



EARLY CARE, EDUCATION AND YOUTH RECREATION
PARENT HANDBOOK



Growing Places Main Office: 603-868-1335 (located at our Lee site)

Growing Places Pinkham Road: 603-868-1335

Growing Places Woodside: 603-868-5674

Growing Places School Age Program: 603-969-8677

Growing Places Leadership Team

Kristen Landau, Executive Director: kristenlandau@growingplacesnh.org

Sarah Nason, Program/Billing Administrator: sarahnason@growingplacesnh.org

Michelle Guthrie, Program Director-Pinkham Road: michelleguthrie@growingplacesnh.org

Hillary Hughes, Program Director- Woodside: hillaryhughes@growingplacesnh.org

Francesca Trial, School Age Program Director: moharimet@growingplacesnh.org



EARLY CARE, EDUCATION AND YOUTH RECREATION

Dear Families,

Welcome to Growing Places!

At Growing Places your child will have the opportunity to receive a nutritious snack, participate in enriching activities, and learn through playing with other children and staff. We pride ourselves in the use of our outside space as an extension to the growth and learning that happens inside in the classroom, and our gentle use of natural colors, toys and activities to encourage exploration without overwhelming the senses. Growing Places' curriculum focuses on the whole child and encourages children to discover and learn through the process instead of the product.

We encourage your family to participate in our programs at any time and to always ask questions, make comments, and offer suggestions. Our goal is to provide a quality child care experience for each family who enrolls in any of our programs. We place great emphasis on the development of partnerships with families, the surrounding communities, and other child care professionals where ideas, information, education and support are shared to create a positive child care experience for all people involved.

Our organization holds a number of family friendly events through the year, including but not limited to a fall picnic/potluck to welcome families, our annual Coppal House Farm Fundraiser that is held in October, breakfast with families mid-winter, our annual Art Show in March, and an end of year celebration in June. We also host an evening fundraiser that is adult-only, but a wonderful opportunity to interact with your child's teacher on another level, and really see what our programs goals are, and what we have achieved throughout the year. We encourage you to join us in celebrating your children and our staff at the annual Wheeler Fundraiser as one of our most important stakeholders!

This handbook is designed to be a guide. These policies are reviewed annually by board and staff members. Please call with any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Kristen Landau, M.S., C.F.L.E.
Executive Director

Getting to Know Us

Growing Places Early Education and Youth Recreation is a private, non-profit 501(c)3 early education and youth recreation organization governed by a Board of Directors and licensed by the State of New Hampshire's Bureau of Child Care Standards and Licensing. Growing Places currently serves approximately 200 families in the seacoast area. Our organization has programs for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years at three different sites.

Growing Places was founded in 1996 when the Durham Children's Center, the Durham Infant Center and Forest Park Child Care Center merged to become one organization. Each of these three former organizations were founded in the 1970's. The three directors of these centers began working together in 1994 on long range planning and resource development.



Our Programs

Early Childhood Education in Lee on Pinkham Road – 56 Pinkham Road, 868-1160

Ages 6 weeks - 6 years

Early Childhood Education in Durham at Woodside Community Building – 60 Strafford Ave, 868-5674

Ages 2 - 6 years

“Our Time” Before and After School Program - Moharimet Elementary School, Madbury, 969-8677

Ages 5 - 12 years

Our Mission Statement: Growing Places provides early education programs that foster development of the whole child.

Our Vision Statement: Our vision for the future is to be a leader in early childhood education.

What We Value

The number one sign of an excellent early education program is the quality of the teaching staff. Growing Places work culture is designed to support excellence in early childhood teaching. Our teachers provide a loving, responsive and rich environment. They plan open-ended, emergent and developmentally appropriate curriculum giving children the opportunity to investigate and explore. We are deeply committed to children and to early childhood education.

Growing Places provides loving, safe and engaging indoor and outdoor environments for children to explore through play in the company of responsive and interactive adults. Knowing that children learn at different rates, teachers intentionally plan curriculum based on individual observations and assessments. A wide variety of enriching opportunities are designed to support children's cognitive, social-emotional, language and physical development. Teachers extend children's learning by asking open-ended, thought provoking questions. Children's development is documented through child assessments twice a year and continuous portfolio work.

Teachers in all early childhood classrooms use sign language as a means to promote early literacy skills. Outside play in our natural environment, loose parts for imaginative play and exploration, music, dramatic play and storytelling are also cornerstones of our program. We value the importance of unstructured outside play in our large wooded area and on our playgrounds. Teachers also provide a balance of more structured activities that promote physical development, curiosity, and investigation of the natural environment.

Our Philosophy

Growing Places fosters learning situations that are flexible, developmentally appropriate, child centered and mindful of differences and individuality. As educators we:

- Provide programming based on cognitive, language, social/emotional and physical goals for each child's development,
- Provide stimulating, hands on experiences that promote a love of learning,
- Believe meaningful learning occurs through play,
- Encourage exploration of the natural environment,
- Support and guide children in problem solving and conflict resolution
- Model and encourage the development of healthy, trusting relationships between and amongst children and adults and the world around them, and
- Build partnerships with families to meet children's individual goals.



Volunteer Opportunities

Growing Places is a non-profit child care and educational organization that depends on volunteer support from family members and from the community to ensure top quality programs for children. The following are ways that you can volunteer during the year:

Event Planning prep for fall and/or spring events
Yardwork/Cleanup
Fundraising/Development Committee
Classroom Volunteers during UNH's Winter Break
Classroom Volunteers during UNH's Spring Break

General Maintenance Projects
Playground Improvement Projects
Art Show Preparation
Board of Directors Member
Community Sponsor Networking

Parents are welcome and encouraged to share their time, talents and/or hobbies in any of our programs at anytime during the year. Please see your child's Program Director to arrange a time.

Parent's concerns, opinions, and suggestions are encouraged to be shared with our staff. All feedback helps our programs grow. Our name *Growing Places* was chosen because all of us are life-long learners. We welcome and encourage your feedback!

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of Growing Places is charged with the role of ensuring that the mission of the organization is carried out while also overseeing the management and strategic planning of the organization. The Board is responsible for planning and policy decisions, for financial stability and the development of adequate resources for the organization, and for the ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the work of the organization.

Please call Executive Director Kristen Landau at 868-1335 for more information about volunteering on our Board of Directors.

Enrollment and Terminating Care Procedures

Enrolling your Child

We strongly encourage every family to have an enrollment interview and tour before their child(ren) attends. Visiting with your child(ren) prior to enrollment is encouraged and can often help with their transition. This can be arranged with the Program Director any time.

- School Age families pay a non-refundable registration fee of \$25.00 per child, as well as the two-week deposit to secure their spot. Families using our school-age program **only** for school vacations and teacher workshop days, are not required to pay the registration fee.
- Before attending any of our programs a registration form completed by the child's parent or guardian must be returned to your child's program location.
- Upon enrollment a weekly schedule is contracted with Growing Places based on classroom availability. Your Program Director will work with you as best he/she can to meet the needs of your family. A minimum of two blocks of time must be contracted for each child.
- A health form and up to date immunization record, completed by a physician, is to be returned to us within thirty (30) days of enrollment. This health form will need to be updated regularly as immunizations are given for children attending our Early Education Programs and every 2 years for children over 6 years of age who are attending the School Age Program.
- A child's enrollment is official **after** the registration fee and tuition deposit are paid in full.

Terminating Care

A two-week written notice must be given when withdrawing from any of our programs. If a two-week written notice is not given, you will be billed for two weeks and your deposit may be applied to those two weeks.

In rare circumstances, the Executive Director of Growing Places with input from appropriate staff, may make the decision that our program is not the right place for a child, or the right fit for your family, which may result in the termination of care. Before terminating care staff will take steps to improve communication, to implement behavior strategies for the child, to make modifications to the environment when appropriate and to seek additional resources to try to help the child be successful in the program. If the decision is made that a child may no longer participate in our program, staff will make every effort to give the family notice.

Situations that may result in that decision would include but not be limited to the following:

- Program staff are unable to meet the emotional, social or cognitive needs of the child or of other children in the program because of the child, or
- Program staff are concerned for the safety of the child or for the safety of other children or of staff in the program because of the child, or
- Communication between program staff and the family has deteriorated to such an extent that a relationship based on mutual trust and respect no longer exists.

Financial Policy Agreement

Tuition Payment Schedule: Tuition payments are due on the first day your child attends each week. Monthly prepayments are welcome, and you are responsible to pay weekly even if you do not receive a bill. Tuition fees are not based on attendance, but are weekly contractual fees. There will be no reductions in fees or refunds given if your child is absent (sickness, vacation, emergency, unforeseen circumstance or other absence). If tuition is not paid on time and according to this contract, we reserve the right to terminate child care unless Operations Manager Sarah Nason (603) 868-1335 has been contacted to create a payment plan. A late payment of \$10/week will be applied to your account for balances (2) or more weeks behind. *Weekly bills are sent to your family's primary email and a copy can be printed and filed in in your child's parent pocket each Friday upon request.*

Registration Fee/Two Week Tuition Deposit: For Early Childhood Sites a \$75 non-refundable annual registration fee is required at the time of enrollment for your child. This is a fee that will be charged annually while your child is attending our programs (September - August). This registration fee covers the cost of liability insurance for each child. When a new child is enrolled **after March 1st, the registration fee is reduced to \$25** (which covers 3/1-8/30). Our School Age Program requires a non-refundable registration fee of \$25.00 per child and each child's last 2 weeks tuition is required at time of registration to secure your child's spot. Your child is not officially enrolled in our program until both registration fee and tuition deposit has been made. If your child enrolls for the 2019/2020 school year, your two-week deposit will carry over to the following year. Families receiving child care reimbursement from the state are exempt from the tuition deposit.

Withdrawal/Change in Contracted Days: If you decide to withdraw your child from any of our programs, or change contracted days attending, you **MUST** give a two (2) week notice, in writing, prior to the withdrawal/change date. If you do not give two weeks written notice, you will be charged two weeks beyond the date notice was given. No exceptions will be made.

Fees:

Programming Fee: Your family will pay a \$25.00 programming fee per child, charged in the month of November. This fee covers materials, special guest presentations, and special projects.

Late Pick-Up Fee: If you are unable to arrive on time, you **MUST** call so that both your child(ren) and the Director can be prepared for the delay. If you are late in picking up your child(ren), you will be charged \$1.00 per minute that has accrued after your scheduled dismissal time.

Returned Check Fees: In the event a payment is returned for insufficient funds, you will be charged \$25.00 for the first returned check, \$30.00 for the second returned check and \$35.00 for the third returned check. Growing Places has the right to ask a family to pay his/her child's tuition with Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) or money orders after receiving three returned checks for a child's tuition during the course of one year (12 months).

Attendance Requirements:

Extra Days: Your child may attend an additional day upon request and if space permits. Such attendance **MUST** be pre-arranged with the Program Director and will be billed to you in your next bill. Growing Places reserves the right to deny permission for your child to attend an Extra Day if you have a past due balance.

Teacher Workshop & School Vacation Registration: Enrollment for Teacher Workshops and school vacation weeks is a separate enrollment process. Registration paperwork for Fall Teacher Workshops will be available early September and registration for Spring Teacher Workshops and school vacation will be available in early January.

Field Trip/Special Events: You will be notified if a special event or field trip is offered. Field Trips and Special Events may be an additional fee.

Approved and Extreme Weather Closures: If one of the above approved closures falls on a day of the week your child is contracted to attend Growing Places you responsible for his/her daily tuition fee. The only exception is the Holiday Vacation and Early Childhood August Shut-down week, where you will be charged 50% of your daily tuition fee. In the event of a change to list of Approved Closures, Growing Places will provide advanced notice. Additionally, you are responsible to pay your daily tuition fee if Growing Places closes due to weather, emergency or unforeseen circumstances on a day that your child is registered to attend.

Please make all checks payable to Growing Places.

Things to Know Day to Day

Sign-In/Sign-Out

Parents (or alternate) must sign their child in when leaving their child for the day and sign out when taking their child from the program.

Clothing

Please always send appropriate clothing with your child. This includes a change of clothes and outdoor clothing. We play outdoors every day, unless extreme weather permits us from safely being outdoors. Please make sure outdoor attire is appropriate for the weather. Shoes that enclose children's feet are strongly recommend for outdoor play.

Nutrition

The desire to feed the children in our programs foods and snacks that are healthy and nutritionally rich goes hand in hand with the practice of providing quality care. Growing Places snack program provides opportunities for the children in our care to eat nutritious foods that promote proper growth and reinforce healthy eating habits. It is our goal to partner with parents to support a lifetime of good health.

Food allergies in children and the severity of reaction to certain foods are common. Effective management of food intolerances and allergies in a child care center requires a team approach which includes appropriate written policies, good communication and thoughtful planning, training and preparation. The Americans With Disabilities Act requires that we make accommodations such as modifying our menu and preventing certain foods from being in the program. To include children with diverse needs and to remain in compliance with the law, some Growing Places sites are **Nut Free Environments**. Families will get detailed information from those sites upon registering.

Illness Policy

As a state licensed organization, Growing Places must follow regulations regarding the exclusion of ill children, along with our own organizational guidelines. Children's health is of our utmost concern followed by the ability of staff to meet the needs of children who are ill while still caring for well children in our programs. **Children who are not well enough to participate fully in our programs should be kept at home to rest.**

Although some illnesses do not require exclusion, sometimes illnesses do require a child or staff member to be excluded from care to prevent the spread of infection to other children and staff, and to allow the child time to rest, recover and be treated for illness. Children with diarrhea, vomiting, excessive congestion or a temperature of 101 degrees or higher (100 under arm) must be excluded from our programs and may not return until they are symptom free for at least 24 hours, along with the resolution of any secondary symptoms.

For certain contagious bacterial illnesses (e.g. strep throat) that typically require antibiotics, your child will also need to be excluded for a period, depending on the illness ~ typically 48 hrs.

A child may also be excluded if their illness prevents them from participating comfortably and fully in our programs, or if the ill child requires more care than the staff can give, which may result in compromising care for other children. There are other less common illnesses which also require exclusion. Please contact your Program Director with questions or for more information about symptoms or length of time a child must be excluded from the program. If your child will not be attending due to illness, please call that site to inform your child's teacher.

Staff receive First Aid and CPR training and follow Universal Precautions to help control the spread of germs. Rubber gloves are worn when caring for an injured child when blood is present. Staff wash hands frequently

during the day, also after administering first aid, diapering, assisting with toileting, and helping children wipe noses. Growing Places follows federally mandated regulations regarding confidentiality and inclusion for diseases such as Hepatitis B and HIV.

Medication

Non-prescription medication may be administered to children after the parent or legal guardian fills out the authorization form. Prescription medication may be administered to children with authorization from a parent or legal guardian and a licensed health practitioner who has prescribed the medication for that particular child. When manufacturer's instructions are not available for a specific child's age, signed and dated written instructions from the child's parent and written approval from the child's licensed health practitioner are required.

All medication must be in its original container labeled with the child's name and the date the medication is to be administered. Expired medication may not be administered. Dosage requirements by the manufacturer or licensed health practitioner must be followed.

Child Pick-Up

The safety of all children enrolled at Growing Places is of vital importance to staff. If a person other than the parent will be picking up the child, the alternate(s) should be listed on the child registration form and must be at least 16 years of age. If the person is not listed, we require written permission from the parent or legal guardian. The alternate pick up person will also be required to show a photo identification at the time of pick up. In an emergency we will accept a telephone call from the parent or legal guardian about an alternate pick up person. The parent or guardian must speak directly to the Program Director or to their child's Teacher to inform them of this arrangement.

There have been occasions in the past when staff have been concerned that an adult arriving to pick up a child has consumed alcohol or other impairing drugs, is experiencing emotional upset or any other event that could put the child's safety at risk. We are not trained to determine what is harmful or could be too much. We cannot refuse to release a child to their parent or legal guardian, but we are liable to ensure a child's safety. If any of the above occurs, staff may take one or more of the following actions:

- Explain that they are concerned about the adult's ability to drive safely.
- Ask the adult if they are willing to secure an alternative ride for the child and themselves.
- Ask the adult to wait for the police to come and ascertain the adult's ability to drive safely.
- Call the police if the adult leaves with the child and tell the police the concern, the kind of car and the license plate number if possible.
- Inform the Program Director (who will inform the Executive Director) that day and the adult in question will be asked to meet with one of the directors about the incident.
- Document the incident including the reasons for concern.

Child Abuse/Neglect

Growing Places follows all state guidelines for reporting abuse or neglect. Any persons in New Hampshire suspecting or having knowledge that a child is being abused or neglected is **required** to report such to their supervisor and to the Director. The Program Director or Executive Director will assist an employee in reporting to the Division of Children and Youth Services and notes will be placed in the child's file.

Extreme Weather Policy

The organization uses UNH and the public schools as a guide in determining whether or not to open during inclement weather. Delayed opening or closing announcements will be made on the following radio stations WHEB 100.3 FM, WERZ 107.1 and WOKQ 97.5 FM. Delayed openings or closings will be announced on WMUR television station and listed on the WMUR website as well. The School Age Program will not operate on days the Oyster River School District is closed.

Behavior Policy

Respect is the key to all of our interactions and expectations at Growing Places and at Our Time School Age Program. Respect is defined as treating people with high regard or concern. We acknowledge the merit and worth of every individual and strive to be respectful in our conduct and attitudes towards others. Staff foster an atmosphere of mutual respect by being respectful of children. We expect that the children will be respectful toward staff, other children, themselves and the environment. We believe that children learn by being held accountable for their behavior.

If a child acts disrespectfully toward a teacher or another child, Growing Places may decide to suspend the child for the day. If a child causes or with careless disregard causes harm or injury to another child by his/her actions, willfully destroys property, or behaves in such a way that staff would be concerned for the child’s safety or the safety of others, Growing Places may decide to suspend the child for the day. If there is concern for the child’s safety and well-being on a field trip, Growing Places may decide that the child not be allowed to attend the program on the day of a future field trip. Parents need to arrange care at their own expense for that day. Two suspensions from the program may result in the child being dismissed from the program.

Our Time School Age Program has adopted the Oyster River Cooperative School District’s Pupil Safety and Violence Policy, which can be found here:

http://orcsd.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_538005/File/School%20Board/Policies/J/JICK - Pupil Safety - Bullying 06 01 16.pdf

Staff Who Offer Babysitting or Other Outside Services

Often staff from Growing Places are willing to babysitting outside of their work at Growing Places. It is important for families to know that hiring a staff member to babysit for your family is separate and distinct from enrolling a child at Growing Places. Staff at Growing Places are closely supervised. We recommend that you check references carefully when hiring someone to babysit your child/children including Growing Places staff. Growing Places is not responsible for anything that occurs when a family hires a staff member for services outside of the organization.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF POLICIES AND GUIDELINES: By signing below, I acknowledge that I agree to abide by the above Policies and Procedures of Growing Places Early Education and Youth Recreation. I will contact the Program Director or Operations Manager at (603) 868-1335 if I have any questions or concerns.



Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____



Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____



Program Director Signature: _____ Date: _____