

PARENTAL RIGHTS

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) the legal responsibility of promulgating rules and regulations governing the operation of early education centers and school age programs.

In accordance with this law, EEC published the requirements now in effect on January 2010. These regulations must be complied with by the licensee in order to ensure a minimum level of care for the children serviced by the early education center.

The licensee (education/center owner) is required to inform all parents of “the rights of parents” as stated in the regulations at the time of admission of their child to the center. Parents may contact EEC for information regarding the program’s regulatory compliance history. Parents can call 413-788-8401 at the EEC Western Regional Office located at 1441 Main St, #230, Springfield, MA, 01103.

PARENT VISITS

The licensee shall permit unannounced visits by the parents to the center and their child’s room while their child is present.

PARENT INPUT

The licensee shall have a procedure for allowing parental input in the development of center policy, programs and their child. Input from and communication with parents is encouraged through meetings and/or board membership. The licensee will communicate information and program updates with parents regularly with day sheets, monthly and quarterly newsletters, message boards, communication notebooks, daily contact at drop-off and pick-up, and through scheduled parent meetings. Additionally, classrooms will offer at least monthly events to ensure parents have an opportunity to meet with classroom staff to foster reciprocal relationships with families over time. When difficulties arise, teaching and administrative staff will make themselves available to speak with families as needed. Meetings, email, notes, board intervention are all techniques made available to parents when working through conflicts with the program.

REPORTS TO PARENTS

The licensee shall prepare a written progress report of the participation of each child at least two times a year in the language appropriate to the family. The licensee shall provide a copy of each report to the parent(s) and/or meet with them to discuss their child’s activities and progress at the center. Parents will be encouraged to provide additional input within their child’s progress reports. In addition:

1. for infants and children with disabilities, the licensee shall complete a written progress report of the child’s development every three months and provide it to the parent(s);
2. the licensee shall bring special problems or significant developments particularly as they regard infants, to the parent’s attention as soon as they arise.

PARENT CONFERENCES

The licensee shall make the staff (and a translator) available for individual conferences with parents at parental request.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF RECORDS

Information about a child or contained in a child's record shall be privileged and confidential. The licensee shall not share, distribute or release information about a child or from a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without written consent of the child's parent(s).

Individuals with access to children's records include the child's Lead Teacher specific to their respective classroom, the Site Director and the Director of Childcare Services, who is responsible for managing children's records. The Lead Teacher and Site Director will have access to a child's record to address and monitor the developmental progress of the child and to share reports with consultants and specialists when needed and appropriate. The Director of Childcare Services will access the records for maintenance purposes only and when copies of information are requested (with parental permission) from outside resources or by the parent directly. Child's screening results and/or assessment results are used and interpreted according to ASQ and Teaching Strategy Gold (TSG) standards and will:

- inform and guide curriculum development for Lead Teachers;
- guide the Site Director in securing outside resources and/or special services

The licensee shall notify the parent(s) if a child's record is subpoenaed. The child's parent(s) shall, upon request have access to his child's record at a reasonable time. In no event shall such access be delayed more than two business days after the initial request without the consent of the child's parent(s). Upon such request for access to the child's entire record regardless of physical location of its parts shall be made available. The licensee shall maintain a permanent, written log in each child's record indicating any persons to whom information contained in a child's record has been released. The center must maintain a permanent, written log in each child's record which identifies anyone who has had access to the record or who has received any information from the record. This log is available only to you and the person responsible for maintaining the center's records.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF FAMILY INFORMATION Early Education and care and child placement programs and their staff may not distribute, share or discuss information (including photographs or other images) about children and families in their care by any means, whether written or verbal, using any medium, including but not limited to telephone, email or electronic text, without the expressed written permission of the child's parents. Images of children, whether or not they are identified by name, may not be posted on any social media site including Facebook or Instagram, or any other online directory, social utility or networking website. Similarly, personal information related to children and families may not be shared on such websites, whether or not they have restricted access, without the expressed written permission of the children's parents.

Children's records are maintained in an administrative office in a locked file cabinet. This file cabinet will be locked when office is unoccupied by administrative staff.

AMENDING THE CHILD'S RECORD

A child's parent(s) shall have the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant materials to the child's record;

1. A child's parent(s) shall have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child's record. Such request shall be made in accordance with the procedures described below:
2. If such parent(s) is of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in the child's record, she shall have the right to have a conference with the licensee to make her objections known:
 - a. The licensee shall, within one week after the conference, render to such parent(s) a decision in writing stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If his decision is in favor of the parent(s), he shall immediately take steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

TRANSFER OF RECORDS Upon written request of the parent(s) the licensee shall transfer the child's record to the parent(s), or any other person the parent identifies, when the child is no longer in the program.

CHARGE FOR COPIES The licensee will not charge a fee for copies of any information contained in your child's record.

INFORMATION REQUIRED BY EEC

AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION TO THE DEPARTMENT The program must make available any information requested by the DEEC to determine compliance with any DEEC regulations governing the program, by providing access to its facilities, records, staff and references.

MEETING WITH PARENTS The licensee shall assure that the administrator or his designee shall meet with the parent(s) prior to admitting a child to the center.

1. At the meeting, the licensee shall provide to the parent(s) the center's written statements of purpose, goals and objectives, services, procedures for parent conferences, visits and input to center policy; information on the administrative organization of the program, including lines of authority and supervision, behavior management policy, referrals for parents, termination and suspension policy, procedures for reporting abuse, program's transportation plan, fee schedule, procedures relating to children's records; and procedures for providing emergency health care.
2. The licensee shall provide the opportunity for the parent(s) to visit the center's classroom at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of the child.

NOTIFICATION OF INJURY The licensee must notify you immediately of any injury which requires emergency care. The licensee must also notify you in writing, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to your child.

In addition, all licensees are required to have a copy of the regulations on the premises of the center and the regulations shall be made available to any person upon request.