

The Basics of Children's Choice

We pledge an uncompromising devotion to a superb and consistent execution of the basics.

Environment

Indoor Environment:

- Clean, organized, aesthetically pleasing, uncluttered, well maintained.
- Reflects work and interests of children: art work and is kid-personalized.
- Divided into at least the following areas, all labeled with "intentionality" signs.
 - Dramatic Play: multi-cultural puppets, multi-cultural food and dishes, CC menus, dress up clothes, cash register, plus a rotating prop box that changes every week.
 - Creative Arts: "how to draw" and other art books, everyday art supplies, and occasional art supplies such as glitter, play dough, and painting.
 - Strategy Games: math games and games designed for younger and older children.
 - Fine Motor Skills: blocks, carpets, and rotating supplies that change every week.
 - Science & Math: science books, science art (rubbing plates), anatomy guy, magnets, magnification, x-ray films, globe, teaching clock, abacus, scale, and a variety of animals from different habitats.
 - Homelike/Homework: CD player w/ quiet music, books, pencils, softness from things like bean bag chairs, camp chairs, carpet; and a "solo spot."
 - Snack: tablecloths, centerpieces, iced water, and serving utensils.
 - Family Corner: current staff bios, calendars, newsletters, and postings.

Outdoor Environment

- Clean, aesthetically pleasing, safe, and well maintained.
- Educators are positioned to supervise all children adequately and ensure safety.
- Educators use outdoor areas to provide a variety of outdoor experiences.
- A variety of equipment and materials is accessible for both active and quiet uses.
- Educators participate in children's outdoor activities.

Relationships

Adult Staff and Children

- Children feel safe in the program.
- Educators enforce rules, boundaries and expectations.
- Educators treat all children with fairness, respect, and caring.
- Educators supervise children appropriately, according to level of risk, ages, and abilities.
- Educators provide support, help and encouragement when needed.
- Child-adult interactions are frequent and characterized by mutual respect and turn taking.
- Educators listen actively, attentively and patiently to children when they speak.

Relationships between Children

- Children do not use insults or "put downs."
- Children show respect for each other.
- Children appear friendly and relaxed and are involved with each other.
- Children cooperate, collaborate, and work well together.
- Children have a low degree of conflict (fighting amongst children is infrequent).

Relationships between School Day and Afterschool Educators.

- School concerns are addressed in a timely manner.
- Program staff and school staff communicate regularly.
- Program staff and school staff show genuine respect and cooperation with each other.
- Information sharing, communication, and collaboration among school and afterschool staff, families, and participants is regular and ongoing.

Relationships between Staff

- Educators are energetic, enthusiastic, and positive.
- Educators show genuine respect, caring, and cooperation for each other.
- Staff interactions are positive, warm, supportive, and committed to program outcomes.
- Educators receive frequent informal feedback, coaching, annual performance evaluations, and participate in self-evaluation and continuous development of skills.
- Educators experience positive interaction through organized social events, recreational activities, team-building exercises, etc.

Relationships between Staff and Parents

- Educators and families treat each other with respect.
- Educators give new families a tour and overview of the program.
- Educators keep families well informed about the program.
- Educators make families feel welcome and comfortable.
- Educators greet each parent by name, chat with them and relate to them as individuals.
- Educators and families communicate and work together to meet the needs of the children.
- Arrivals and departures between parent and the program go smoothly.
- Educators encourage families to provide input, support, become involved in program events, and visit the program at any time.
- Educators plan special family events where everyone can celebrate learning and enjoy academic, cultural or recreational activities together.
- All parents are invited to support children's learning by volunteering, participating on the CQI team, collecting resources, fundraising, and taking part in projects.

Experiences

- Children enjoy the activities.
- Activities are novel, enriching, and challenging.
- Activities are self-selected, engaging, and intrinsically motivating.
- Activities are well suited for the age range, styles, abilities, and interests of the children.
- Educators keep records of activity planning and finished lesson plans.
- Children do not perceive afterschool as more school.
- Activities are different from school-day activities, but may support academic outcomes.
- Activity and lesson planning is aligned with and links to school-day objectives. There is observable evidence that activities are part of a theme that is clearly connected to school-day learning.
- Children may choose from a wide variety of activities: working on their homework; active play; reading for pleasure; eating a snack; relaxing; learning new skills; and completing projects.
- Children participate in activities aimed at helping the community and developing life skills such as cooking, public speaking, earning money, solving problems, completing projects, etc.
- Children can engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity most days of the week: games, sports, dance, outdoor activities, fitness activities, aerobics, martial arts, or yoga.
- Children have input into what afterschool activities will be offered and how they will be structured.
- Educators give children many opportunities to make decisions, many ways to take charge of their own learning, and many chances to choose what, how, and with whom they will do activities.
- A high-quality, up-to-date activity calendar and newsletter are posted at the family corner and at the office. The current activity calendar is posted on the website.

The choice: superbly and consistently meet each and every basic standard, or... "do us one better."

Management Tasks

- Site director is personally responsible for facilitating regular and ongoing information sharing, communication, and collaboration among school and afterschool staff, families, and participants.
- Site director personally promotes positive interaction among educators by organizing social events, recreational activities, team-building exercises, etc.
- Site director personally invites all parents to support children's learning by volunteering, participating on the CQI team, collecting resources, fundraising, and taking part in projects.
- Site director ensures a high-quality, up-to-date activity calendar and newsletter are posted at the family corner and at the office. The current activity calendar is posted on the website.
- Site director gathers, summarizes, and reports information accurately and on time: attendance totals, snack information, payroll information, CQI team assessments, quality-improvement action plans, etc.
- Site director disseminates information and keeps staff, parents, and children informed about the program. Relays information from the office, supervisors, and other sources.
- Site director leads meetings with competence: 1:1 coaching sessions, staff meetings, CQI team meetings, family and community events.
- Site director upholds Children's Choice-school/APS agreements and is responsible for the facility.
- Site director supervises all activities, staff, and contractors closely.
- Site director ensures basic Children's Choice standards of quality are upheld.
- Site director holds all staff and contractors accountable for following policies and procedures, managing behavior, and upholding basic standards.
- Site director oversees the CQI process.