

# Redeemer Preschool Teacher Handbook

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Redeemer Preschool  
Teacher Handbook

*One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.*

**- Carl Jung**

### **Mission Statement**

To serve the community by providing an exemplary learning environment, which promotes the safe and healthy growth of children by following developmentally appropriate practices.

### **Background**

Redeemer Preschool is a non-profit, non-denominational preschool and child care program that was established by the Church of the Redeemer (member of the California Episcopal Diocese) in response to a growing need in the community for quality early childhood education environments. A new facility was built in 1994 to provide year-round preschool education for up to 55 children each day ages 2 through 5. Redeemer is located in the peaceful Glenwood neighborhood with a beautiful, natural setting. Redeemer holds a Preschool Day Care Center license with the California Department of Social Services – Community Care Licensing.

The professional staff of Redeemer Preschool has worked in partnership with the community to meet the needs of children and families we have served over the years. The preschool is completing accreditation from the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC), a certification of program excellence.

### **Philosophy**

- We believe learning is a lifelong, enjoyable, and challenging experience.
- We believe that every child is unique. We tailor our approach to each individual child's social, emotional, and intellectual needs.
- We believe in providing an environment where children's individual differences and cultural experiences are respected and valued.
- We believe that play gives children opportunities to understand their environment, interact with others in social ways, express and control emotions, and develop their imagination and creativity.
- We believe that the family provides the child's most important learning environment. Therefore, we offer education, involvement opportunities and support for the entire family.

- We believe in attracting and retaining high-quality professionals as consistency and stability of staff promotes the healthy growth of children.

### **Core Values**

We have a commitment to the care for young children that RESPECTS the differing cultures, lifestyles, preferences, abilities, learning styles, and needs of the children and families served.

Therefore, we follow an approach that is RESPONSIVE to what the children and families bring to care and emphasize RELATIONSHIP-based implementation strategies.

1. Families need to be partners in care. We seek out families' beliefs, values, practices, and child rearing strategies and include them in our practices whenever possible.
2. Young children are unique individuals with varying temperaments, rates of development and interests. We identify these individual differences and tailor our teaching strategies to meet the children's needs.
3. Young children are curious, motivated learners and also dependent upon adults for nurturance, support, and guidance. We respect them as learners, and recognize their vulnerability. Therefore, planning in our program is a shared experience including families, program staff and is individualized for children by:
  - Welcoming family and cultural practices;
  - Providing young children responsive relationships with their teachers in a nurturing setting;
  - Designing safe, interesting, and developmentally appropriate environments;
  - Giving young children uninterrupted time to play and explore;
  - Interacting with young children during caregiving routines and throughout the day in ways that physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually support their initiations in discovery and learning.

Appropriate program policies that anchor our work:

- Primary/Individualized Care  
*Each age group will be assigned to the same teachers in the morning and in the afternoon. This establishes responsive relationships and creates attachment security which is essential to the child's development of self confidence and social competence.*
- Small Group  
*A small group setting promotes personal contact between children and allows one-to-one attention by caregiver. Closer relationships develop.*

### **Non-Discriminatory and Diversity Policy**

Redeemer Preschool admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to its students.

At Redeemer Preschool, we strive to ensure that all the children enrolled in our program feel welcomed by the school, its staff and other students. Families with many different backgrounds,

traditions and experiences continually join our community. We offer an inclusive environment where each child is valued.

Redeemer's curriculum is designed to reflect the diversity of the school community and the wider community in which we live. The Redeemer staff selects books, activities and other instructional materials that are appropriate for each age group and individualized to the needs and developmental level of each child. The curriculum offers diverse images of gender role, racial, ethnic and cultural traditions and backgrounds, individual capabilities, and family lifestyles.

During the preschool years, children develop self-identity and ideas about others. Their learning experiences and environment play an integral part in developing a strong, positive self-concept, as well as empathy and respect for others. At Redeemer, we encourage the children to express who they are and show respect for their similarities and differences.

### **Anti-Bias Statement**

At Redeemer Preschool, we understand that at an early age children can absorb our society's biases of gender, age, color, language, and physical characteristics. We believe that the anti-bias curriculum that we embrace supports children as they explore, celebrate, and understand differences.

Our approach acknowledges that children and adults can be empowered to stand up for their rights and the rights of others and to recognize and question social injustice. We challenge the children and ourselves to:

- explore issues of fairness as seen from a child's perspective;
- see conflict as a challenge in problem-solving;
- be open to differing perspectives, ideas, attitudes and behaviors;
- monitor our words and actions for unconscious bias or prejudice;
- recognize and demonstrate respect for diversity among people.

### **Board of Trustees**

Redeemer Preschool is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees consisting of two ex-officio members and ten elected members. The two ex-officio members are the Vicar and the Director of the Preschool. Board membership is composed of community leaders from business, education and service fields as well as parents of children enrolled in the Preschool and members of the Parish. The Board has the independent authority to select its own staff, establish its own policy and rules, and maintain separate financial accounts.

### **Staff**

The teaching staff is the foundation of a quality program. Redeemer teachers are chosen for their training and experience in early childhood education, and their commitment to the healthy and nurturing development of children. Besides meeting the requirements established by Community Care Licensing, all staff members need to pass a background check (including fingerprint and

reference check), a TB test, and be certified in pediatric CPR and first aid. We encourage staff members to enhance their skills through team review, professional development and continued education. Our low teacher-to-child ratios allow for quality teaching and individual attention.

Redeemer Preschool is staffed by teams of educators. The administrative team includes a director, a master teacher, and a part-time bookkeeper. Each classroom is team-taught by either two qualified teachers or a teacher and a teacher assistant. All Redeemer employees are hired and managed according to the Human Resources policies established by the Episcopal Diocese of California. They are oriented, earn a competitive salary, have paid planning time, and receive full or partial benefits, including tuition for extended education. The preschool also provides a professional development program of over 20 hours per year, as well as supporting each individual's goal for growth through seminars, conferences, professional affiliation and experiences.

Our experienced administrators and educators participate actively in local and national early childhood communities by serving in leadership capacities, giving presentations, providing consulting to other programs (through the State Director Mentor program). The director and the master teacher are also a member of Marin Association of Education for Young Children and a local Preschool Administrators Leadership Group which is established and funded by the County Office of Education. This partner organization is seeking way to support each other, enhance training opportunities and serve as a resource for early childhood educators. Each staff member is responsible for being thoroughly familiar with his/her job description, staff handbooks and ongoing communication, preschool policies and procedures, and the NAEYC standards.

### **Health Examination**

All staff must obtain a written form from either their doctor or Health Services indicating the date of a physical examination. A negative TB test from the past 3 years is also required.

### **First Aid and CPR Certification**

All staff must complete a Child First Aid Training Course to work at the Preschool. All staff are also required to complete an Infant/Child CPR course as well. Documentations of these courses must be kept in your personal file. Timely renewal of both is required.

### **Enrollment**

The preschool operates year-round from August through July. The hours are 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The preschool maintains a waiting list.

- Priorities are given to the siblings of currently enrolled students, then to the siblings of alumni;
- Families who are making a commitment to stay at Redeemer before their children enter Kindergarten;
- Other children who are on the wait list will be admitted on a first-come, first-serve basis, based on the openings designated for full-day and morning students, as well as boys and

- girls for each classroom;
- Approximately 5-10% of Redeemer openings are also reserved for low-income families through a partnership with Marin Child Care Council.

**Licensed Capacity and Teacher-to-Child Ratios**

Redeemer Preschool is licensed by Community Care Licensing, California Department of Social Services to maintain a capacity of up to 55 children. The following is our daily enrollment in each classroom.

Green Frog Class (2 years old)	12 children with two teachers
Yellow Duck Class (3 years old)	13 children with two teachers
Purple Dragon Class (4 to 5 years old)	14 children with two teachers
Red Dragon Class (4 to 5 years old)	14 children with two teachers

**Daily Schedule**

Below is an example of our daily schedule. Schedule for each classroom may vary depending on the teachers’ style and the age groups served.

7:30 a.m.	School opens
8:30 a.m.	Morning program begins – student drop off and free play
9:00 a.m.	Breakfast (whole-grain cereals, fresh fruit, milk)
9:30 a.m.	Morning circle time (songs, stories, calendar/weather, games)
10:00 a.m.	Morning enrichment activities**
10:45 a.m.	Outside play and gardening
11:30/11:45 a.m.	LUNCH
12:15 p.m.	Morning program ends—Pick up for Green Frogs & Yellow Duck
12:30 p.m.	Morning program ends—Pick up for Purple & Red Dragons
12:30-12:45 p.m.	Circle time before nap/rest time
12:45-2:30 p.m.	Nap/rest time
2:30 p.m.	Children wake up
3:00 p.m.	Afternoon snack (fresh fruit, grains, cheese, milk/water)
3:30-4:30 p.m.	Afternoon enrichment activities**
4:30-5:30 p.m.	Outside play and gardening
6:00 p.m.	School closes

\*\* Enrichment activities include: art, science, storytelling, cooking, music, dance, sports, yoga, gymnastics, gardening, etc.

## **Play: How Young Children Learn**

At birth a baby's organs are fully developed, except one – the brain. Some of the brain cells are connected at birth, but most are not. These connections shape the way a child thinks, feels, behaves, and learns. That is why young children learn best from interaction with their physical environment.

PLAY is how young children learn best and it does have a real place in school. By experimenting with materials that lead a child to explore, ask and search for answers to questions about people, materials, events and ideas, children learn to solve problems. Between the ages of three and five, a child acquires a wealth of knowledge and skills by playing with other children under the guidance of caring and compassionate adults.

Play is the avenue for learning for young children and lies at the heart of our curriculum. It makes a major contribution to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional, development of children. The development of skills and competencies is promoted largely through play, supported by a variety of materials and a wide range of experiences, under the guidance of teachers who understand and value play as an avenue for learning at this age. Play helps develop thinking skills and social skills—by recalling experiences, figuring out how to replay them and solving problems that come up and mastering new challenges in an environment. While young children learn through informal play, teachers plan ahead, and provides the necessary and diverse materials for learning.

### **Types of Play**

Children engage in many different kinds of play, and each kind of play encourages particular kinds of interactions. Described below are some types of play that are typical of young children, and the opportunities for conversation that adults may watch for during each type of play.

1. Exploratory play. Exploratory play (in which children explore the functions and properties of materials and tools) is a relatively simple kind of play that doesn't always lend itself to play-related conversation. If three-year old Kevin is cutting, pasting and swinging, or rolling clay with his hands, he may or may not feel the need to explain or comment on what he is doing. However, because of its repetitive quality, exploratory play often offers a relaxed occasion for the child to initiate a conversation about a topic of personal interest like a new pet or a recent visit with Grandma.
2. Constructive Play. In constructive play, the child makes or builds something. In contrast to exploratory play, this more goal-oriented play usually presents an opportunity for talk that is related to the activity. During constructive play, children may pause – to take a look at what they have done, to consider how to solve a problem, or simply to seek acknowledgement of what they have done so far. A brief conversation with an adult can be helpful at these times. However, it is important for adults who want to converse with the children during constructive play to wait for the child to pause if the child is wholly engrossed in making something, an adult's comments may simply be disruptive.

3. Pretend Play. Role-play or pretending usually stimulates lots of role-related conversation among children. An adult who takes part in the pretend play by assuming a role related to the ongoing play or taking on a role assigned by the players will naturally be included in these conversations.
4. Games. Playing games (including action games like tag, or board games) is another common kind of play for young children. Such games often involve verbal negotiations over how to proceed and what to do next, and these are natural conversational opportunities.

### **Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)**

We adapt the following developmentally appropriate practices from NAEYC (1997) to develop and implement our curriculum:

1. Provide activities and routines that address the whole child (all aspects of development: cognitive, social, physical, and emotional).
2. Provide hands on experiences with real, concrete, and relevant materials for children to explore and manipulate.
3. Provide ample opportunities for children to interact with both adults and other children in conversations and discussions so that children will learn to use oral language expressively and functionally.
4. Provide functional learning centers that contain appropriate learning activities such as writing, reading, drawing, oral discussion, projects, and constructing. Problem solving, exploration, discovery and field trips are important learning activities as well.
5. Provide opportunities for children to construct new knowledge and skills based on what they already know and can do.
6. Provide playtime as a tool for learning and developing social skills, such as cooperation.
7. Provide an environment where children's individual differences and cultural experiences are respected and valued.
8. Provide a place where joy in learning occurs, where every child feels affirmed and good about being "just me", and can blossom within a community of learners.

### **Emergent Curriculum**

1. Emergent curriculum is a process in which the teacher integrates children's spontaneous, day-to-day discoveries, interests, and questions into established learning goals and activities.

2. Teachers connect the energy of children's natural curiosity by adapting the curriculum to these spontaneous interests.
3. When teachers incorporate children's ideas into their learning goals, children self-confidence and self-esteem are enhanced. Over time, such a practice supports children in becoming self-directed learners.

### **Intentional Teaching**

Intentional teaching strategies are research-based and blend child and adult guided learning experiences. Intentional teaching is to always be thinking about what we are doing and how it will foster children's development and produce real and lasting learning.

The following components reflect best practice principles for intentional teaching:

- 1. Plan the curriculum**

Ensure a developmentally-appropriate curriculum is in place that includes language and literacy, social skills and understandings, physical movement, and visual arts.

- 2. Structure the physical learning environment**

Ensure both indoor and outdoor environments are safe for children. Use interest areas or centers to organize the classroom space. Have plenty of different types of equipment and materials. Display what children have created and topics in which they are interested.

- 3. Schedule the program day**

Have a consistent, yet flexible daily routine and include a variety of types of activities. Use a variety of groupings, including opportunities for children to work alone or with another child. Carefully allot enough time for each type of activity, neither too short, nor too long.

- 4. Interact with children**

Connecting with children and building relationships with them is the basis of instruction and learning. Understand child development and offer supports and encouragement that promotes growth and progress for the children.

- 5. Building relationships with families**

Exchange information with families about the curriculum and how it promotes children's development. Provide information and strategies to families about how to extend learning at home.

- 6. Assess children's development**

Use assessment results and on-going progress monitoring to plan for individual children and for the whole group.

### **Indicators for School Readiness**

(from National School Readiness Indicators Initiative, a 17 State partnership, February 2005):

- Physical Well-Being and Motor Development (growth, gross/fine motor skills)
- Social Development (ability to interact with others, capacity for self-regulation)

- Emotional Development (perception of self, ability to understand people's feelings, and express own feelings)
- Approaches to Learning (inclination to use skills and knowledge – enthusiasm, curiosity, and persistence on tasks)
- Language Development (listening, speaking, vocabulary, print awareness, story sense, early writing, connection of letters to sounds)
- Cognitive and General Knowledge (thinking and problem solving, knowledge of particular objects and the way the world works, mathematical/science knowledge, abstract thought and imagination)

### **Curriculum Framework**

At Redeemer Preschool, we offer a curriculum that provides a balance between current demands for outcomes and accountability and what we know about the vital role of play in children's learning. Our curriculum also reflects good child development principles while integrating content and skill development. It also allows for adaptation and modifications to ensure access to our program for all children, including those with special needs. Our curriculum is also responsive to family home values, beliefs, experiences, and language.

Interactive, playful and interesting, our curriculum prepares children to get along well with others and become enthusiastic learners. We provide a purposeful and inspiring learning environment that helps children grow in all areas of development: social emotional, physical, cognitive, and language. The goal is for each child to be prepared for success in school.

Our teachers integrate children's spontaneous, day-to-day discoveries, interests, and curiosity into established learning goals and activities. When teachers incorporate children's ideas into their experiences, their self esteem is enhanced, and over time, this will support children in becoming self-directed learners. We offer our children a combination of child-initiated and teacher-directed learning experiences including circle time, free and dramatic play, reading, storytelling, music, dance, yoga, performing arts, arts and crafts, science and nature, health and safety, cooking, mathematics, early literacy, language arts, technology, social studies, gross and fine motor activities.

Our playground and school garden offer a natural setting for learning and exploration. Children find and study bugs and butterflies, plant seeds and watch them grow. We incorporate nutrition and wellness into our curriculum. Helping children to understand how to be healthy will be an attribute that follows them throughout their lives.

Animals are part of nature and can play a significant role in children's learning and development. They can also provide children with companionship and entertainment. Our animal program includes a salt-water fish tank, rabbits and chicken. We adhere to health and safety procedures pertaining to school pets to ensure that the animals are well cared for, interaction between children and animals is always supervised, and hand washing is frequent.

Teachers are engaged in a continuous cycle of observing, guiding, learning and assessing children's progress to ensure each child's experience at Redeemer Preschool is rewarding and meaningful.

**1. Two year olds (Green Frog Class)** are active and motivated learners. They are curious, growing in independence and eager to learn the world around them. They learn by experiencing their environment through their senses, by physically moving around and through social interaction. The Green Frog curriculum is designed to inspire the two year olds to explore, create, and share as they broaden their language and motor skills in a loving and inspiring environment.

Learning to self-regulate is an important part of the growing. We provide ample sensory and repetitive activities to help young children transform new experiences into knowledge.

A nurturing relationship with loving and responsive adults is essential for the two year olds to develop trust and a healthy sense of self. When young children know caring adults are physically and emotionally available to provide encouragement, love and appreciation, a strong foundation is set for lifelong learning. Our caring and experienced teachers appreciate and are responsive to each child's temperament, interests, and needs. We use small group teaching to build a closer relationship with the children and can be easily adapted to individual abilities.

Learning experiences encompass all aspects of a child's development and are offered through hands on, age appropriate activities. Projects are often open-ended without a specific final product in mind. Activities include circle time, reading, storytelling, sensory experience, nature experience, dramatic play, block play, creative art, music, movement, indoor and outdoor play.

**2. Three-Year-Olds (Yellow Duck Class)** Each accomplishment fills three year olds with pride and a desire to learn more. They are active learners with a natural curiosity and have endless energy. When children turn three, they become more social and produce language rapidly. They begin to understand various concepts and think more symbolically and logically.

The Yellow Duck classroom provides a rich learning environment where children are encouraged to explore and are challenged to learn, while making friends and developing self-confidence. We provide opportunities for hands-on experiences, which combines creative expression and skill building. Our teachers also provide plenty of individual attention to support your child's unique needs.

Our child centered curriculum combines teacher guided activities with time for free choice, socialization and play. Children choose from activities such as free and cooperative play; math and manipulative; block building; science and nature; art and construction; writing; and reading. During circle time, the children share books, music, songs and their experiences together. Our outdoor play yard and garden offer an exciting climbing/slide structure, as well as wheel toys, play houses to develop the children's physical skills and coordination.

**3. Four and Five-Year-Olds (Purple Dragon & Red Dragon Classes)** The Dragon (Pre-K) classes are designed for each child to acquire the skills and concepts necessary for later success in school. The Pre-K age is one of wonder and exploration, where children want to learn more about the things they find most fascinating. Through scaffolding, close observation, and curricular support, we provide opportunities for the children to explore things that are interesting and meaningful to them. When children learn through play, they develop a deeper love and appreciation for learning we hope will last a lifetime.

Many of the learning competencies begin to merge in the Pre-K years and continue to develop in Kindergarten. Our teachers work on the children's skill levels, using an emergent approach, through playful and meaningful activities. The children also keep a journal in which they capture their experience throughout the school year.

The curriculum content areas and developmental indicators for the Pre-K classes include:

- Approaches to learning — choice making and problem solving.
- Language, literacy and communication — interest in reading, writing and dictating stories.
- Social and emotional development — express feelings, building relationships with children and adults.
- Physical development, health and well-being — knowledge of health, creative movement, self-help skills.
- Arts — visual art, dramatic art, music.
- Mathematics — number, sorting and matching, patterns, space.
- Science — classification of objects, time, similarities and differences, exploration, study of nature.
- Social Studies — group routines, awareness of the community.
- Technology

### **The Learning Environment**

A developmentally appropriate learning setting allows for the young child to play in an environment that stimulates learning in the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional domains. Therefore, our classrooms provide a rich, exciting learning environment and be organized for the children's safety and comfort. The learning environment should also support children's independence. When planning the learning environment, the teacher should take into account the size and configuration of the room. The room arrangement should separate and define learning centers and areas. A distinction should be made between learning centers and areas, all of which are important components of a preschool classroom.

**Learning areas** are permanent parts of the classroom, which may be rearranged as the teacher desires and the room permits. Examples include reading area in the Library Area, or a Personal Storage Area.

**Learning centers** are flexible areas within the classroom, which have an interest/content area focus. They change frequently to correlate with certain topics. In addition, they provide for the reinforcement, application and scaffolding of a new skill or concept. A center can also create interest in a topic that is related to a theme. Learning centers need not encompass large areas. They may be placed on shelves, small tables, desks, window ledges and the floor areas or attached to walls/bulletin boards. Children must be clearly instructed in the use of learning centers to make them most effective. Centers not only help provide for the individual differences within a class, but they also provide hands-on activities that are developmentally appropriate for the young learner. Examples include the Listening Center, Music Center, or Science and Nature Center.

With proper organization, the teacher can optimize the available space to meet the needs of the group effectively and efficiently. A well-organized preschool classroom should have:

1. Sufficient empty space;
2. A broad, easily visible path through it;
3. Ease of supervision;
4. Efficient placement of storage units;
5. Modification of the learning centers throughout the school year;
6. Materials readily accessible to children and are placed at their eye level; and
7. Labeled centers and areas with pictures and names that children can understand with ease.

### **The Learning Centers**

Room arrangement is also a management tool. The learning environment and materials should be organized in such a way so that the design of the room and learning centers or areas will enhance the children's learning and enable the teacher to manage the group size within a particular area. Centers may be modified in size, shape, and with new materials throughout the year.

#### **1. Reading/Writing/Media Center**

One of the most empowering achievements in life is learning to read. The Reading/Writing and Media center should be a comfortable place where children can discover the joy of reading and writing. It should be filled with a variety of age appropriate books, magazines and newspapers and provide ample opportunity for children to read a wide selection of quality children's literature.

Children should be allowed to select their own materials to read independently or in a group. They can interact with each other as they "buddy" read or discuss books they've read.

## **2. Music/Listening Center**

Research strongly suggests that music is a powerful teaching tool that can increase brain activity and embed learning. Music is an integral part of every child's life. The music/listening center/area provides a variety of musical instruments and materials for the children to enjoy. Children, who listen to music to identify, discriminate and create sounds, sound patterns, rhythm and rhythm patterns, are far more likely to be able to hear sounds in words. Chants, rhymes and songs on charts help children to tune into the similarities in music and language as they build listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Through musical activities of marching, clapping and singing, students enhance their cognitive ability, as well as motor coordination and body movement.

**3.**

## **Math Center**

Young children learn mathematics best through the manipulation of real, concrete and relevant materials. Mathematics is developing as children construct buildings in the block area and measure their castles at the sand table. It develops as children sort, classify, and count all the buttons in the button box, create patterns with red and yellow snap cubes, problem solve and record how many more beans Adam has than Lucy, and use spatial visualization in putting puzzle pieces together. The Math center should be carefully planned to encourage the development and reinforcement of mathematical concepts. It should have a variety of manipulatives so that children may engage in hands-on, developmentally appropriate activities.

## **4. Arts and Crafts Center**

Art allows children to explore and experiment with many interesting materials and mediums. Children are naturally creative and art gives them a means with which to express themselves. During art activities, give children the opportunity to talk about and share their work with their classmates. In an Art and Crafts center it is the process, not the final product, which is the most important aspect.

## **5. Science Center**

Young children have unlimited curiosity about their world. A Science Center should be a place where children can explore, observe, hypothesize, investigate, experiment, poke and probe. A place where they can record their findings through drawings and print is needed. The center should be structured so children can do investigations independently to discover and form science concepts. The materials should invite children to explore with all five senses. It should be a place of discovery, wonder and excitement.

## **6. Block and Manipulative Center**

Giving children the opportunity to be active participants in their own learning is key. The Block/Manipulative center should be equipped with some type of shelving for storing manipulative materials.

## **7. Dramatic Play Center**

In this area children become acquainted with roles and situations in life. The Dramatic Play Area can be arranged to create various “real-life settings”: post office, bank, theater, hospital, doctor’s office, restaurant, grocery store and a multitude of household tasks and routines, e.g., nurturing babies, cleaning the house, preparing and cooking food, setting the table, doing the laundry and ironing the clothes.

Remember to change materials according to children’s interests and needs. “Role playing” offers opportunities for developing social skills, exchanging ideas, giving and following directions, sharing, as well as working out conflict situations.

## **8. Personal Storage Area**

The Personal Storage area is very important for children and should be easily accessible to them. In this area children learn to be responsible for their belongings and learn to put things away. The area gives children a sense of privacy and individuality.

## **9. Outdoor Play Area**

An Active Play Area is critical for allowing children to develop large muscles and coordination. It should be spacious and inviting. Gross motor equipment should be sturdy, attractive, safe and inspected regularly. Large muscle activities are essential for children’s health and physical development. They are also important for the development of perceptual and conceptual skills. Active play areas may be indoors or outdoors as weather permits.

## **Classroom Management – Effective Techniques**

Effective teachers in early childhood classrooms facilitate, model, demonstrate, create challenges, listen to and support young children as they expand their cognitive, social, emotional and physical abilities. The preschool teacher needs to be committed to serving the interests and needs of the young child. Young children, especially, need stability and benefit greatly from routines. These two factors give the children assurance, confidence and make them feel comfortable in school. This reduces their level of anxiety and allows children to engage in new experiences. Therefore, the SAME TEACHER needs to be available every day to implement the curriculum through a consistent daily routine and to offer assistance, support, information, and friendship as needed to each child. The following characteristics are important in a preschool teacher:

1. Likes, respects, and values children.
2. Relates easily and spontaneously to others.
3. Is a patient, confident, and caring individual.
4. Is a positive, happy individual.
5. Is dependable and reliable.
6. Makes friends easily.
7. Possesses a sense of humor.
8. Is flexible and adapts well to the requirements of others.
9. Accepts children's strong emotions such as anger, love, and wonder and redirects inappropriate behaviors.
10. Takes initiative in the classroom.
11. Has knowledge of early childhood curriculum, child growth and development and child guidance.
12. Keeps abreast of changes in the field by reading, attending conferences, seminars and courses.
13. Desires continuous learning.
14. Enjoys challenges and problem solving.
15. Can juggle several activities at a time.
16. Feels rewarded by progress even, if it is minimal.

According to research, the teacher's ability to converse with the young child is fundamental to the learning process. The teacher's voice and speech assists a child in putting their own thoughts and experiences into words, become more reflective and to develop critical thinking skills.

## **Building Positive Skills for Children**

The following are some skills to help a child build confidence and trust.

<b>DO</b>	<b>DON'T</b>
Help the child develop an, "I-can-do-it attitude.	Don't destroy the child's self-confidence by doing everything for him or her.
Use as few words as possible when giving verbal direction.	Don't use too many words and confuse the child.
Reinforce words with actions. Body gestures are another form of guidance.	Don't be inconsistent. Model the behavior you expect from the children.
Use simple words to communicate clearly.	Don't use a vocabulary that is beyond the children's level of understanding.
Speak in a calm, quiet, relaxed tone of voice.	Don't raise your voice. Save loud voices for an emergency.
Encourage independence and cooperation.	Don't dress and feed children who are able to care for themselves.
Provide the children with time to change activities.	Don't deprive children of a transition time.
Consider children's feelings.	Don't deprive the children of recognizing, understanding, and learning to express their feelings in acceptable ways.

## **Daily Routine and Transition Time**

Establishing a daily routine and schedule has many benefits. Routines such as toileting, resting and eating are everyday experiences. They serve as a framework around which the child's day is organized. It gives the child assurance, trust and confidence to know that there are familiar aspects of the day which he or she can anticipate and understand. Establishing consistent daily routines also help a child learn:

- a sense of the passage of time;
- be successful and experience a sense of independence;
- provide opportunities to be responsible; and
- experience less confusion and minimize behavioral difficulties.

Moving smoothly from one part of the day to the next or from one activity to another (transition) is important so that children are neither stressed or hurried or bored with waiting. Transitions should maintain the flow of the daily routine so that children can anticipate upcoming events and move toward them. Teachers may think transition time as unimportant times during the day, but they can be consequential events as they can mean the difference between a difficult day and one that goes smoothly for the children and adults. Transition times need to be adjusted to suit children's needs. They can help with teaching children how to put away or store their belongings and toys and the reason for maintaining a clean and orderly environment. The following are some guidelines for transition times:

- Keep to a minimum the number of transitions between activities, places and caregivers.
- Plan enjoyable ways for groups of children to move from place to place or activity to activity (e.g., count, sing, compare, observe, signs).
- When waiting time cannot be avoided, plan ways to keep children actively involved.
- Offer appropriate choices to individual children before a transition.
- Alert children to the upcoming change.

## **Managing Field Trips**

Trips outside school are important as they help a child learn more about the world in which they live. Preparation for a field trip is essential. The children need to know what they are going to see, what to look for, what they can do and what they cannot do and what to expect. Children need to be prepared for unusual or unexpected events such as loud noises or sudden changes.

For the maximum benefits of a field trip, educational goals must be carefully planned. Some of the reasons for adding field trips to the curriculum are to:

- Develop keener observational skills.
- Provide first-hand experiences.
- Build vocabularies.
- Clarify concepts as new information is gained.
- Learn about the community and the environment.
- Participate in sensory experiences.
- Gain new insights for dramatic play.

- Practice following directions while in a group.
- Practice acceptable social behaviors.

## **Teacher Resources**

While we respect and appreciate the talents and teaching style each teacher brings to our program, we utilize **The Creative Curriculum** as a reference and guideline for planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate development. The Creative Curriculum Framework presents the following components:

1. How Children Develop and Learn
2. The Learning Environment
3. What Children Learn
4. Caring and Teaching
5. The Teacher's Role
6. The Family's Role
7. Interest Areas
8. Goals and objectives which link directly to ongoing assessment of children's progress
9. Strategies for meeting the needs of second language learners and children with disabilities

The Creative Curriculum provides a comprehensive picture of a high-quality picture program and strategies teachers can use to bring the program to life in a classroom. While using the Creative Curriculum framework, our teachers should incorporate their own interests and teaching style, as well as information about the children they teach and their families.

Our teachers also adhere to the **Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)** developed by NAEYC, which means teaching in ways that match the way children develop and learn. DAP is also a theory behind the Creative Curriculum.

Our teacher library contains a wide variety of books, articles and videos including established and recent **NAEYC publications** including:

1. Emergent Curriculum
2. The Intentional Teacher
3. Scaffolding Children's Learning
4. Early Literacy, Learning to Read and Write
5. Discovering Nature with Young Children
6. Working with Children's Behaviors
7. The Spotlight on Young Children Series: Language, Math, Science, Creative Arts, Social Studies, and Assessment

## **Assessment of Child Progress**

We use **The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum** that links to our curriculum goals and objectives. Assessment is naturally integrated into the course of every day as ongoing teacher observation of individual development and group patterns. Teaching teams meet weekly to review their assessments, and to identify children's current interests and needs so teachers can plan their curriculum to better support individual and group progress. At times, these reflections indicate the need for altering the classroom environment, shifting a learning focus, trying new teaching strategies, etc.

Redeemer Preschool does not conduct any norm-referenced or standardized assessments or standardized assessments of preschool children for comparison purposes. We utilize the assessment tool described above, together with our professional judgment, rather than a standardized screening. Occasionally, staff and/or parents identify the need for additional screening or referral for professional diagnostic assessment. In those cases, staff and parents typically include the director in the dialogue for the purpose of more precisely identifying the focus for screening/diagnosis and to review the resources available to children and families in the community.

### **1. Curriculum Goals and Objectives – A roadmap for assessment**

Goals and objectives give our teachers a direction for planning their curriculum and a way to determine what children know and how they are progressing. Our curriculum and assessment goals address all aspects of development:

- **Social/Emotional Development** – children's feeling about themselves, the development of responsibility, and their ability to relate positively to others.
- **Physical Development** – children's gross and fine motor development.
- **Cognitive Development** – children's thinking skills: the development of logical and symbolic thinking, problem-solving skills, and approaches to learning.
- **Language Development** – children's ability to communicate through works, both spoken and written.

Before planning for assessment, become familiar with The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum and set up a portfolio for each child.

### **2. Collecting Facts**

Ongoing observation is an essential part of connecting assessment and curriculum. Besides observation notes, teachers can collect evidence of what children are able to do by keeping samples of their work over time.

- Set up simple system to make collecting observations as convenient as possible.
- Keep documentation simple.
- Keep track of all the children in your group, write down all of their names in the space provided on the class summary worksheet.

### **3. Observing and Documenting Children's Learning**

Observation is the basis of good teaching and the foundation of our assessment system. Observation involves looking objectively at what a child does and says to learn about the child.

- Short, informal notes – take a moment to jot down a few notes about what you have observed as you work directly with a child. Later on, you organize and evaluate your notes.
- Formal observations – in addition to observing while you are involved with the children, schedule time for more formal observations, where you systematically watch one or more children and record what you see and hear.
- Use the goals and objectives in The Creative Curriculum to help you focus your observation.
- Document your observation accurately and objectively.
- Maintain a portfolio for each child.
- Collect a variety of items for a portfolio.
- Be sure to write the date and a short note about the work sample. To show growth, it is important to collect similar samples over a period of time.

### **4. Analyzing and Evaluating Facts**

The next stage in the assessment process involves organizing your notes and making a judgment about what they tell you about a child's progress towards the curriculum objectives.

After reviewing your observation notes and the child's portfolio, you can begin evaluating each child's progress by using the following assessment tools provided by The Creative Continuum:

- The Creative Curriculum Goals and Objectives at a Glance - to connect to your curriculum planning and implementation.
- The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum – to identify what step each child has reached for each of the objectives.
- Class Summary Worksheet – to keep track of children's progress as a group at the same time.
- Individual Child Profile – to track a child's progress at multiple checkpoints during the school year. This form also becomes the child's permanent records to help next year teachers see what the child can do.

### **5. Planning for Each Child and the Group**

Teachers make many decisions each day as they observe children and respond to them based on what they feel the child needs to extend learning. The wealth of information

you have on each child, and your group as a whole, is only meaningful if it is used to plan your curriculum and measure its effectiveness.

The main purpose of summarizing each child's progress at multiple points (2-3 times during a school year) is to share this information with families and jointly plan how best to support the child's development and learning.

Just as you plan for individual children, you need to plan for the whole group. When you complete your Class Summary Worksheet, you have a picture of the progress of your class as a whole. At a glance, you can see the strengths of your children and the areas that need further development. The summary worksheet also enables you to identify those children about whom you need more information, or who would benefit from more focus in a particular developmental area or skill. Plan strategies to continuously support children's learning in small group activities and as a whole group.

## **6. Including All Children**

The skills and stages identified in our assessment instrument cover most of the children in our program. However, there may be children who go beyond the scope of the developmental continuum, and others whose development in one or more areas is not at a typical level. Assessment and parent conferences are conducted in a way which is sensitive to diversity. Assessments involve only activities that are familiar to the children, and every effort is made to eliminate verbal directions that might not be understood by a child with a language disability or limited English proficiency.

Some of our children may have special education needs or a diagnosed disability. We adhere to the federal ADA act and believe in educating children in the least restrictive environment, and all children bring with them strengths and abilities on which we can build. The developmental continuum allows our teachers a way of identifying children who are not yet at the beginning level of a typical preschool environment.

## **7. Use of Assessment Results**

Results of children's assessments are primarily used to shape current program planning and to discuss individual children's development progress with parents so we can work together to best support each child's growth. In addition, the group results contribute to group planning and the preschool's quality improvement process. When parents seek public or private elementary school education for their children, the assessment results may be used to complete a student evaluation form typically requested by local public and private schools.

Our families are provided information about their child's development and learning on a on-going basis through verbal or written communication (notes or emails). A written report is provided at each of the two parent conferences a year.

## **Parent-Teacher Conference**

A teacher-parent conference is held twice a year (December and May). The first meeting is a time to get to know each other, to share information you each have about the child, and to discuss your goals for the year. Before meeting with families, go through the child's portfolio and review your observation notes to be sure everything is up to date. Review what you have learned about each child as documented on the Class Summary Worksheet and the Individual Child Profile. This gives you a picture of the child's level in all areas of development. Now you can use the Child Progress and Planning Report to begin planning. A final step in preparing for the conference is to give some thoughts to what are the next steps for this child, and what strategies will you discuss with the child's family.

A good way to put families at ease is to begin a conference by sharing samples of work you have collected over time. This is a concrete way to talk with parents about the child's learning. Highlight the child's strength as well as any areas of concern. Invite families to share their own observations and record what you learn in the "Family Comments" section.

Next, find out what the child's family is most comfortable doing that would help the child make progress on specific objectives. Provide families with a copy of the plan so it becomes a true blueprint for supporting the child's development and learning. When you next meet, you and the family can assess how the plan worked, review more evidence of the child's progress, and develop a new plan.

## **Program Evaluation**

Once a year, program assessment tools such as parent surveys (including those who graduated from the program), staff surveys, and director reviews are being utilized to evaluate program performance. Developmental profiles (continuum) of children are completed two times a year. Parent/teacher conferences are held to review each child's experience and success, as well as to address any questions or concerns that may arise for parents. Parents are always welcome to request meetings with teachers or the director at other times as the need arises.

## **Inclusion in the Classroom**

Redeemer Preschool provides for all children, including those with identified disabilities and special learning and development. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff members are aware of the identified/diagnosed special needs of individual children and trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. Therapy is developed appropriately and incorporated within classroom activities as much as possible rather than removing the child from the classroom. The master teacher/director makes appropriate professional referrals when necessary. Family members are involved in development and use of Individualized Education Plans.

When serving children with special needs, a partnership among the classroom teachers, outside professionals and family members is key to promote the development and growth of the child, as well as to help him achieve his best potential. Here are some guidelines:

- Make sure that you review any unusual area(s) in a child's development with the director so he/she can be part of the intervention team and help identify professional assistance if necessary.
- We utilize a team teaching model and it's imperative for all the team teachers to get involved in the educational plan for a child with special needs. However, we also need to establish a point of contact, a teacher assigned by the director or selected by the team, to streamline the communication with the director, outside therapists and parents.
- It is important we all share a genuine interest in the child, including proactively seek the best possible resources, participate in meetings with outside professionals or family members, and follow through with appropriate modifications in the learning environment or our teaching strategies.

### **Interaction Guidelines (staff to staff, child, family, therapist)**

Redeemer's staff members share the following core values as guides for interactions among staff members, between staff and children, between staff and parents, between staff and field professionals.

- We strive to respect each individual and work to create a positive emotional climate for all learners, with sensitivity to differences in age, ability, background, language, culture, religion, and family structure.
- We use direct eye contact, smiles, warm tones of voice, positive touch, social conversations, and joint laughter to support the development of effective working relationships.
- Our partnership in learning is supported by regular, reciprocal communication, affirming recognition of effort and accomplishment, predictable, developmentally appropriate responsiveness to initiative, emotion, and concerns, and proactive conflict resolution.
- We are committed to reaching out to people of different races, genders, ethnicity, and ability, and we strive to create an environment of inclusion that celebrates our differences and highlights our commonalities. Our program accepts children with special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided for the child consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Because our mission is multifaceted, we aim to build positive relationships with all learning partners by appropriately balancing equity of care for the group with services tailored to individual needs. Our goal is to develop the school's caring community for learning through broad participation and involvement in program improvement for all of our staff, families, and professional partners.

### **7. Staff-Staff Interactions**

Our staff uses a team approach, with hierarchical role relationships used only as much as necessary for smooth functioning of our programs. We engage in ongoing reflection and professional development to evaluate and improve individual and team performance, continuously strengthening our practice, leadership, and outreach.

In an emergency or time-critical situation when the director is not present or reachable by phone, the Master Teacher serves as the Acting Director. If neither the Director nor the Master Teacher is present at the time of an emergency, the most senior teachers present decide collaboratively on a course of action.

## **8. Staff-Child Interactions**

Program staff never use physical punishment such as shaking or hitting and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion. Program staff never use threats or derogatory remarks and neither withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

We make every effort for all children to know and be known by all adults in our open school environment so that they are comfortable interacting with and seeking assistance from any adult. Each child is assigned to a primary teacher by age, and each support teacher works with all groups so that he or she is familiar with the children and routines for each group and can effectively substitute when a teacher is absent. Support teachers are also invited to participate in staff development events and other school functions in order to maintain their familiarity over the years.

Prior to the start of school, staff members review the files, in particular the family/child information sheet for children in their groups to familiarize themselves with new children. Our teachers participate in mixed-group activities (e.g., outdoor classroom time) help familiarize the staff with children in all groups. Interactions in the school's open spaces and shared facilities (e.g., kitchen, outdoor area) encourage continuity of relationships between all staff and children, as well as among groups of children, so that they are comfortable learning in any of our indoor or outdoor spaces. We use a gradual familiarization process starting from the home base (i.e., the room where the child's belongings are kept and the primary teacher leads) and then progress to tours and other strategies for gradual introduction to other spaces, people, and groupings. This approach broadens children's opportunities for learning, particularly in areas where they may find a closer match with an older or younger child.

Because we strive to encourage diverse interactions and not gender stereotypes, we address children as frequently as possible by their individual names or we refer to groups of children as "friends or children" (i.e., as opposed to "boys and girls").

## **9. Staff-Family Interactions**

All staff members aim to communicate regularly and effectively with families and other caregivers so that their perspectives can be incorporated into our understanding of the child's development, our curriculum planning, and our assessment process. In addition to the detailed family handbook and easily navigable web site, we have scheduled parent meetings and conferences, regular newsletters (typically for each month), and frequent spontaneous interaction.

All new families are invited visit the preschool and to attend an orientation night when the director and teacher representatives review school policies and procedures. A parenting consultant also participates in the orientation to discuss school transition issues with parents.

Adult family members can schedule classroom visits to observe their child in the program. Teachers are easily accessible by phone and/or email during planning time to answer questions, schedule classroom volunteering, or discuss effective ways for staff and parents to handle changes and challenges, such as a new sibling, a move, an extended illness, the parents' separation, etc.

The school events, including family potlucks, the Fall Festival, the Holiday Pageant, the Auction Dinner, and the Talent Show, offer the whole family a chance to participate in the child's school and interact with the staff. Many parents also contribute their talents or time to the school by helping on parent workdays, offering special programs and activities, organizing school functions and fundraising events.

The following are some steps to consider when talking to families regarding their **child's behaviors** at school:

- Greet the parent, make sure he/she has time to talk, and share your observation. Never discuss a child's challenges at school openly in front of the child, other children, other staff members or parents.
- If pick up time is not a feasible time to have a discussion with the parents, establish a follow-up verbal (meeting), or written (email/memo) communication with them.
- Listen to the parents' feelings and ask for their observations and ideas.
- Offer child development information, and give possible reasons for the behavior.
- Explain to the parents how you are handling the behavior. Do not make it sounds like a complaint.
- Clarify with the parents why are you are sharing this information with them.
- Ask the parents if they have any questions, be positive, thank the parents, and arrange to check in later.

Letting the parents know that you have the tools, knowledge, expertise, and resources to help their child through trying behaviors is one of the most important parts of dialogue with families. It not only reassures the parents that their child will be respected and cared for, but it also clarifies that the parents do not have to intercede.

## **10. Staff-Therapist Interactions**

Therapists working with children are not employees of Redeemer Preschool; nonetheless, they must abide by the policies in our Staff Handbook. We make every effort to coordinate and communicate effectively with the therapists and their supervisors so that children receive the best possible services during school hours in the smoothest possible manner, all while maintaining confidentiality. This approach necessitates broad involvement of classroom staff and administrators in planning meetings regarding individual children's support. Initial therapy arrangements are typically made with the director, who also handles

relaying any concerns that arise at school. The child's primary teacher is designated to maintain contact information and manages entry and exit. Even when a child has a therapeutic professional, the classroom teachers remain the child's primary adults at school.

We want to build relationships and interaction patterns that will last beyond the therapists' tenure here. Teachers and therapists should engage in frequent dialogue to coordinate use of strategies, alternate activities, etc. as needed. Though the goal is to include the child and related therapists in the regular routine of the classroom as much as possible, there are times when the best therapy approaches will necessitate work with the child in a space separate from the classroom. These decisions will be made as a team including the teachers, parents, and therapists, with frequent involvement of the director. One of the biggest challenges is to find time and space to discuss children openly and frankly without compromising confidentiality by talking about children in the presence of other adults or children. Please always contact an administrator for support or temporary coverage if necessary.

### **Code of Ethics**

All staff members are required to thoroughly review the NAEYC position statements regarding ethics and sign a statement of commitment. According to NAEYC, "This Statement of Commitment is not part of the Code but is a personal acknowledgement of the individual's willingness to embrace the distinctive values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood care and education. It is recognition of the moral obligations that lead to an individual becoming part of the profession."

#### **"Statement of Commitment to Professional Ethics"**

As an individual who works with young children, I commit myself to furthering the values of early childhood education as they are reflected in the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct. To the best of my ability I will

- Never harm children
- Ensure that programs for young children are based on current knowledge and research of child development and early childhood education.
- Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children.
- Respect colleagues in early childhood care and education and support them in maintaining the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Serve as an advocate for children, their families, and their teachers in community and society.
- Stay informed of and maintain high standards of professional conduct.
- Engage in an ongoing process of self-reflection, realizing that personal characteristics, biases, and beliefs have an impact on children and families.
- Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others.
- Continue to learn, grow, and contribute as a professional.
- Honor the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct."

## **Dress Code**

- A manner that allows comfort and flexibility and provides safety as a teacher to perform his/her job.
- Viewed with credibility by a parent or visitor.
- What we wear to work should be professional, clean, in good repair, and comfortable.
- Safe, comfortable shoes or sandals.
- No tube tops or belly shirts
- Shorts, skirts, and dresses should be of adequate length to ensure coverage when moving and bending. Tears and holes are not acceptable.
- Clothing must not present tobacco products, alcohol, drugs, violence or other inappropriate subjects.
- Fragrance and odors may cause sensitivity and allergies in children and co-workers. Employees may be asked to minimize the use of perfumed products.

## **Confidentiality**

Because the staff at Redeemer Preschool works as a team, with every adult knowing and interacting at times with every child, observations and assessment data may be shared with all staff members. Information about family situations, special needs, and other sensitive issues is shared on an as needed basis. Student workers, volunteers, and other adults working within the school are only informed of such sensitive issues when they are a part of keeping the child safe, supporting the child's inclusion, or when the information might impact their coursework. All adults working in Redeemer Preschool sign the following confidentiality agreement.

“As an adult working, observing, providing professional service and/or regularly volunteering at Redeemer Preschool, I may become privy to confidential information regarding children and families. It is of the utmost importance that I realize that all such information is strictly personal and confidential and can only be shared within the confines of Redeemer Preschool. I will discuss children's behavior out of the hearing distance of the children, and I will discuss the families, children, and staff for professional purposes only. When I encounter families, children or staff outside the school, I will be courteous but use discretion. I understand that written authorization is required before disclosing any information regarding a child to an outside agency or individual. I know that confidentiality is an ethical obligation and that it is a requirement for my continued involvement at Redeemer Preschool. By signing this statement I agree to understand and practice the preschool's confidentiality policy at all times.”

In accordance with Community Care Licensing guidelines, all written records for each child are kept in files in a locked cabinet in the director's office and released only to the individuals listed above or those for whom parents sign a written release. These files include enrollment forms, parent conference reports, health assessments provided by physicians, results of health screenings, incident reports, reports of diagnostic assessments released to the school by parents, individual education plans, etc. Staff documentation of children's behavior and development, including specialized records for children whose special circumstances require extra classroom

documentation are kept in classroom locations accessible to teachers but out of the reach of children and out of sight of classroom visitors.

When discussing behavior incidents with families (e.g., a child is bit, hit, etc. by another child), staff members use discretion regarding revealing the identity of the aggressor (e.g., writing separate incident reports for the aggressor and the victim). In most cases, the child reports identity information to the parent, so the parent may add that information to conversations with the teacher, particularly in cases of repeated aggression. The teacher's responsibility is to focus any discussion with parents on their child only, to avoid violating confidentiality or engaging in gossip.

## **General Health and Safety Guidelines (also refer to the Health & Safety Manual)**

At all times, health and safety are top priorities at Redeemer Preschool. Each individual's vigilance regarding health and safety issues contributes significantly to our effectiveness. Always assume that you are the only one who notices a problem or potential problem and handle it to the best of your ability.

The guidelines for **exclusion** of children who have infections that pose a risk to others apply equally to staff members. When you are sick, seek treatment and take steps to recover as quickly as possible. Discharging or infected wounds on exposed parts of the body are also cause for exclusion from the care of children. Staff members should follow the procedures listed under sick leave allowance in the employee handbook when missing work because of illness.

**Hand washing** is the number one preventive measure to avoid the spread of disease. Use the posted hand washing procedure in all of the following circumstances: upon arrival at work and re-entry from outdoor, before eating or handling food, after using the restroom, changing a diaper, assisting with toileting, treating a child's injury, handling bodily fluids, touching the pets, playing in the water table or with toddlers, handling garbage or cleaning, and before and after preparing food, or administering medication. Non-porous gloves are provided for use when diapering, cleaning, etc. The diaper table is equipped with disposal sheets.

In addition, use strategies to prevent back and other musculoskeletal injuries while at work.

A **First Aid / CPR** course is provided for staff each year, and all staff must pass. In addition, be sure that you know the location and proper use of all safety equipment, including the emergency pack, first aid supplies, and fire extinguishers. Fire drill and emergency procedures are provided in the Health and Safety binder. Staff members are responsible for reviewing them annually so that they are familiar and for keeping them handy in the classroom.

Complete **first aid kits** are located in all the classrooms and adjacent to each playground. Staff members are all responsible for daily checks of the following items.

- Safety covers are on all electrical outlets.
- Electrical cords are appropriately placed and secure.
- Adults' personal belongings (handbags, backpacks, etc.) are stored out of children's reach.
- All poisonous or sharp substances are stored in high, locked cabinets and the lock is engaged (kitchen, art closet, sink closet, classroom cupboards, etc.).
- All exits and hallways are free from obstruction.
- Toys are stored appropriately at the end of the day.
- Sand is covered at the end of the day.

In addition, every staff member is responsible for responding immediately when encountering the following items, either by handling the problem or notifying the director or master teacher.

- Tripping, slipping, choking, pinching hazards
- Physical plant problems (breaks, leaks, pests, etc.)
- Violations of the preschool's policy re: animals, no smoking / drugs / firearms
- Outdoor gates left open while the children are outside

Use **procedures for standard precautions** at all times. Wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur. Do not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or for removing smeared fecal material, and do not use kitchen sinks for cleaning anything besides food or kitchen equipment. In addition, immediately **sanitize surfaces** that come in contact with body fluids, use barriers and techniques that minimize contact of mucous membranes or of openings in the skin, clean and sanitize according to the established procedures, and dispose of contaminated materials and diapers in a plastic bag with a secure tie placed in a closed container.

### **Food Safety**

Our staff take steps to ensure the safety of food brought from home:

- All foods and beverages brought from home are labeled with the child's name.
- Staff make sure that food requiring refrigeration stays cold (e.g., stored in a enclosed box/bag with ice pack).
- Food is provided to supplement food brought home if necessary (and also when parents forget to pack a lunch for their child).
- Food that comes from home for sharing among children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged food in factory sealed containers.

Staff take steps to ensure food safety in its provision of meals and snacks. The Food Coordinator routinely check foods, date foods when they are open from commercial packages, and discards foods with expired dates. The Health and Safety Coordinator posts information on children's food allergies in the food preparation area and in each classroom upon parent consent.

Food that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are always kept out of children's reach.

Staff do not offer children younger than four years foods that may create a choking hazard: hot dogs, whole of sliced into rounds, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas and hard pretzels, spoonful of peanut butter, or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. Staff cut foods into pieces no larger than ½ -inch square for toddlers.

The meal serving time at the preschool is scheduled as follows:

9:00 a.m.	Breakfast
11:30 a.m.	Lunch
2:45 p.m.	Afternoon Snack after Nap Time
5:00 p.m.	Evening Snack

### **Responding to Environmental Conditions**

All staff members are responsible for knowing health & safety hazards and protecting children from harm.

Heat and Cold: Ensure that children wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather.

Air Pollution: Please report to the director or master teacher if you suspect air conditions prohibit outdoor activities.

Sun and Insects: Most of our outdoor playground is shaded for most of the day, and there is always some shade available in the sand boxes and play structures. Our teachers will apply sun block to children with a minimum UVA protection of SPF 15 if it is authorized in writing and provided by the family. At this time, our area is not designated by health authorities as high-risk of insect-borne disease. A pest company is obtained to control rodent and bee infestation.

Ventilate the classrooms frequently by opening a window or door, including in the cold or rainy season. Limit the use of spray to eliminate odors (i.e., around the diaper changing area).

### **Toy Safety**

Frequently inspect and clean toys. Repair them as needed.

- Provide a variety of toys for each age group
- Have enough toys (including duplicates of popular items) for all children to have something and to prevent fighting
- Use toys that are easily washed and sanitized. Stuffed animals should be machine washable
- Set toys aside for sanitizing after a child has placed them in his or her mouth.
- Use riding toys that are the right size for the children using them
- Keep objects smaller than 1 ¾ inches diameter, and toys with small parts away from children who put objects in their mouths
- A toy that a child has placed in his mouth or that is otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion is either to be washed by hand using water and detergent, then rinsed, sanitized, and air dried or washed and dried in a mechanical dishwasher before it can be used by another child.
- A bag is always available in the toddler classroom to put away toys which are mouthed by the children.
- Make sure toys are free of lead

Schedule a schedule with your parents to help clean and sanitize toys and dress-up clothes on a regular basis.

### **School Animal Safety**

School pets or visiting animals must be in good health. When required, pets or visiting animals have documentation from a veterinarian to show that the animals are fully immunized and that the animal is suitable for contact with children.

Staff must supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. We also make sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to the animal.

Reptiles are not allowed as classroom pets because of the risk for salmonella infection.

### **Administration of Medication**

Since we care for children, especially infants and toddlers, it's more than likely that we care for a child with an acute or chronic health condition that requires giving medication. If a child has a mild illness or a non-contagious illness that requires medication there is no reason to exclude that child from our program. However, it is very important for us to assure that medications are given safely and stored correctly, and to seek advice when needed. All staff who work with children should have training on these practices (American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association, 2002).

- Check that the name of the child listed on the medication and the child receiving the medication are the same.
- Read and understand the label/prescription instructions related to measured dose, frequency, and other circumstances related to administration (such as in relation to meals).
- Administer the medication according to the prescribed methods and prescribed dose.
- Observe and report any side effects from medications.
- Document the administration of each dose by recording time and amount given.

Medication should be given at home whenever possible, but there will be times when it must be given while the child is at preschool. California Community Care Licensing (CCL) regulations permit child care providers to administer medications under the following conditions:

- All prescription and nonprescription medications must bear the child's name and date.
- All medications must be administered according to the label direction. Permission and instructions must be provided by the parent for each medication. The instructions should not conflict with the label directions and should be filed in the child's record.
- Nonprescription medications do not require approval of the child's health care provider if administered according to the product label and if parental approval and instructions are provided in writing from the parent. The instructions from the parent cannot conflict with the product label and must be filed with the child's records. Obtaining a written approval or instruction from the child's health care provider is a safe practice.
- The child care provider has a plan to record administration of medication and to inform the parent of daily medication administration.
- When no longer needed all medications are returned to the parent.

### **Remember the Five R's of Medication Administration**

**R**ight Medication is given to the **R**ight Child using the **R**ight Amount at the **R**ight Time given by the **R**ight Route.

Always check:

Parental Permission – must be in writing and filed in the child's record

Medication Label - the child's name, dosing instructions, special instructions

Parent Notification – use standard form to notify parents of medication given

Allergies and Reactions - check before giving medication if the child has allergies and watch for reactions afterward

### **Supervising Children**

Staff members, as a group, must **supervise preschool children primarily by sight. All toddlers (Green Frogs) must be supervised by sight and sound at all times.**

All staff members are responsible for knowing all children and should take appropriate action in response to any child's needs or behavior. At all times, interact with children without using physical punishment or any form of psychological abuse.

We maintain appropriate staff – child ratios at all times

Minimum of 1:6 for two-year-olds

Minimum of 1:8 for three to five-year-olds

These ratios are applicable both indoors and outdoors. Off campus field trip ratios are no more than 1:3. No wading pools are allowed on campus.

Classroom space must be designed so that there are no areas of the room where children can hide. Supervision by sound is permissible for short intervals, such as when children go to the bathroom from the classroom or outdoors. For children new to the school, an adult should accompany the child to the bathroom. Once children are capable and comfortable toileting independently, they should signal an adult that they are going to the bathroom, and that adult should check frequently to ensure that the child is safe. Other adults in the school will provide support as necessary.

Staff members responsible for supervising children during program hours (i.e., as part of the above ratio) **should not make calls** on the school or personal phones, except in cases of emergency. Personal cell phones should be kept on silent during work hours, and family members should be instructed to call only in case of emergency. If a teaching staff must leave the classroom for more than 5 minutes (take care of a bathroom accident, talk to a parent, etc.) another adult must be present in the classroom.

When children have known **allergies**, be sure to follow the procedures specified by the parent and/or health professional regarding foods served or environmental precautions taken. Keep

EpiPens out of the reach of children but easily accessible for quick action, including outside; be sure to take them with other first aid supplies on outings.

When a child has an **accident**, follow the emergency procedures appropriate for the situation. Administer basic first aid as appropriate or seek the help of an administrator. Be sure to complete an incident/accident report and give one copy to the director, keep one in the classroom file, and give one to the parent.

If a child ingests a **poisonous substance**, immediately bring the child to the office and have someone call the Poison Control Center.

Make sure that toddlers do not carry bottles or sippy cups with them while walking. Offer children fluid from a cup at all times.

When a **child is sick**, bring the child to the office, help the child get settled in a comfortable position, and arrange for a call home. Be sure to designate someone to supervise the child before returning to the classroom.

**Release children** only to adults who are listed in the child's file or on a signed note from the parents. Parents submit a list of adults to whom we may release their child. Oral changes are permitted if you can verify the identity of the individual. In that case, log the name of the parent, date, and time of the request, name of the individual, and names of both the staff person taking the call and staff person releasing the child.

### **Water and Sand Play Supervision**

One of the most important features of a preschool classroom is the sand and water table, also known as a discovery table. They all share one common goal. Children are able to explore math and science concepts, develop new language skills, improve fine motor function, and engage in social interactions by playing in sand and water.

Water and sand play are a great opportunity for children to have fun while they learn. One way to take this tried and true activity out of the usual box is to expand beyond water and sand. By trying different materials, play tools, and containers, teachers can spice up learning center time.

A supervised water table and sand box area creates a happy atmosphere for playing and learning. Close supervision is required for all preschool water/sand activities. Young children can choke on sand or become irritated when it gets in their eyes. A clear review of the rules with the children ensures comprehension prior to play.

To ensure that water play does not spread infectious disease. No child drinks the water. Children with sores on their hands are not permitted to participate in water play. Fresh potable water is used, and the water must be changed before a new group of children comes to participate in the water play activity. When the activity period is completed with each group of children, the water is drained. Alternatively, fresh potable water flows freely through the water table and out through a drain in the table.

## **Playground Supervision**

Safety on the playground, along with effective supervision, are key components to providing a safe and joyful outdoor experiences for the children. We must adhere to the following areas of playground safety when we are supervising children in the school yard:

- Adequate and attentive playground supervision.
- Students instructed on how to properly play on the playground equipment and be consistent with the rules.
- Perform routine playground equipment/toy inspection to identify hazards in the equipment and the playgrounds, and correct such hazards if feasible, and report hazards to the director.

**Proper playground supervision has the following basic components and we expect our teachers to follow ALL of them.**

- Presence and attentiveness - stay in a reasonable proximity to the areas of activity. Keep all students easily in sight.
- Refrain from actions that may distract one from the supervision duties, such as prolonged adult conversations, especially in a group when adults' sights are away from the children while talking, sitting down at one spot for more than a few minutes.
- **AND KEEP MOVING!** Activities on the playground change constantly. We must position ourselves attentively to be able to respond to moving children.
- Prevent children from roughhousing, horseplay or other inappropriate behaviors.
- Being risk-conscious (prioritizing attention into the areas where accidents are most likely to occur such as the play structures and the bike area).

## **Prohibited Practices**

If any staff member or person from the child's family, while in the vicinity of Redeemer Preschool, engages in a practice prohibited by the program, the director will take necessary steps to assure that there is no reoccurrence of the practice. Prohibited practices include, but not limited to:

- Corporal or any type of physical punishment is not permitted. This includes hitting, shaking, or other measures that produce physical pain.
- Withdrawal or the threat of withdrawal of food, rest, or bathroom opportunities is not permitted.
- Abusive, profane or derogatory language, including yelling and belittling is not permitted.
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment is not permitted.
- Any form of emotional abuse, including rejecting, terrorizing, isolating, or corrupting a child is not permitted.

## **Reporting Child Abuse**

Section 11166 of the Penal Code requires any child care custodian, medical practitioner, or employee of a child day care facility who has knowledge of or observes a child in his/her profession capacity or within the scope of his/her employment whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse (including by families, staff, volunteers, or local agencies), to report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately as soon as practically possible by telephone and to prepare and send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident. Staff members who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious.

A staff member who is accused of child abuse may be suspended or given leave without pay pending investigation of the accusation. Parents or legal guardians of suspected abused children will be notified. Parents or legal guardians of other children in the program will be contacted by the director if a caregiver is suspected of abuse so that they may share any concerns they have had. However, no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Caregivers found guilty of child abuse will be summarily dismissed or relieved of their duties.

## **Staff Development Plan**

Redeemer Preschool provides opportunities for staff to improve program-planning skills, improve leadership skills, and to observe various teaching styles and techniques. All staff may utilize the Teacher Resource Library. Teachers are required to attending three staff development days throughout the year. Books, professional organizations, career opportunities, college courses, and workshop information are all provided to the staff.

The Preschool maintains professional memberships in NAEYC and PACE and subscribes to monthly publications such as Child Care Exchange and Young Children. Many books and other curriculum materials are purchased throughout the year.

Staff development objectives include:

- Ongoing education in the early childhood education field.
- Staff training in assessment, working in a multi-cultural classroom and with children with special needs.
- To complete a self-evaluation survey at the end of each school year.
- To utilize the materials provided in the Teacher Resource Library on a regular basis.
- To attend staff meetings and training throughout the year.
- To be informed of local and state conferences and workshops available.
- To have an evaluation with the Director to discuss self-evaluation and the evaluation of the supervisor. Records are to be kept in each staff member's file.
- Staff training on management and administration.

## **Staff Meetings and Trainings**

Staff trainings are held at least three times a year on campus (preschool will be closed). The required First Aid/CPR Training is offered on school campus each year (on a Saturday) and paid for by the employer. Staff meetings are usually held monthly. The staff is required to attend both staff meetings and training.

Staff training topics shall include:

- NAEYC standards
- Review of Preschool policies and regulations
- Handling of emergency situations
- Curriculum planning and development based on program's philosophy and goals
- Learning Environment
- Use of program's assessment tools for assessment of child progress and program quality
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)
- Health & safety
- Parent-staff relationships
- Team building (Staff-staff relationships)
- Leadership skills
- Staff participation in local, state or regional public-awareness activities relating to early care (through joining groups, attending meetings, or sharing of information)
- Handling of emergency situations
- Work with children and families of diverse cultures and languages
- Multi-cultural education/curriculum
- Work with children with special needs:
  - Family-centered practice
  - Typical development and common health problems
  - IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
  - Children's and families' rights under IDEA
  - Roles and responsibilities related to IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan)
  - Strategies for supporting inclusion
  - Strategies for modifying and adapting curriculum, schedules, materials, and instruction to meet individual needs
  - The referral and assessment process
  - Community supports and resources

## **Annual Parent and Staff Survey**

Parents and staff are asked to complete a survey at the end of each year. This information helps to assess how the program is meeting the needs of parents and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program to help set program goals for the next year. A copy of the report is made available to all parents and staff with suggestions for program improvement.

### **Policy on Releasing Children**

Only the authorized parent(s) or others identified by the parents can pick up a child. A signed form is on file in the child's folder listing other authorized persons. Check the child's emergency contact form in your classroom (a copy in the emergency binder located in the director's office) to verify parent authorization for pick up. If no written authorization can be verified, a staff member must call the parent for authorization prior to releasing a child. Under no circumstances can a child be released to anyone not on the signed form. Ask for identification if you do not know the person.

### **Pet Policy**

The Animal Program Coordinator will be responsible for checking the appropriate care instructions for pets both indoor and out. All animals requiring immunizations will require proof of immunizations and be in good health and free of any diseases which can be transmitted to humans. All pets will be secured in clean living quarters. Children and staff will follow proper hand washing after feeding or handling pets. No reptiles are allowed in the program due to the risk of salmonella infections. Program staff must make sure that any child who is allergic to a type of animal is not exposed to that animal.

### **Babysitting Policy**

In an effort to maintain the professional status of Redeemer Preschool staff and prevent any potential conflict of interest, it is strongly recommended that teachers not to baby-sit for current preschool children or their siblings. It is difficult for staff to accommodate all families who ask of their babysitting services as well as maintain a teacher-child relationship in the classroom. Redeemer Preschool cannot be held responsible for the working arrangements of either party when entering into an agreement to provide care or services independently.