

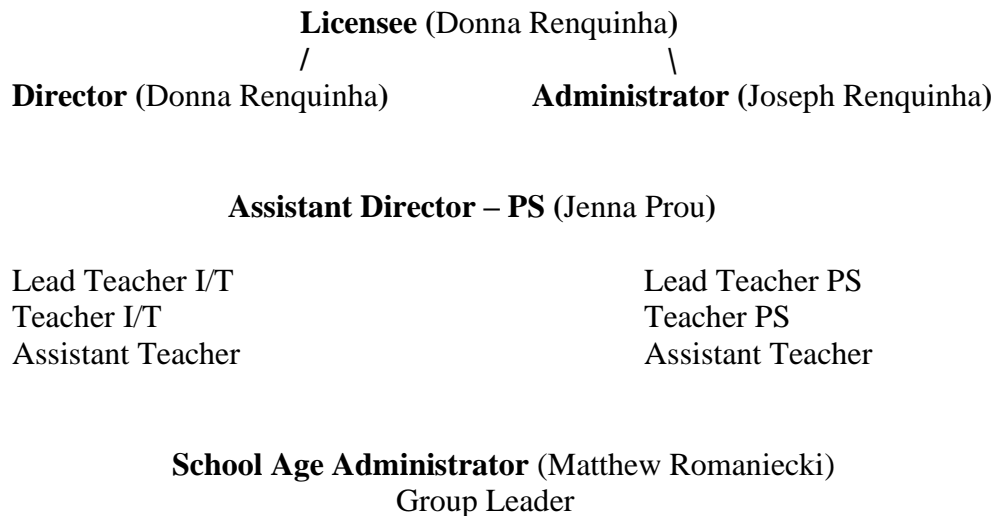
## **PHILOSOPHY OF CENTER / STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Expanding Horizons Children’s Center exists to support the working families of our surrounding communities. We believe that quality child care means offering a safe, stable, stimulating, and caring environment in which a child can comfortably develop intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally to his/her fullest potential. A quality program must stimulate interest, curiosity, and creativity in each child. We strive to provide an environment in which each child can feel secure, needed, wanted, liked, accepted as is and in which he/she receives positive reinforcement for endeavors in order that he can develop a positive self-image. Our goals are to assist each child in developing a sense of responsibility, to teach and model respect for all people and property, to encourage sharing so that they may learn the value of cooperation, and to help them learn the advantages of self-restraint and control over impulsive and negative behaviors.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION**

Expanding Horizons Children’s Center is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care. Our regional office is located at: 100 Myles Standish Blvd., Suite 100, Taunton, MA 02780, phone (508) 828-5025. Parents may contact EEC for any program regulatory compliance history.

The following is our organizational chart identifying the lines of authority and supervision within the program. We welcome your opinions, concerns and suggestions for improvement. Feel free to call or drop us a note in the tuition box.



## **CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN SERVED/NON DISCRIMINATION**

Our program provides child care for children ages 6 weeks through 11 years old from all socio-economic backgrounds. No child or family will be discriminated against because of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or require a child to be toilet trained.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

Prior to enrollment, parent and child will visit with the director or designee for an orientation to the program, to include meeting the child's educators, visit the classroom, seek information about the child's and family interests, discuss any special requirements or needs the child or their family may have. Infants through preschool children require a developmental history to be completed and updated annually, per the Department of Early Education and Care.

The parent will be provided with the center's statement of philosophy, services, policies and procedures, and other required information. All enrollment forms must be completed prior to admission of children to the center.

All enrolled children must have a record of the most recent physical (within a year) and up-to-date immunizations, including lead screening.

## **CHILDREN'S RECORDS**

Upon enrollment of your child and updated annually, the following information is required to be on file in each child's record per the Department of Early Education and Care.

Enrollment forms that include complete information on child and parents/guardians, including any custody agreements, court orders and/or restraining orders when applicable, emergency contacts, permission to treat in an emergency, health care and pediatrician information, proof of immunizations, annual physicals with lead testing, individual health care form for any child with identified health needs, developmental history, transportation plan, permission slips for treatment of first aide and CPR, photographs, movies, walks, off site activities, sharing of information with outside agencies, pool and water activities, sun block, topical medications and over the counter medications.

## **DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES**

Children must arrive by 9:00 am each and every day. Our structured program begins promptly at 9:00 am each morning and it is difficult for both children and educators to be disrupted at this time.

We understand there is the occasional doctor appointment for children and they may enter late with their doctor's note. Please understand that young children should not be dropped off between the hours of 11:30 – 2:00. It is hard for a child to enter the program and be expected to sit down for lunch without playing first and then be quiet for nap time.

When dropping off your child each morning, all parents must accompany their child to his/her classroom, check in through the Brightwheel app, and receive a verbal recognition from an educator to be sure your child is seen.

When picking your child up each day, please check out your child in the app, and be sure to keep them with you. **Do not** allow them to run through the hallways or run off and enter the busy parking lot alone.

## **ATTENDANCE**

The safety of the children is always a first priority. Parent/Center communication is essential to maintaining a safe environment for all children.

Any child who is not attending a scheduled day of care or entering center after 9:00 am **must** be called out by their parent/guardian as soon as possible, but no later than 9:00 am. This includes children who are part of our before and after school program. Please let us know in advance if there is going to be any changes to your drop off and pick up times.

## **CLOSING / LATE FEES**

Our center closes at 5:30 p.m. each day and anyone who is late is responsible for the following fees: \$20.00 for each 15 minutes after 5:30.

## **TUITION POLICIES**

Tuition is payable weekly unless other arrangements are made in advance with the office. All payments must be paid in full on the first day your child attends care. There are no exceptions to full payment for weeks containing holidays, snow days, missed days due to illness, and vacation.

Tuition not paid at this time is considered overdue and subject to a \$10.00 late fee. Overdue balances beyond the second week may result in the loss of child care.

A two week notice of terminating child care is expected. Accounts not paid at time of termination will be subject to legal action.

## **PAYMENT METHODS**

We will accept payment by personal checks or through our Brightwheel app. Please be aware of the fees that Brightwheel charges for their payment service: EFT .60 per transaction, and 2.9% for any card payment. Their service charges can change at any time.

## **HOLIDAY CLOSURES**

Please see office for updated holiday closures. Our Holiday Closure schedule runs from July 1 – June 30.

## **ON-GOING COMMUNICATION / PARENT CONFERENCES / CHILD ASSESSMENTS**

On-going communication between parents and educators is important. Daily contact during arrival or departure times, as well as the communication through Brightwheel, allows the opportunity to for a quick check on a child's progress, relay a concern, or find out about his/her day in general. For parents who do not see the educators daily, we urge you to call occasionally to check on your child's activities, progress, behavior, etc. If you have a concern that requires time for discussion, please set up a day and time to speak with the teacher. They are responsible for the care of all children in their group, and do not have time for a lengthy conversation at the end of the day.

Educators shall be available for individual conferences with parents/guardian at parental request and when individual child assessments are completed. Parents are asked to make every effort to meet with their child's educator.

Infants and children with special needs will be assessed every three months. Toddlers and Preschool children will be assessed every six months and School Age children annually.

Areas to be assessed include Cognitive, Social/Emotional, Language, Fine and Gross motor development and Life Skills. School Age will include Self Image, Respect for People and Property, Cooperation Skills and Self Restraint.

Children with special needs who are receiving outside services, consultants and/or specialists working with the child must be offered the opportunity to contribute to the child's assessment.

## **CHILD GUIDANCE**

Effective child guidance begins with an understanding of child development, classroom design and management and a positive attitude.

Educators provide an environment that is conducive to children's success by arranging adequate play space, materials and choices, structured, predictable classroom schedules that include thoughtful transitions, setting limits and the reason for their limit. Classroom rules must be posted in pictures and words and children receive daily reminders. They are consistent and firm, using natural consequences.

Educators must also role model appropriate forms of communication and behavior; use positive reinforcement when encouraging appropriate behavior. Redirection to an appropriate activity usually works best. Remember to ignore the non-threatening, attention getting behaviors. Observe and document children's behavior regularly. Discuss any concerns you may have with the parents and Director.

When behaviors do arise, identify the feelings the child is presenting. Empathy and reassurance helps keep the child and adult calm. Use reflective listening (repeat what the child says). "You're mad because you want the red truck." Ensure the child's concerns are being addressed. Give the child the first opportunity for a solution. Brainstorm solutions together with the child.

When behavior persists and enters into a situation where harm to the child or other children are involved, use techniques that help encourage self control. Allow the child to have time and space to regain control while under direct supervision. Talk to them calmly and allow them to rejoin the group when they regain self control.

## **REFERRAL PLAN**

In their daily interactions with the children, educators observe and document the children's development on a daily basis and present this information to the parent in the form of an assessment. During these daily observations educators occasionally observe developmental delays, medical concerns, behavioral difficulties, speech delays or other areas of concern with a particular child. The educator who is responsible for the child's observations is responsible for reporting their concerns to the Director.

Upon reviewing the information presented and making her own observations, a conference meeting is scheduled with the director, parents and educator to go over their concerns and make the appropriate referral for an evaluation. The director will assist the parents through the referral process.

Children at least 2 .5 years of age will be referred to the public schools and be informed of the availability of services and their rights, including the right to appeal, under Chapter 766. Children under 3 will be referred and informed of the services provided by Early Intervention Programs.

The director also maintains a current list of local community services including, but not limited too, mental health services, Early Intervention, vision, hearing and dental, parental stress hotlines and WIC. Please see the director for the complete list.

The center shall maintain a written record of any referrals, including parent conference and results. Release forms are signed by the parents for the collaborative efforts between outside agencies serving the child and the center.

## **SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION**

It is the goal of Expanding Horizons Children's Center to provide an environment that promotes success for all children. In the event that a child displays behaviors repeatedly that threaten the health and/or safety of the group or an individual or continue to disrupt the daily routine of the group, a behavioral plan will be developed in an effort to promote the child's continued enrollment at Expanding Horizons. The plan will utilize three steps and will be implemented upon approval of EHCC and the parent/guardian. School age children will participate in the development of their behavioral intervention plan. The steps are as follows:

The Director and classroom teacher must meet with parents/guardians to discuss behaviors and present options to address these behaviors. Parent/Guardian will be responsible to pick up a child who is unable to regain self control after following our Child Guidance Policy. Parents/guardian must agree to fully cooperate and participate with Expanding Horizons and follow through with recommendations within a time frame determined to be reasonable.

Information regarding resources for behavioral evaluation, observation and counseling will be given to parents/guardian and with written consent referrals for such services will be made by the director.

If at any time it is determined that parent/guardian is not cooperating with the Directors, a written warning (1<sup>st</sup> offense) will be issued outlining necessary action needed to avoid suspension/termination. A second offense will result in a written termination notice containing specific reasons(s) for the decision and, if any, condition(s) would allow the child to return to EHCC.

Expanding Horizons Children's Center reserves the right to immediately terminate any child or their parent/guardian who displays the following actions while under our care and supervision:

1. Attempt or threaten to flee the property.
2. Threaten the lives of educators or children.
3. Bring weapons into the center.
4. Bringing or using drugs anywhere on the property.
5. Engaging in destruction of property that endangers children or staff.
6. Engaging in violent behavior that requires the local police to be contacted.
7. Emotional / Psychotic behaviors that are out of the scope of our professional training.

Expanding Horizons Children's Center also reserves the right to terminate childcare services as a result of parents/guardian actions in the following:

1. Failure to follow the written policies and procedures of the center.
2. Treating educators, including the director, in a disrespectful and/or degrading manner.
3. Failure to supply the required medical records / information.

4. Failure to pay tuition fees.
5. Being habitually late in drop off and pick up times.
6. Acting in a manner that is detrimental to the children, educators and/or program.
7. Allowing children access to the outside parking lot without supervision.

### **STATEMENT OF LIMITED LIABILITY**

Expanding Horizons is not responsible for loss, injury or death of any child on the premises or parking lot while they are under the supervision of their parent/guardian or designated persons of care. Our supervision liability ends when parent/guardian enters the care space of the child, whether is be in a classroom or playground. This includes pick up from the classrooms, entering and exiting the property and its parking lot as well as attending family events and/or staying after pick up to speak with staff or remain on property for extended play.

### **TRANSITIONS**

Whether children are coming from home or another location of care, transition into the program always start with visits to the center with their parent/guardian prior to the start of enrollment. How many visits a child makes prior to starting is determined by the parent and child. Parents are encouraged to make as many visits as necessary until they and their child are comfortable with their new environment. Favorite activities which are identified by the parents are used to help ease the transition from home to the center. Any specific activities, strategies or supports listed on IFSP/IEP will be used to ensure a successful transition to the center and their new environment.

Infant/Toddler parents are required to provide schedules for feeding, sleeping and specifics on a “typical day at home” so we may compliment home routines of the infant while in our learning environment and Toddler parents receive a copy of the Toddler schedule.

Director, parents, past and future teachers are involved in planning the transition for “aging up”. When an infant is developmentally and chronologically of age, transition plans begin with cot napping, table and chair seating for meals and activities and schedule adjustments to napping and feeding that are reflective of a toddler schedule. Visits to the new classroom are frequent and duration extended over time until the child is comfortable in his/her new environment. At approximately 24 months children begin their transition to the Toddler/Preschool classroom upon approval from the parent, teacher and Director. Again, the transition is done over the amount of time necessary for the child to adjust.

EHCC supports children who are referred or found eligible for Early Intervention Services or Mental Health Services by providing space on site to help eliminate additional transitions to and from the center for our youngest of children.

A unique experience that culminates the preschoolers experience is the transition to Kindergarten in the public school. Our planning includes a 10 week Summer Kindergarten Camp where children are introduced to a schedule typical of a kindergarten classroom. Slight adjustments to snack/lunch times and “weaning” from naps are addressed, meeting and greetings time is progressively extended to reflect a kindergarten circle.

Our school age program’s “home like” environment is conducive to an easy flowing morning routine of homework fine tuning, and quiet, social interaction with peers. The children will be escorted to the front porch and await the arrival of the Norton Public School Bus to transport them to school.

## **DIAPERING AND TOILETING**

At Expanding Horizons infants and toddlers are diapered and/or encouraged to use the potty every two hours unless it becomes necessary to do so sooner. Parents/Guardians must supply their own diapers, wipes, diaper cream if necessary, 2 complete sets of extra clothes and a minimum of three complete set of extra clothes, including an extra pair of shoes, for those children who are potty training. It is our policy that no child shall be punished or ridiculed for having accidents while potty training.

Each infant and toddler classroom is equipped with an area exclusively used for diapering children. First we wash our hands and cover the changing surface, which is a cushioned, intact and waterproof pad, line with a disposable paper lining, collect the child's diaper and wipes, put on gloves, then go get the child and lie the child down. Educators are trained to change diapers with one hand always on the child. All soiled diapers are disposed of in a covered pail. When the changing is complete the educator must thoroughly wash the child's hands and dry them with individual disposable paper towels before placing them back in their environment.

After the child is taken care of, each educator must dispose of the paper covering, washing the changing surface with soap and water, then disinfect the changing area with the center prepared disinfectant solution by streaming the solution closely onto a paper towel to avoid any chemicals from misting into the air, then thoroughly cover the changing area, and allow it to air dry before changing another child. Each educator must wash their own hands thoroughly after each change and dry with disposable paper towels.

Clothing that has been soiled by feces, urine, vomit or blood shall be double bagged and labeled with the child's name, then stored away from other items in their diaper bag or cubby. Soiled clothing should be emptied, not rinsed, as rinsing these items at the center can spread germs and disease.

## **PLAN FOR USE OF VOLUNTEERS**

Anyone wishing to volunteer at EHCC must meet all the requirements of the application, screening and orientation plans before being accepted for services. The application process includes: 1: Complete application. 2: Provide three contact phone numbers of references. (must include 1 personal, 1 professional, and 1 from agency for which volunteer efforts are necessary) 3: Letter of intent from applicant with statement of reason for volunteering at EHCC.

Upon completion of the application process, the screening process will be implemented. The screening process includes a complete Background Records Check (BRC), Proof of 2 MMR immunizations or proof of immunity. A Physical exam documentation within the last year and statement of limitations.

Volunteers will not be scheduled for orientation until both the application and the screening process are complete. The Director, Assistant Director or Site Coordinator will schedule a time for volunteer orientation. This orientation process includes: 1: Tour of the facility. 2: Health and safety procedures. (hand washing, universal precautions, classroom and playground supervision) 3: Guidance on interactions with children and families. 4: Volunteer conduct code and dress code. 5: Confidentiality policy.

EHCC will maintain a volunteer personnel file that will contain proof of the completion of the entire application, screening and orientation process. This file will also contain record of volunteer's hours.

Volunteers will wear an ID Badge with name and volunteer status. Volunteers will not be allowed to be alone with a child and/or group of children.

## **NUTRITION REQUIREMENTS**

The Department of Early Education and Care requires licensed child care centers to implement a nutrition program that meets the USDA guidelines for nutritional and dietary needs of each child, including those of children with disabilities.

EHCC realizes the importance of proper nutrition in the growth and development of children and necessity to meet each child's individual feeding requirements. As early childhood educators we must address and practice healthy eating habits while serving as role models and resources to the families we serve. Therefore all staff will receive basic training and printed materials on the following topics:

1. USDA dietary guidelines for proper growth and development of children.
2. Information on incorporating the Food Pyramid into daily curriculum.
3. Guidelines on proper food portions for children and adults.
4. Food choking hazards.
5. Healthy lunch and snack suggestions.
6. Importance of daily physical activity to a healthy lifestyle.

Educators will follow parents' and/or physicians' orders for each child regarding food preparation, special diet, food allergies or over the counter vitamin supplements. (Must be in original manufacture's packaging and dispensed according to package directions unless otherwise specified in writing by the child's physician.)

## **LUNCH and SNACK GUIDELINES**

Parents are responsible for providing lunch for their child daily, as well as a morning and afternoon snack. A healthy lunch should have selections from all of the food groups: Proteins (meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts), Grains (breads, cereals, rice, crackers), Fruits, Vegetables, Dairy (milk, cheese yogurt), and Fats and Sugars (used sparingly). When packing your child's lunch and snacks, please be sure to include one choice from each food group. While children should have choices, please do not provide an overabundance of choices. We provide milk to each child at lunch and water throughout the day. Please do not send in candy or heavily sugared snacks.

## **PEANUT BUTTER**

Many pediatricians are recommending that children not be introduced to peanuts or peanut butter until the age of three due to the severity of allergic reactions. Therefore, we are eliminating peanut butter in our infant and toddler classrooms. That means in sandwiches, packaged snacks foods and Nutella. Cream cheese, soy butter and other non-nut butters are a great alternative to peanut butter and jelly.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

We do not allow cakes or cupcakes to celebrate birthdays at EHCC, for allergy purposes. For parents who want something special for their children on their birthday, we suggest pizza party at lunch time, fresh fruit, or other fresh foods to avoid any potential allergy incidents. Popsicles are also a great idea as they don't contain dairy.



## **CUBBIES**

Each child is assigned their own personal space (cubby) to store their belongings. Your child's cubby needs to be checked daily for their belongings. Cubbies need to be emptied and cleaned out on Fridays. Remind your child to take care of his or her personal space. Educators have the right to clean out and dispose of projects and papers that are left behind on Fridays.

## **EXTRA CLOTHES**

Each child is expected to have 2 complete sets of seasonal extra set of clothes for use in the instance of spillage, getting wet by playing outdoors or in water tables or the occasional accident. This should include extra socks, underwear, shirt and pants. A sweatshirt or sweater should also be left at the center for days when it is chilly inside or when it gets nice and they don't need a full jacket. Remember to label all your child's belongings.

## **APPROPRIATE DRESS**

Our program includes daily outdoor play with the exception of rain, severe heat or severe cold. Sneakers are required daily for running, climbing and playing outdoors. Children will not be allowed at the center with sandals, flip flops, crocs or water shoes.

When choosing your child's clothing for the day, please keep in mind that they play all day and should be comfortable and easily managed by themselves as we work on self help skills for our younger children.

No short shorts or tank tops are allowed (boys or girls) to be worn at the center. Shorts must reach the bottom of their finger tips when arms are extended. Dresses are discouraged as they pose a safety risk while climbing as well as unnecessary exposure. If your child insists on wearing a dress, shorts must be worn underneath and they will not be allowed to use any climbing apparatus, as the hanging material can be hazardous while climbing.

Snow pants, water resistant boots, hats and mittens/gloves **are required** for your child to play outdoors on snow days. No child can be left inside alone, so they will be asked to stay on the black top while the children play in the snow. If this causes a financial hardship, please see the Director or Assistant Director. Older School Age children may have an extra set of clothing to change into for snow play along with hat, coat and gloves.

## **LABEL CLOTHING / PERSONAL ITEMS**

Be sure all of your child's clothing and belongings are labelled with his/her name. It is not possible for us to recognize every child's belongings. Write their name on everything! Masking tape is great for inside shoes, gloves.

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

We ask that all children leave their toys, electronics, jewelry or other valuables at home. EHCC is not responsible for the theft of loss of personal property.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

We accumulate many unclaimed and unlabelled clothes, bathing suits, towels, etc. If your child is missing anything, please check their classroom's lost and found box. Lost & Found items not claimed will be donated after each season!

## **OPEN DOOR POLICY / PARENTAL INPUT**

Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program unannounced at any time when their child(ren) are enrolled in the program. We always welcome your compliments, concerns and suggestions.

## **BABYSITTING**

Educators are not allowed to "babysit" children enrolled in our program. This compromises the relationship between educator and child.

## **SNOW DAYS / INCLEMENT WEATHER**

During stormy weather we try to remain open with the exception of severe weather that threatens the safety of the children and staff members. Any changes to our operational schedule due to weather or emergencies, there will be notice sent as an alert on our Brightwheel app.

# **Expanding Horizons Children's Center Receipt of Parent Handbook/Health Care Policy**

I have read and understand the policies and procedures of Expanding Horizons Children's Center regarding:

- Drop off and pick up policies
- Attendance
- Tuition Policies
- Termination / Suspension of childcare policy
- Nutrition Requirements
- Fever / Illness Policy
- Personal Property Policy
- Statement of Limited Liability

---

Parent's / Guardian's Signature

---

Date