



# **Family Handbook**

**2015-2016**

## **Annette's Preschool Family Handbook**

Annette's Preschool is a 5 STAR child-centered early care and education program serving families with children age 6 weeks to 12 years with specific programs for birth to three years, three to five years and after school for Kindergarten through age 12. We support intentional, play-based, hands-on experiences that are appropriate to each child's developmental level, and value each family as a child's first teacher. We are one of only 7 programs in Vermont that have the Eco-Healthy Childcare Certified, and welcome your family as a part of ours!

Our mission is to understand and support each child's unique developmental profile by achieving the highest level of professional learning for our staff, building a community where families feel respected and connected to the wider Hinesburg community, and cultivating sustainable business practices and environmental choices.

Our core values support the development of the "whole" child as a unique individual within his or her family system, and as a member of our entire community. We seek

1. To provide every child with opportunities to learn through play in a healthy and stimulating environment, supported by trained teachers adept at nurturing diverse early learning experiences.
2. To help each child develop a positive self-image, and believe they are capable of success.
3. To help each child acknowledge their own feelings and the feelings of others as healthy, and to learn how to create positive social interactions with peers and teachers.
4. To guide each child using an inquiry-based approach to learning through hand-on experiences and investigations based on their deep areas of interest.
5. To promote developmentally appropriate learning in language, literacy and communication, creative expression, science, mathematics, whole

body movement, social interactions, self-regulation and approaches to learning which are consistent with the Vermont Early Learning Standards.

6. To help foster the respect of all people, our natural environment and our creative learning materials.
7. To offer support to the families of our children through resources, conferences, referrals, parent gatherings, workshops and a parent committee.

## **The Curriculum**

We utilize an emergent curriculum approach which is inspired by the practices of Reggio Emilia schools in Italy. Emergent Curriculum is recognized by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to be a best practice in the early education field today. It is child-centered and focused around the competencies, interests and needs of the children along with the passions of the teachers. Learning is the result of a continuous cycle of inquiry using areas of deep interest to the children, exhibited through active play. Emergent Curriculum is a process in which teachers collaborate with children around their ideas, questions, development and topics of interest. The curriculum is intentional and teachers respond to children's ideas by proposing further activities for discovery, scaffolding knowledge, changing the environment, documenting the process and writing a plan for curriculum that emerges.

It is distinct from approaches used in other centers in which teacher-directed planned "themes" are the focus of activities. When children understand that they belong to a learning community, that their ideas do matter, and that their questions can lead to deep problem solving and creative expression, then mastery motivation is truly born!

## **Classroom Ages/Structure**

The Infant classroom is for children age 6 weeks to 1 year of age+/- . The Mobile Infant classroom is for children who are over 1 year who are able to walk, are taking 1 afternoon nap, and have begun to demonstrate self-help skills. The Toddler Classroom is for children age 2-3 years. At this time, children transition between classrooms from birth to three usually after a period of one year in each class, depending on the child's date of entry, developmental milestones and date of birth.

All of our preschool classrooms have children who are 3, 4, or 5 and thus are "mixed age." Once a child enrolls in the preschool, the child will remain for 1, 2 or 3 years depending on their date of birth and entry to Kindergarten. This enables them to develop strong relationships with their peers and with teachers over time.

Annette's Preschool is a year round program. New enrollments are typically admitted at points in the year when children transition within the birth to three program or from the birth to three into the preschool program. These points are June, Sept and occasionally February.

### **Family Involvement**

**We welcome family engagement in our program and seek to establish strong home-school connection with every family. These connections may be through family events, participation on the Parent Committee, through sharing child observations, bi-annual conferences or parent surveys.**

\* A visit to the school and a personal interview between parent, child and director to introduce our program mission, philosophy, practices, and policies is required before admission.

\* Parents are required to sign a contract and complete the admission form prior to admission. A copy of the child's immunization records must be on file at the school before admission.

\* Parents are encouraged to visit or volunteer at our school at any time. We believe families support our emergent curriculum by helping us understand their child in unique and special ways. Please complete the family involvement survey and let us know how you can share a special talent, interest or activity!

\* Any suggestions, concerns, compliments or complaints should be brought first to your child's teacher. If the outcome is not satisfactory to you, we encourage you to speak to a director. Open communication through phone or in person conversation, notes, emails or blogs is essential for every child to feel unconditionally supported at our school.

\* If you change a contact number at home or work, it is essential to share the new contact details with us. If an emergency should arise, we will refer to the telephone numbers you gave us when you registered.

\* If anyone other than parents/guardian will be picking up your child, we must be informed in **writing**. You may use the family/teacher communication notebook at the sign in sheet in your child’s classroom. If we do not have written permission, your child will not be released, even if the person picking-up is on your list. This is Vermont law. All individuals listed on your alternate pick up list will be asked to show ID before your child is released to them.

\* Your child must be signed in and out daily by the adult that picks them up or drops them off. This is also a state law, and will be enforced.

\* Important notices will be posted on parent boards in each classroom, and via email newsletters and announcements. Please keep your email address updated with the Director, as important notices are sent by email (to help us conserve paper resources.)

**Hours of Operation**

<b>Nursery</b>	<b>Monkeys</b>	<b>7:30AM – 5:30PM</b>
<b>Mobile Infants &amp; Toddlers</b>	<b>Lemurs Tigers</b>	<b>7:30AM- 5:30PM</b>
<b>Preschool</b>	<b>Jaguars Tree Frogs Toucans</b>	<b>7:00AM – 5:30PM</b>
<b>Part Day Preschool</b>	<b>Clubhouse</b>	<b>8:50AM-12:10PM; 12:50PM-4:10PM</b>
<b>After School Program Vacation Camp</b>	<b>Clubhouse</b>	<b>3:00PM-5:30PM 7:30AM-5:30PM</b>

**Please make every effort to arrive PRIOR to 9:00 AM.** Late arrivals not only present a distraction for the entire class but make it more difficult for your child to have a successful transition to school.

As of 5:15PM, some preschool classrooms may pool together to close for the last few minutes on the playground or in a classroom.

## **Closings**

See attached annual calendar for Annette's Preschool holiday closings, parent teacher conferences and professional learning days for our staff. Please note: The Part Day Preschool program runs for 9 months and follows the CSSU school calendar which are different from the Annette's Preschool calendar which is year round.

While it is a rare occurrence that we close due to bad weather, please visit [wcax.com](http://wcax.com) for school closings where we will be listed if we are closed. You may also listen to the following radio stations if you are in doubt: WOKO 98.9FM, WVMT 620AM, or Channel 3 News.

## **Tuition**

See attached tuition rates for the current year and specific program to which you wish to enroll. Tuition is due on Monday of the week childcare services are provided. A \$5.00 per day late fee may apply after Tuesday. As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, all accounts will require tuition payments to be automated via direct debit. We offer weekly and monthly payment options, as well as a 10% sibling discount for the lower of the two tuition rates.

Act 166 PreK funding provides 10 hours of free early education programming for all children who are 3, 4, or 5 years old on or before 9/1/15 who are not enrolled in Kindergarten. Annette's Preschool is a prequalified provider with the Agency of Education. This funding reduces preschool tuition by \$3,000 for families whose children are enrolled in full time, part time and part day programs over the course of 35 weeks during the school year beginning in September. It is the family's responsibility to enroll their child with the school district in order to access the funding at Annette's Preschool. If a family enrolls in Annette's but does not enroll with the school district in a timely way, the tuition at Annette's is the responsibility of the family, with or without the Act 166 funding in place.

For the Part Day Preschool program only, tuition is collected 9 times per year on Oct 1, Nov 1, Dec 1, Jan 1, Feb 1, Mar 1, Apr 1 May 1, Jun 1) via direct debit at the current tuition rates for 3, 4 or 5 part days. Families who receive Act 166 funding will not be charged for 10 hours of early education for 35 weeks of the school year.

## **Cancellation Policy/Program Departure**

If enrollment status changes and you wish to withdraw your child from our program, you are required to provide a 2 week written notice if you are paying weekly, or a 1 month written notice if you are paying monthly. You will receive the amount of your prepaid tuition back provided your account is current. The deposit and registration fees are not refundable.

If it is determined that commitments and responsibilities are not being upheld by a parent/guardian, Annette's Preschool reserves the right to terminate care with 24 hour notice. Termination may also occur if Annette's deems that for any reason continuation of care is not in the best interest of the company, staff or other families. Non-payment of tuition when due may be cause for termination of care.

## **Health Regulations**

Children must wash their hands upon arrival at school. Parents must supervise. Children are required to have a pair of "indoor shoes" and a pair of "outdoor shoes" to maintain the health and cleanliness of our classroom.

Prior to admission, each child shall have had all immunizations appropriate for his/her age. **A copy of your child's immunization records shall be kept on file at the school and should be updated annually or when new immunizations are received.** Parents should inform the Director of any changes in their child's health status.

Medications may only be given to your child when accompanied by a signed medication form (available in all classrooms) and specific directions for administration. All medications must be in original containers.

If your child is sick and will be absent, please call the school and let us know. Our office will call you by 10AM if your child does not attend on a regularly scheduled day.

If your child is seriously injured, you will be notified by phone at once. Minor scratches, cuts or bruises will be medically attended to at the center by the director or teacher and you will be notified at time of pick up. An accident report will be completed and a copy will be provided to the parent on the same day.

## Head Lice Policy

We must be notified immediately if your child has head lice. Prompt treatment and notification decreases the spread in group settings such as ours. We will conduct head checks of all the children and staff if there is a suspected case of head lice. If your child does have head lice, he or she must be treated with the appropriate medication and be nit free (no eggs – dead or alive) before returning. If you would like further information regarding head lice, we have packets of information available upon request.

## Sick Child Policy

Sick children will not be admitted to school. If your child becomes ill during the day, you or your designated guardian will be notified immediately so that your child can be picked up and taken home. Until you arrive, your child will be kept comfortable separate from the rest of the children. If you are unsure if your child is contagious, please consult your doctor. State regulations regarding children's health are posted in each classroom, and indicate that your child must be symptom free for 24 hours (and without fever-reducing medicine) before re-admittance to our program. **Please pick up your child within 1 hr. of being notified.**

We are unable to care for your child if he/she.

- \* Has a fever of 100F or greater before fever reducing medicine.
- \* Is congested enough to require a vaporizer.
- \* Is tired enough to require sleep beyond a regular nap.
- \* Has any discharge from the eyes.
- \* Has diarrhea (2 times while in care)
- \* Has an unidentified rash.
- \* Has severe coughing.
- \* Is not able to keep up with the scheduled day.
- \* Has vomited 2 or more times in 24 hours.
- \* Has head lice or eggs.

A note from a physician may be required before your child is re-admitted after certain contagious illnesses.

If there is a confirmed case of a contagious illness in any of our classrooms, we will post notifications on the parent sign in sheet with a resource guide to symptoms and next steps.



## **Biting Policy**

One of the many benefits for children enrolled in a high quality early care and education program is the opportunity for them to be exposed to social interactions with peers, learn to regulate responses when waiting, and to develop adaptive skills (such as zipping up coats, putting on boots, using utensils, etc). In addition, children learn that their needs will be consistently met by teachers through sensitive and appropriate responses for his or her age and developmental level. In a group toddler setting, frustration is to be expected, and one child biting another is often a common response, albeit very upsetting to both sets of parents!

When one child bites, or physically hurts another, our approach in the classroom is consistent with NAEYC and Zero to Three's best practice which supports firm verbal intervention with the goal of setting expectations for behavior, identifying feelings, and supporting empathy by helping others.

An accident report is completed which is given to the parent of the child who was hurt. This report shows the name of the injured child, the date, the classroom, the time, a description of the incident, what was done to help, the outcome and the signature of the teacher. No identifying information of the other party is shared with families in order to maintain and respect the confidentiality of all involved.

The director will contact the parents of the injured child to notify them of the incident. The director will also contact the parents of the child who bit/hurt another child. As part of our dedication to building a community and strengthening the home-school connection, we encourage dialogue between parents and teachers about their child's sensitivities, stress points, and enjoyable activities. This is essential for our teachers to understand a child's behavior at home, and to build shared expectations of behavior in both learning environments!

## **Nut Free Program**

Annette's Preschool is a tree and peanut free school. Please check all packaged snacks for safe labeling before packing your child's lunchbox. Our staff do check labels, and we will return items home if they pose a tree or peanut risk. We encourage you to visit [www.snacksafely.com](http://www.snacksafely.com) regularly where up to date lists are provided for suggested alternatives.

## **Clothing**

Your child will need a complete change of clothing at the center. This includes shirts, pants, underwear, socks and indoor shoes.

Please dress your child appropriately for the weather. During the winter months, please be sure to send a hat, mittens, snow pants and boots. Make sure to put your child's name on all clothing brought to our center.

Parents are responsible for providing all diapers and wipes for children in the birth to three program. **Children who are enrolling in the preschool program must wear underwear during the day, demonstrate independent toileting skills, and remain dry during the day.**

## **Meals**

Children are required to bring their own snacks (morning & afternoon) as well as lunches (for our full day programs). Each child should bring in a water bottle to keep at school where it is rinsed daily and washed weekly. We will provide organic milk or water for beverages. Please do not send in candy or gum.

In the infant room, parents must provide bottles, food, diapers, wipes, bibs, a sheet and blanket for their pack and play and at least 2 extra sets of clothes to be kept at the center.

When it is your child's birthday, please feel free to bring in a healthy treat to celebrate the special occasion (Fruit kabobs, muffins, etc!).

## **Rest Time (full day programs only)**

Rest time varies by age of child, but lasts up to 2 hours depending on the group, but no less than 30 minutes, as required by state law. Rest is always right after lunch. Please do not drop off or pick up your child during rest time without securing special permission from your child's teacher or the Director.

For our full day programs, your child will need a rest mat (all-in-one pillow, mat and cover is recommended) for rest time. We have found it helps many children to have a transitional item for resting (special blanket, stuffed animal etc.). Please bring the rest mat in a medium sized eco-friendly reusable bag which fits the items. We have limited space in our classroom for bedding, so we encourage you

to bring in compact bedding and storage. More importantly, manageable sized rest mats helps your preschool child learn to roll up their bedding and put it away themselves.

All bedding will be sent home on Fridays (or end of week) to be laundered and returned on Monday.

### **Child Assessment/Family Conferences**

Ongoing observation, documentation and child assessment is a regular part of our 5 STAR early care and education program and required by the state for PreK Act 166 funding. Family conferences are held twice a year in October and March. At that time, there will be a parent/teacher sign-up sheet posted on the parent board. You may sign up for a time that is most convenient for you. This will be an opportunity for you to discuss your child's interests, strengths, learning and social relationships with his/her peer group. We highly value the home-school connection to foster the optimal growth and learning for your child, and will ask for your participation in the teacher/parent conference process. Conferences may be arranged at any other time of the year at your request.

At frequent intervals, and upon enrollment, we use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) with children age 6 weeks – 5 years to better understand the developmental level of each child. This tool has a family component so that parents/guardians can provide their observations of the child's development at home and share with your child's teacher. If there are any questions or concerns which are raised, both the parents and teachers will meet to discuss the similarities, differences and concerns. The results may indicate that further evaluation is not necessary at that time in which case teachers will continue to observe in more detail. If the results indicate a possible developmental concern, the Director will observe the child and assist with further evaluation steps, including observation of the child by additional early childhood experts, and/or a referral for a comprehensive evaluation by a multidisciplinary team of practitioners. The results of these evaluations will be shared with the parents and the teachers in a team meeting and will result in a set of recommendations for next steps which either confirm or deny a developmental delay, and propose appropriate services if needed.

## **Field Trips**

We occasionally take the children on field trips in our Annette's van and will provide at least 1 week advance notice before they occur. Two teachers always accompany groups of 6 or more in the van, and the van seats 13 children. The van is equipped with safety harnesses which are adjustable and appropriate for young children. A permission slip must be signed and returned for each child for each trip. If there is a cost for the trip, this must be paid prior to departure. Please make sure that the necessary arrangements are made if you are planning an irregular pick up or drop off on one of these days.

Walking field trips occur regularly as a part of our outdoor programming, and exploration of the Hinesburg community. Permission slips are not required for these spontaneous events, and we ask for your signed permission upon enrollment for walking excursions.

## **Suspected Abuse/Neglect**

All of our teachers and staff are mandated reporters and are required by law to report any cases of suspected abuse/neglect of a child to the Department of Children and Families within 24 hours to Vermont child's protection line 1-800 649-5285.

Our goal is to have strong home-school connections with every family. If your child sustains an injury at home (this is a normal part of childhood!), please let us know so that we can monitor your child's wellness while they are in our care. Likewise, we will inform you in writing (and/or by phone depending on the type and extent of injury) if your child sustains an injury while in our care so that you can monitor your child's health once they go home with you. We greatly value this ongoing partnership with our families to communicate about the daily health and wellness of each and every child.

## **Confidentiality**

All personal information regarding families and children is treated as confidential. Staff and Directors will provide a safe and secure place for family files. Staff and Directors will exercise professional discretion regarding conversations with each other, parents or children concerning personal information or family matters.

## **No Smoking Policy**

Annette's Preschool is a non-smoking early care and education program. Staff, parents and volunteers are not permitted to smoke anywhere on the property.

## **No Idling Policy**

Annette's Preschool is an Eco-Healthy Childcare certified program and we maintain this status in part by prohibiting the idling of vehicles in our driveway or parking lot.

## **Child Behavior Guidance Policy**

Our child behavior guidance policy is based on a positive guidance approach in which behavior is managed first by setting expectations in the classroom for appropriate use of toys and interactions. Our policy is based on the premise that young children are still learning appropriate methods of social interaction and expression of feelings and need to be supported and taught how to manage a conflict, and not punished because they have a problem that they do not yet know how to solve.

When conflicts arise, we use a 5- step dialogue to address a variety of situations and support children. The teacher facilitates by first helping children to **identify feelings** ("you're frustrated/mad/upset" -cool off), followed by **identifying the problem** objectively ("I see one toy and two children who are upset", and helping children **identify a possible solution** ("what could we do to change/fix/make this better?"), **try out** the solution, and then "**check back in**" with the friend to see how that solution is working. For younger ages, we talk about turn taking (e.g. "Tommy is using that toy, your turn is next." or redirection to another activity or toy ("You can choose the blocks or the books while you wait for that toy"). Children whose behavior disrupts the classroom will be redirected to make a choice for themselves in another area in the room before they try again.

If a child's behavior continues to be an obstacle to their full participation in the program, or continually prevents others from safe participation as well, the teachers and Director will seek to collaborate with families to get more information, problem solve, provide additional resources, and if needed offer a referral for further evaluation to support the child in our classroom setting. If the safety of the child and/or his or her peers is compromised, the child's parent may be called to pick up the child.

**Communication**

Annette's Preschool can be reached by phone 802-482-2525, or by email to the following individuals:

Andrea Sambrook, Director and Owner, [andrea@annettespreschool.com](mailto:andrea@annettespreschool.com)

Victoria Ward, Business Director, [victoria@annettespreschool.com](mailto:victoria@annettespreschool.com)

Tricia Pawlik, Director of Youth and Family Programs, [tricia@clubhousecamp.com](mailto:tricia@clubhousecamp.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/AnnettesPreschool](http://www.facebook.com/AnnettesPreschool)

Website: [www.annettespreschool.com](http://www.annettespreschool.com)



### **Annette's Family Handbook Receipt**

I agree to the terms set herein the Annette's Preschool Family Handbook. I will adhere to the contract which I have signed and follow Annette's Preschool's policies and procedures, including paid staff in-service days, holidays and snow days.

Parent Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_