. The new facility is scheduled to open in 2025, allowing us to better serve our community







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DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

Age Group	Program
6 Weeks – 18 Months	Infant Care @YMCA Location
18 Months – 3 Years	Toddler Care @YMCA Location
3 Years – 5 Years	Preschool Care @YMCA Location
3 Years – 4 Years	Preschool Care @Dakota Valley Location
4 Years – 5 Years	Preschool Care @Dakota Valley Location

• This chart outlines the different age groups, corresponding educational programs offered, and locations

Two Preschool Locations:

NORM WAITT SR. YMCA

601 Riverview Dr. South Sioux City NE, 68776

Dakota Valley Elementary School

1150 Northshore Drive North Sioux City, SD 57049

Creative Curriculum – Preschool

Our educational approach is grounded in the Creative Curriculum, which emphasizes learning through play. This methodology ensures that children are actively engaged in their learning experiences, fostering a natural and enjoyable way to absorb knowledge.

Developmental Focus

- Social Development: Encouraging interaction, cooperation, and communication skills among peers
- <u>Emotional Development</u>: Building self-awareness, empathy, and emotional resilience
- <u>Cognitive Development</u>: Stimulating intellectual curiosity, problem-solving abilities, and early literacy and numeracy skills
- <u>Physical Development</u>: Promoting gross motor and fine motor skills through age-appropriate activities and play

Developmental Milestones / CDC Milestone Tracking

- We meticulously document your child's developmental milestones as they progress through each classroom level. This tracking is integral to our approach, allowing us to provide personalized guidance and ensure each child receives the support they need
- Tracking Method: Our classroom teachers use the CDC Milestone Tracking app to monitor your student's progress
- Quarterly Tracking: Milestones are tracked quarterly during the school year
 - Aug-Sept
 - Nov-Dec
 - Feb-March
 - May
- Communication and Reporting:
 - Reporting Method: Results of milestone tracking will be shared with you via email
 - <u>Parent-Teacher Conferences</u>: These results will also be discussed in detail during scheduled parent-teacher conferences
- Collaboration Approach: We believe in a collaborative partnership between families and our classroom teachers. Regular communication and sharing of milestone achievements foster a supportive environment where everyone is involved in your child's education journey.

DAILY SCHEDULES

DV Preschool Daily Schedule		
7:45-8:15 AM	Arrival / Center Play	
8:20-8:30 AM	Pledge / Bathroom Break	
8:30-8:45 AM	Circle Time	
8:45-9:30 AM	Activity Time	
9:30-9:45 AM	Snack	
9:45-10:15 AM	Music / Movement	
10:15-10:35 AM	Small Group Activity	
10:35-11:00 AM	Recess	
11:00-11:40 AM	Bathroom Break / Clean Up	
11:40-1:45 PM	Lunch / Bathroom Break	
1:45-2:00 PM	Rest Time	
2:00-2:30 PM	Reading / Snack / Clean Up	
2:30-3:00 PM	Recess	
3:00-5:00 PM	Back Up / Pick Up	

YMCA Preschool Daily Schedule		
7:30-8:30 AM	Arrival / Center Play	
8:30-8:40 AM	Clean Up	
8:40-8:50 AM	Bathroom Break	
9:00-9:15 AM	Activity Time	
9:15-9:30 AM	Circle Time	
9:30-10:30 AM	Activity/Music / Movement	
10:30-10:40 AM	Bathroom Break	
10:40-11:00 AM	Story Time	
11:00-11:45 AM	Lunch	
11:45-1:45 PM	Bathroom Break/Rest Time	
1:45-2:15 PM	Bathroom Break / Snack	
2:15-2:45 PM	Small Group	
2:45-3:00 PM	Clean Up / Folders	
3:00-6:00 PM	Free Play / Pick Up	

Infant/Toddler Daily Schedule		
7:30-9:00 AM	Arrival / Free Play	
9:00-9:30 AM	Morning Snack	
9:30-10:00 AM	Circle Time	
10:00-10:30 AM	Activity Time	
10:30-11:30 AM	Circle Time	
11:30-12:00 PM	Outside/Gym Time	
12:00-2:30 PM	Lunch	
2:30-3:00 PM	Rest Time	
3:00-4:00 PM	Afternoon Snack	
4:00-5:30 PM	Free Play/Centers/Reading	
5:30-6:00 PM	Outside Play/Gym/Walk	
	Free Play / Pick Up	

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ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSION

Application Process:

Parents can apply for enrollment through our website. Navigate to the Programs section and select either the Child Care or Preschool tab based on your child's age group

- Age Requirement:
 - Infant Care: 6 Weeks to 18 Months
 - Toddler Care: 18 Months to 3 Years
 - Preschool Care: 3 Years to 5 Years
- Enrollment Steps:
 - <u>Online Enrollment</u>: Complete the online registration through the steps above
 - <u>Additional Enrollment Forms</u>: After the online application is complete, your student will either be placed in the program or onto our waitlist. If your student is enrolled there will be additional paperwork that will be needed before your students first day:
 - Enrollment Form
 - Medication Form (If applicable)
 - YMCA Waiver

• 4 Bottles with lids to keep at

Immunization Records

Supply Lists:

Supplies will need to be provided on your child's first day.

Infant Supplies:

ready

Diapers

• Wipes

the center

Pacifier if needed

• 3-5 Extra Outfits

Picture of Child

• Diaper Cream / Powder

Sleep Sack or Swaddle1 Picture of Family and 1

Toddler Supplies:

- Formula/Baby food when
 Lunch Everyday
 - 2 Sippy Cups to keep at center
 - Diapers / Pullups
 - Wipes
 - Diaper Cream / Powder
 - 3-5 Extra Outfits
 - Blanket Rest Time
 - 1 Picture of Family and 1 Picture of Child

Preschool Supplies:

- Backpack
- Pencil Box / Bag
- 1 Box Crayons
- 1 Box Markers
- Scissors
- 1 Bottle of Liquid Glue
- Rest Blanket
- 2-3 Extra Outfits
- Reusable Water Bottle
- 1 Picture of Student and 1 Picture of Student
- Swimsuit / Towel (Only on Swim Days)

Essential Enrollment Information:

• Preschool students must be fully toilet trained before their start date in the program

- All paperwork must be turned in prior to your students first day
- You will receive communication from the Early Learning Director after all the necessary paperwork is completed and your student has a confirmed start date.

PAYMENTS / FEES

Classroom	Weekly Tuition
Infants	\$215 per week
Toddlers	\$215 per week
Preschool	\$165 per week

\$50 Nonrefundable Registration Fee for All Classrooms

Payment Schedule:

Upon enrollment, the tuition for the first week is due on your child's start date. After this initial payment, subsequent tuition payments will be scheduled to be charged to your payment method on file every Friday, covering the upcoming week of care.

Discharge Policy:

If you are needing to discharge your student from the program, we kindly request a two-week notice. Thsi helps us provide communication to families on our waitlist and ensures a smooth transition when adding a new student to our classroom.

• If a two-week notice is not provided, you will be responsible for payment for the remaining two weeks following your notification of withdrawal from the program.

Late Fees:

We kindly request that you pick up your child on time. A late fee will be applied if you are not able to pick up your child within 10 minutes of the scheduled time. After the initial 10-minute grace period, a fee of \$1 per additional minute will be charged until the child is picked up. This fee will need to be paid before your child can return to programming.

DROP OFF / PICK UP PROCEDURES

Hours of Operation:

Infant/Toddler: 7:30AM – 6:00 PM YMCA Preschool: 7:30AM – 6:00PM DV Preschool: 7:45AM – 5:00PM

Infant/Toddler:

- Consistent Schedule:
 - We ask that you maintain a consistent drop-off and pick-up schedule for your child and communicate this schedule to the classroom teachers.
- Drop-off Time:
 - Please ensure that your child is dropped off no later than 9:00 AM, which is snack time. If you anticipate a late arrival, kindly inform us in advance.
- Early Pick-up:
 - If you need to pick up your child before 3:00 PM, please communicate this in advance, as early pick-ups can affect our daily schedule and activities.
- Pick-Up/Drop-Off Location:
 - When dropping off or picking up your child, please enter through the main entrance of the YMCA and provide your name along with the child's name to the front desk.

Preschool YMCA:

- Consistent Schedule:
 - Please maintain a consistent drop-off and pick-up schedule for your child and inform the classroom teachers of this schedule.
- Drop-off Time:
 - Ensure that your child arrives by 8:30 AM. If you expect to arrive later, please notify us in advance.
- Early Pick-up:
 - If you need to pick up your child before 3:30 PM, please communicate this in advance, as early pick-ups may disrupt our daily activities.
- Pick-Up/Drop-Off Location:
 - When dropping off or picking up your child, please enter through the main entrance of the YMCA and provide your name along with the child's name to the front desk

Preschool Dakota Valley:

- Consistent Schedule:
 - Please maintain a consistent drop-off and pick-up schedule for your child and inform the classroom teachers of this schedule.
- Drop-off Time:
 - Ensure that your child arrives by 8:20 AM. If you expect to arrive later, please notify us in advance.
- Early Pick-up:
 - If you need to pick up your child before 3:10 PM, please communicate this in advance, as early pick-ups may disrupt our daily activities.
- Pick-Up/Drop-Off Location:
 - When dropping off your child, please proceed to door #8 located at the rear of the school on the north side.
 For afternoon pick-ups at 3:10pm, your child will be dismissed at the front of the school. For pick-ups between 3:15pm and 5:00pm, please use door #8 at the back of the school.

Following these procedures helps us maintain a smooth and structured environment for all children.

Safety and Security:

The individual picking up your child must be a parent or guardian listed on the enrollment form. If someone other than a parent or guardian will be picking up your child, they must be included on the approved pick-up list provided in the enrollment paperwork. Additionally, non-parent/guardian pick-ups must present a valid ID at the front desk.

ILLNESS / MEDICATION PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Illness Procedure

Please keep your child at home if they are unwell. If your child has a temperature of 100.4°F or higher, diarrhea, or flulike symptoms, you must pick them up. They can return only after being symptom-free and having a normal temperature for 24 hours.

- 1. Children will not be admitted or allowed to stay if they have a temperature of 100.4°F or higher, diarrhea, or flu-like symptoms. They must be symptom-free for 24 hours before coming back.
- 2. If a child becomes ill during the day, we will contact you to pick them up immediately. If we cannot reach you, we will call your emergency contacts. The child will wait separately from others.
- 3. If a child seems lethargic and not active, we will contact you to assess the situation.
- 4. You will be notified if there is exposure to a communicable disease. Information will be posted in the classroom and sent home. The Department of Health will be informed if needed.
- 5. If a child is on prescribed medication for an infection, they may return only after taking the medication for at least 24 hours, except for ear and urinary tract infections, depending on their condition.
- 6. If your child is presenting any of the following symptoms they will not be able to attend our program until they are symptom free for 24 hours:
 - a. Pink, gooey, or matted eyes
 - b. Continuous and/or colored nasal drainage
 - c.Sore throat
 - d. Discharge from eyes or ears
 - e. Open sores
 - f.Vomiting
 - g. Skin Rash
 - h.Diarrhea

We enforce these policies to keep all children safe and healthy.

Medication Policy:

Our program can administer prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, and emergency medications (ex. EpiPen).

- Over-the-counter medications:
 - Parent or Guardia will need to fill out the medication form.
- Prescription medications and Emergency Medications
 - Must be brought by a parent or guardian
 - original prescription container
 - clearly identifying the prescribing physician
 - medication name
 - dosage
 - frequency
 - Parent or Guardian will need to fill out the medication form
- A completed medication form is also required for all emergency medications.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

• Emergency Contact Information:

- YMCA Phone Number
 - 402-404-8439
- Early Learning Director:
 - avandyke@nwsymca.org

• Disaster Preparedness Plan:

- Fire:
 - Go to the nearest exit and leave the building
 - Walk to the Tennis Courts or to a safe location
- Tornado:
 - Once a tornado warning has been issued all staff and children in our care will relocate to the women's locker room
- Flood:
 - Go the nearest exit and leave the building
 - Walk to tennis courts or to a safe location

• Emergency Supplies:

- Class Roster
- Emergency Contact list for children in our care
- Authorized pick up list
- Emergency first aid bag
- Tornado kit

• Communication Protocols:

- Parents will be notified first through Class Dojo if an emergency has taken place
- Parents will then receive an email explaining the emergency and steps that were taken
- If children will need to be picked up from the center parents will be individually notified with a phone call

• Drills:

- Fire Drills:
 - Completed once a month in each classroom
 - One fire drill per year is conducted during naptime
- Tornado Drills:
 - Completed 4 times a year during the months of March through September
 - One tornado drill per year is conducted during naptime

• Parental Responsibilities:

- Ensure we always have your phone numbers and emergency contacts, and this information is regularly updated
- Keep the list of authorized individuals who can pick up your child updated
- Understand that if we are in an emergency like a tornado warning and it is unsafe to leave our designated safe area, we cannot authorize pick-ups until it is safe to leave.
- Please wait until it is safe for both staff, children, and you before attempting to collect your child

MEALS / NUTRITION

Preschool:

- Lunch Options:
 - Parents/guardians may provide lunch daily or opt for hot lunch.
 - Hot lunch costs \$5 per meal
 - YMCA location: Hot lunch provided by South Sioux City Elementary School.
 - Dakota Valley location: Hot lunch provided by Dakota Valley Elementary School.
 - Hot lunch charges will be added to your tuition on the 15th of the following month if chosen.
- <u>Snacks:</u>
 - Students receive morning and afternoon snacks provided by the YMCA.
- <u>Allergies and Dietary Restrictions</u>.
 - Please provide a doctor's note for any allergies or dietary restrictions.
 - If your child has food allergies or dietary restrictions, provide morning and afternoon snacks as well as lunch.

Infants/Toddlers:

- Lunch Options:
 - Parents/guardians provide lunch daily for their child.
- <u>Snacks:</u>
 - Snacks are provided for infants and toddlers by the YMCA
- Allergies and Dietary Restrictions:
 - A doctor's note explaining any allergies or dietary restrictions is required.
 - Please provide lunch/snacks that adhere to your child's dietary needs.
- Breast Milk:
 - Use polypropylene bags or bottles to store breast milk
 - Clearly label bags or bottles with your child's name and the date the milk was expressed
 - Bottles will stay at the center and washed daily
 - Bags containing stored breast milk can be frozen and stored in the classroom freezer for up to six months

Bringing a well-balanced meal for preschoolers, infants, and toddlers to daycare is essential for their growth and development. A balanced meal typically includes a variety of foods from different food groups such as fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy. Providing nutritious meals supports their overall health, promotes learning, and encourages healthy eating habits from a young age. It also helps in managing energy levels and mood throughout the day, ensuring they stay focused and engaged in their activities.

Nut-Free Policy:

Our program is strictly "peanut and tree nut-free" to ensure the safety of all students. Therefore, peanuts and tree nut products are not permitted within our facilities. Any snacks or party treats brought into the classroom (excluding fruit) must be purchased from a store or bakery and include an ingredient or allergy label for verification. This policy helps us ensure that all treats are safe for students with allergies. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.

COMMUNICATION

Class Dojo (Preschool/Infants/Toddlers) :

- Teachers use Class Dojo to communicate directly with parents.
- Message the teacher anytime with questions or concerns.
- Events and important dates will be posted on the calendar.
- Notify the teacher directly via Class Dojo for:
 - Late drop-offs or early pickups.
 - Student appointments conflicting with class time.
 - Days your student will be absent from school.

Student Folders (Preschool) :

- Students will have daily folders for school-home communication.
- Folders contain:
 - Behavior charts.
 - Yearly Calendar
 - Swim Dates
 - Monthly newsletter.
 - Any homework or forms needing completion and return

CENTER POLICIES

Toys and Electronics Policy:

To maintain a focused learning environment, children are encouraged not to bring personal toys or games into the classroom. During designated rest times, children may bring a blanket and a small stuffed animal. Electronic devices including cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, and other communication or technology items are not permitted and must be stowed away until the end of Y Preschool or when the student is picked up.

Photo Release

At the time of enrollment, parents will be requested to sign a release form granting permission for the Siouxland Y to use their child's photograph for public relations purposes, or to withhold this permission. The Siouxland Y maintains strict confidentiality and will not disclose any information about your child to unauthorized individuals.

Clothing Policy

- Please ensure your child wears play clothes: comfortable, sturdy, and washable attire suitable for unrestricted participation in all activities, minimizing concerns about spills, spots, and tears.
- All clothing and personal articles should be clearly marked with your child's name.
- Essential footwear includes tennis shoes or non-skid shoes for active play.
- Socks are required for gym activities.
- For skirts or dresses, please have your child wear pants or shorts underneath for ease of movement.

Transition to a New Classroom

- The director will notify parents/guardians when a child is ready to transition to a new classroom.
- Transitions occur when a child is developmentally ready or has reached the age requirement for the next classroom.
- To ensure a smooth transition, your child will spend a few hours over a couple of days in the new room to become familiar with the environment before moving full-time.

FIELD TRIPS / SWIMMING

Field Trips – Preschool:

- Several field trips are planned each year for our preschool classroom.
- Transportation to field trips is provided by a YMCA bus driver.
- Parents and guardians are welcome to join us on field trips if they use their own source of transportation.

INCELEMENT WEATHER

Infant/Toddler YMCA Location:

- Follows the South Sioux City School District schedule for late starts and closures due to weather
- Parents/guardians will be notified via Class Dojo.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

YMCA Preschool Location

- Follows the South Sioux City School District schedule for late starts and closures due to weather
- Parents/guardians will be notified via Class Dojo.

Swim Lessons – Preschool:

- Preschoolers participate in weekly swim lessons at the YMCA throughout the school year.
- Swim lessons are conducted by a certified swim instructor.
- A lifeguard is always on duty during swim lessons for added safety.
- Teachers actively participate in the water during swim lessons to ensure supervision and support.

DV Preschool Location

- Follows the Dakota Valley School District schedule for late starts and closures due to weather
- Parents/guardians will be notified via Class Dojo.

The philosophy of our YMCA program is based on the character development principles of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility. It is with the respect that each teacher will handle every disciplinary situation. Our main objective is to provide positive reinforcement, consistent praise, and encouragement. When a disciplinary situation arises, the following steps will be taken:

- 1. Redirect the child will be redirected from the inappropriate behavior to a more suitable choice or activity.
- 2. Warning the child will be given a verbal warning and reminded that continuing the inappropriate behavior will result in a consequence.
- 3. Logical Consequence the child will be given a logical consequence for their behavior such as being separated from the group for a short time or not being able to play with a certain toy, etc.
- 4. Parent Conference if the above steps have not been successful, a conference with the parent and teachers will be held to discuss positive methods.

Biting Policy for Infants/Toddlers:

1. When biting occurs:

- The child who has bitten is gently told, "biting hurts," and redirected to another activity.
- The child who was bitten is comforted, and the affected area is washed with soap and water.
- An incident/injury report is completed promptly.
- Parents of both children are personally notified of the incident.

2. Additional Measures:

- If a child bites three times in a day, they will be sent home.
- Continued incidents of biting may necessitate a parent meeting to discuss and find solutions to address the behavior effectively.

YMCA EARLY LEARNING BEHAVIOR POLICY Siouxland YMCA



A high quality program can only take place in an orderly, mutually respectful, caring environment. Child guidance is a process where children take increasing responsibility for their own actions. At the YMCA, we take the happiness and safety of our participants seriously. Therefore, we work very hard at creating a safe and fun environment. Along with our efforts, we need the children to help us by following some simple rules. Below is our behavior agreement.

Please read this Behavior agreement with your child and ensure they understand our behavior policies.

- I will listen to the staff and follow directions.
- I will respect other people's belongings by not touching/ using their stuff without permission.
- I will respect all property, help clean personal messes, and assist in leaving areas better than I found them.
- I will respect other people's personal space by keeping my hands and feet to myself.
- I will respect other people's feelings by having a positive attitude when talking to them.
- I will act in a caring way, and I will not hit, fight, bite, tease, harass or bully others.
- I will use my indoor voice when speaking inside.
- I will use appropriate language, which does not include swear words or negative remarks (i.e., "shut up," "stupid," "dumb").
- Before leaving the room or program space, I will ask a staff member for permission. I will never leave an area without adult supervision.

Not abiding by these rules may result in suspension and/or removal from the program.

All incidents will be handled on a three-incident system, except hitting, biting, scratching, fighting and inappropriately touching another child and/ or staff.

- <u>Hitting, biting, scratching, fighting and inappropriately touching another child and/ or YMCA staff</u> will be an immediate suspension from the program with no refund for the remainder of the suspension. If this behavior continues once more, the child will be removed from the program.
- All other incidents will be handled as follows:
 - 1st Incident = Verbal Warning
 - 2nd Incident = Written Warning & Parent Contact
 - 3rd Incident = 1 to 3 day suspension & Parent Meeting

More than 3 incidents will be subject to the child's dismissal from the program.

YMCA staff and management reserve the right to dismiss/dis-enroll a child from the Early Learning program if the child's behavior is disruptive to the program and/or compromises the safety of themselves, other children and/or staff.

Children suspended or terminated from the program will not qualify for a refund.

CONTACT INFORMATION



Director Information:

- Abigail Van Dyke, Early Learning Director
 - Phone: 402-404-8439
 - Email: avandyke@nwsymca.org

YMCA:

- Website
 - www.nwsymca.org
- Phone Number
 - 402-404-8439

Facility Addresses:

Infant/Toddler/YMCA Preschool:

• 601 Riverview Drive, South Sioux City, NE 68776

Dakota Valley Preschool:

 Dakota Valley Elementary School, 1150 Northshore Drive, North Sioux City, SD 57049

At the Siouxland Y Early Learning Program, we are committed to providing high-quality early education grounded in developmentally appropriate practices. We deeply value and support the strong connection between each child and their family, recognizing that understanding children within the context of their family, culture, and society is essential. We celebrate human diversity and are dedicated to the fair treatment of all individuals. Our primary goal is to create an environment that fosters creativity, independence, and responsibility, empowering children to make successful choices and thrive as students.

Thank you for being a part of our community and for entrusting us with your child's early education.