

Welcome to



A Place to Grow; A Place to Learn

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Parent Handbook



Children Learn What They Live

If a child lives with Criticism, he learns to Condemn

If a child lives with Hostility, he learns to Fight

If a child lives with Ridicule, he learns to be Shy

If a child lives with Shame, he learns to feel Guilty

If a child lives with Tolerance, he learns to be Patient

If a child lives with Praise, he learns to Appreciate

If a child lives with Fairness, he learns Justice

If a child lives with Security, he learns to have Faith

If a child lives with Approval, he learns to like Himself

If a child lives with ACCEPTANCE AND FRIENDSHIP, he learns
to find love in the world!!

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Picket Fence Daycare and Learning Center is located at 36 Conti Parkway in Elmwood Park, founded in October 1993. We are licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services and are under the rules and regulations of the Cook County Health Department and Illinois Fire Marshall.

Picket Fence opened in October 1993 with one classroom; there were two on staff, one Director/Teacher and one Teacher Assistant. Seven children were enrolled and we were serving ages two through six. By the time summer of 1994 came, there were thirty five children enrolled and three classrooms were open. Shortly after that, all four classrooms were open with ten staff members and a long waiting list.

The center relocated in August of 2004 from 22 Conti Parkway. We have been open for over thirteen years and will continue to offer outstanding quality care. In March of 2005, we were recognized for our quality care and became accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Picket Fence fosters creativity within children, so does it foster and encourage staff to be creative as well. Staff is the most important aspect for a good program and we encourage parents and families to be sure to thank the members of our team frequently. Early Childhood educators do not get the recognition they deserve. It is the early years of a child's development that is the most important.

As our waiting list continued to grow at the Elmwood Park location, we decided that it would be best to expand our business to meet the needs of the community. An opportunity was presented to us by the school formerly known as Bethlehem Lutheran School. Although we are not a faith based program, we decided that the location and building would be the best place for us to expand. On July 20th, 2012 we had our Open House and ribbon cutting ceremony. Our doors were open for business on July 30th, 2012; starting with one classroom and three staff members, two Directors/Teachers and a teacher assistant.

Philosophy

As parents and teachers, we are interested in good beginnings for young children. The right start in early years is an invaluable aid to the continuous unfolding of a child's potential. Our curriculum is activity based and we believe children learn through play. We would like to offer your child a stimulating, secure and warm home away from home. Children are special and we believe in praising them for their accomplishments. Each child will be able to progress at his/her own pace, so that he/she can experiment, discover and learn. We will try to develop their independence and confidence. We provide a learning environment with many experiences that children will investigate, represent and share.

Our loving and supportive staff respects each child's individual capabilities and nurtures their self-esteem and creativity. Through encouraging self-expression, play and initiating choices of materials and equipment, we promote each child's emotional, social, cognitive, language and physical development.

Our staff also sees family as partners in each child's development and encourages ongoing communication and input.



Our Center's Program

Picket Fence is dedicated to the premise that learning is best facilitated in an environment which is challenging, hands on, and of course FUN!

We offer a varied curriculum to develop the child as a confident and well rounded person. Play is also an important tool in the practice skills; it furthers cognitive development as thinking abilities are stretched; it involves language, encouraging new uses; it involves physical activity's; it helps children work through emotions; its inventive nature makes it creative; it is often a socializing event; beyond all that, however, it provides a way for children to assimilate and integrate their life experiences. Our program gives the child ample opportunities in play. Children in our program will also have experiences in arts and crafts, manipulative blocks, language arts, sensory experiences through our sensory table, story telling, dramatic play, science, music, cooking, nature, reading readiness, numbers, and exercise and group games.

General Policies

Enrollment Procedures

After you have toured the center and have decided to enroll your child, please read this handbook in its entirety. Please return the application forms and the following PRIOR to starting day:

- A. Registration fee of \$35.00.
- B. One week's tuition is required as a deposit to be used to pay for your child's last week of attendance. We will also have the option to apply the deposit toward delinquent tuition fees.
- C. First week's tuition.
- D. Purchase of "kidnapper" (sleeping bag).
- E. A complete change of clothes to be kept in cubby.
- F. Application forms completed including immunizations/physical, copy of child's birth certificate and a signed handbook receipt.
- G. Both A & B are non-refundable.

Admission

Admission is open to all children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old who have completed the application forms, medical forms and pays the appropriate fees.

We are committed to equal opportunity for all persons in our program regardless of race, color, gender, creed, religion age, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, marital or parental status, and arrest or conviction record.

Dismissal

We reserve the right to dismiss a child from this center for the reason of non-cooperation of parents with our policies, delinquency in payment of tuition or if the child, who, after reasonable trial, could not benefit from our program.

Two weeks written notice is required for parents who choose to withdraw their child from our program. If two week's notice is not given, you will forfeit your deposit. DEPOSITS ARE NOT REFUNDABLE.

We are not responsible for items left at the center after 30 days.

Separation

Children and families entering the center should have a chance to visit the center before starting to see what it is like. A teacher can also come to meet the child at his/her house during a home visit. Home visits can be set up through the Director. Separation can be made easier if the parents are honest with their child and let them know they are leaving (no sneaking out please) and that they will be back at a specific time (for example, "I'll be back right after snack or story time.) Building a trustful relationship is very important for young children.

Relationships

Building quality relationships among the parents, families, teachers and children is the foundation for the success of our program and healthy growth and development of the children. Picket Fence strives to work in partnership with families in order to provide a positive and supportive learning environment for all who enter here. We will support you in making the primary decisions about services your child needs and encourage you in advocating those needs.

We hope you will become actively involved in our program by contributing time, materials, suggestions, or feedback to help evaluate our program. We encourage your interest in participating and supporting community improvement and advocacy projects.

We value your time, input and opinions. Twice a year, we will ask for your feedback about our program through confidential surveys. A NAEYC survey in October and a Quest For Excellence survey in April.

Hours of Operation

The center is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The center's school year is from the middle of August to the end of May. The summer session is held from the end of May to the middle of August.

Arrivals and Departures/Late pick up

Parents may bring their children anytime after 6:30 a.m. Please be sure to **sign in** your child at their classroom. It is best to have your child arrive by 9:00 a.m.; this is when our program begins. In order to offer a program that is most beneficial to all students, we would like children to arrive by 10:00 a.m. However, please remember 9:00 am is MOST beneficial. If you are going to arrive at school after 10:00 a.m., please notify the office before 10:00 a.m.

We close promptly at 6:00 pm according to the schools wall clock in the office. Promptness in picking up your child by 6:00 pm is necessary. A charge of \$2.00 per minute after 6:00 pm will be charged payable when you child is picked up. If you will be late, please phone the center and talk to the person in charge. Repeated tardiness will result in removal from the center. Tardiness at 6:00 pm cannot be tolerated. Tardiness worries young children. In times of unusual weather, some delays will be tolerated.

Smoking

Picket Fence is a smoke free environment. NO smoking is permitted in the presence of children.

Security

For your child's security, when dropping him/her off, please sign them in at their classroom. When picking up your child, please sign them out. If you are not able to pick up your child, please call to tell us who will be coming. They need to be an authorized person that is listed on the authorization form, including the driver's license number on the application form. All staff has been instructed to card anyone that they do not recognize.

You may enter the building by ringing the doorbell at the front door and a staff member will come and open the door.

Absences

The center must be informed each time a child will be absent. THERE ARE NO TUITION DEDUCTIONS MADE FOR TIME MISSED DUE TO ILLNESS. When choosing days for part time scheduling, no changes may be made to make up for illness, vacations, or any other reason. Discuss scheduling with the Director before signing up your child.

Accidents and life safety

The River Grove Fire Department and Gottlieb Hospital have been notified about the existence of the center. If your child needs emergency treatment, the River Grove ambulance and Gottlieb Hospital will be used. Parents will be notified in such an instance. If the parents are not available, the persons on your application form for emergencies will be notified. Minor injuries will be treated with first aid by the staff.

All fire regulations required by the State are abided by. An evacuation plan in case of fire has been place in every room, and tornado/severe weather instructions have been place in every classroom. Fire drills and storm drills are held on a timely basis to meet current codes.

In the event that an evacuation needs to take place, all children will be brought to the River Grove Public School at 2650 Thatcher Avenue.

Dress code/clothing

Let your child be comfortable and feel free to get dirty. Dress your child in clothes that are easy to take on and off for bathroom purposes. Most children want to be independent at school, even though at home they may demand help.

Please send at least one complete change of clothing and be sure to label them with their name clearly marked. These will be kept in their individual lockers. If there is not a change of clothes available, a parent will be contacted to pick up your child or to bring a change of clothes. Be sure children are dressed for all types of weather. Children will spend time outside everyday including during the winter months. Children will be kept in on rainy days, and extremely cold or hot days.

Toys/Treasures from home

We encourage the children to bring a favorite stuffed animal for nap. Many children feel more secure when they bring something with them while away from home. It is as if they are carrying a bit of home with them to school. However, other toys are NOT allowed to be brought to school. They can very easily get lost or misplaced. Teachers cannot take time away from the other children to look for a lost item.

Naps

Children nap from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. At this time, children are encouraged to sleep or rest. During this time soft music will be playing and backs or heads are being rubbed. Children are not forced to sleep; however, they are not allowed to be disruptive to the rest of the children napping.

Mealtime/Snacks

Children eat lunch family style in their own classrooms. Teachers will join the children for lunch. Second helpings of food will be provided. Children will be encouraged to clean their places after meals. Children with food allergies will be treated individually. Written consent must be made for a special diet. Substitute foods, such as peanut butter, shall be available if this should prove necessary. After lunch, there will be a short time before nap to relax with a story. A mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack will be provided daily to the children. We ask that each child bring in a **HEALTHY**, nutritious snack once a month. Your child will pass out his/her snack to his/her friends on their snack day. Children look forward to their snack day! Some ideas for healthy snacks include; cheese and crackers, apples, oranges, vanilla pudding and graham crackers, yogurt, 100% juices. All snacks need to be store bought, **NO** homemade goodies please. Items made with peanuts, on a peanut line or manufactured in a facility where peanuts are made are **NOT** allowed.

Hand-washing

To reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases, **all** children and adults are required to properly wash their hands upon entering the building. Proper hand-washing procedure is as follows: Using liquid soap and running water, rub your hands vigorously for at least twenty seconds (length of the ABC song), including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinse well; dry hands with a paper towel and use the paper towel to turn off the water. Hand sanitizer may not be used in place of hand-washing.

Toileting

For children in diapers, please bring in a supply of **disposable** diapers to be stored in the bathroom. When the supply gets low, you will be notified. In the event that your child is unable to wear disposable diapers, please provide a document from your health provider stating the medical reason. If cloth diapers are necessary, a waterproof cover such as a diaper wrap or a pull on pant is required.

Birthday treats/holidays

A child's birthday is important to their self-image. Being a year older is a milestone in a young child's world. We have a party with his/her peers during p.m. snack. We will make or give the birthday boy/girl a crown and will sing the birthday song. The crown and song are a center tradition. Treats are to be store bought and purchased within 24 hours of usage (Illinois Child Care Act 1969.) Please remember that even birthday treats must be peanut-free. If you bring a box cake mix and frosting, your child will pick some friends to help make his/her cupcakes.

Because of religious tradition or cultural backgrounds, families celebrate holidays in their own way. We strive to represent all families (cultures, traditions and beliefs) throughout our

program. We encourage children and parents to talk about family traditions of holiday celebration.

Diversity

We welcome children and families without regard to family structure, socioeconomic status, race, religion, cultural backgrounds, gender, ability or language. The multi-cultural backgrounds of our families have added to our well-rounded educational programs. Individual differences among our children are recognized, encouraged and respected.

Inclusion

We are committed to equal opportunity for all persons in our program regardless of the child's developmental situation.

Changes in home situation/parent involvement

A major thesis for the Picket Fence Learning Center's philosophy is that the more we cooperate and communicate with each other, the greater will be the benefits that your child will derive from the center. Frequently, a child's behavior will change, and the teachers, unaware of what is happening at home, will be mystified as to the cause. The teacher will be hampered in her/his methods of dealing with this unusual behavior, if he/she has no idea as to the cause. We do not want to pry into your personal life; that is assuredly NOT our intention. But often, your child's emotional well being is at stake. For this reason, we urge you to speak to us about any change or unusual event in your family life. We should always be told if you are going away on a trip and leaving your child with grandparents or a sitter. The illness of a parent or a close relative is often important to a child, particularly when one or both parents are away visiting the sick person in the hospital. We should always be notified immediately of a death in the family, since the very first reactions of a child to such an event are often crucial. The feelings of a very young child during such a trying period are often overlooked. "Talking it out" can prevent the development of unhealthy reactions. So please, do not hesitate to communicate with us. At important times in the life of your family, speak with your child's teacher or the Director. Remember that we are sharing (if only for a year or two) in the development of your child. The early years are most important!

Communication

We encourage families to keep the lines of communication open. We hold parent-teacher conference once a year and more often if needed. Other ways to communicate is through phone calls, personal notes, bulletin boards, dry erase boards, daily news flashes and monthly newsletters. The newsletters will help keep you informed about activities at the center.

Grievance Procedure

At times, differences in communication styles, guidance methods or child rearing philosophies may occur. Our goal is to understand your wishes and find a way to work together to provide a comfortable learning atmosphere and reach the best possible outcomes for your child. If your position on a particular issue differs with what you see or hear in the classroom, it is recommended that you discuss your concerns directly with your child's teacher. You can then

work together with the teachers and Director to reach a solution. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the center Executive Director, Toni Chakchay at picketfence36@sbcglobal.net.

If there is a language barrier between teacher and parent, the program will make sure parent's concerns are addressed.

Curriculum

Our program focuses on the development of the whole child (physical, social/emotional, cognitive and language) as well as each child's culture and individual learning styles. Into our curriculum we integrate key areas of content including literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, technology, creative expression, health and safety, and the arts. We value play and implement the Creative Curriculum for Preschool Program. These curriculum models are research and theory based. They encourage providing "hand-on" and open-ended learning activities designed to meet the individual interests, developmental needs and emerging skills of children. On a daily basis, the teachers are expected to seek out children's ideas and discern how they understand things by observing, talking with, and listening to them. The *Illinois Early Learning Standards* are also used as a guide for developing and meeting curricular goals that are developmentally appropriate and meaningful.

Child Screening and Assessment

It is important that we ensure each child has typical development during these important years. Screening and assessment is a way for us to accomplish this goal. These provide teachers with information that helps evaluate a child's development and helps us better understand his/her skills, knowledge and behaviors. All Picket Fence teaching staff is trained in these screening and assessment process. Teachers begin assessing children upon their first day of enrollment. A child's first screening will occur within three months after enrollment. All information will be kept confidential.

Screening refers to the first step in a two-step process of identification of disabilities such as vision or hearing impairments, physical disabilities, speech and language impairments, emotional disturbance, mental retardation and specific learning disabilities and delays. The second step is further evaluation.

Children with disabilities or other special learning needs will be evaluated by District #401 at the Early Childhood Center located across the street from Picket Fence. A case study will be completed within sixty days and we will attend a meeting to discuss their findings. An individualized education plan will be created with the team at the ECC.

Open House

We encourage families to attend our open house that is held in October of every year. This gives you the opportunity to meet your child's teachers, peers and their parents. It also gives you the opportunity to see what your child's day is like while at Picket Fence.

Spring Fun Fair

We encourage families to attend our “Spring fun fair”. This event is held in early May on a Friday evening. Children have the opportunity to come to play games, win prizes, eat, make and take, and enjoy the company of their teachers and peers.

Parent Education

As part of the development and education of young children, we offer parent education resources here at Picket Fence. We can also arrange consultants to come to the center for special presentations.

Guidance

Simple, understandable rules are used with children. The purpose of guidance is to help children develop self-control and to learn to assume responsibility for his or her own actions. Positive statements are used to redirect any negative behavior. Removal from a group may be an occasional means of helping a child regain control. He/She will not be subject to a “time out”; he/she will be redirected to a different area. We feel that “time out” shames children and does not assist in promoting positive self-esteem.

In accordance with state law, no child will be subjected under any circumstances to corporal punishment in any manner upon the body, or to verbal abuse.

Health Policies

Control of communicable illness among the children is a prime concern. Policies and guidelines related to outbreaks of communicable illness at Picket Fence have been developed with the help of the health department and the local pediatricians. In order to protect the entire group of children, as well as your own child, we ask that parents assist us by keeping sick children home if they have experienced any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours:

1. A fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit, orally or 100 degrees axially (under arm).
2. Signs of a newly developing cold or severe coughing.
3. Diarrhea, vomiting or an upset stomach.
4. Unusual or unexplained loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability or headache.
5. Any discharge of drainage from eyes, noses, ears or open sores.
6. Three or more watery stools, especially if your child acts or looks ill.
7. Vomiting two or more times within the past 24 hours.
8. Sore throat, especially with fever or swollen glands in neck.
9. Unexplained rash, especially with fever or itching.

If your child becomes ill at the center, we will notify you for IMMEDIATE PICK UP. Your child will be kept in the office on his/her cot awaiting your immediate pick up. If we cannot reach you, the emergency person authorized to pick up your child on the application form will be contacted to pick up your child. Your child may return to school 24 hours after a fever, diarrhea or vomiting has stopped or he/she has been on antibiotics for a 24-hour period. They need to be “fever free” WITHOUT medication (Tylenol, Motrin, etc.) to return to school.

Any child not well enough to participate in the school activities, INCLUDING OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES, should remain home until recovered. Should your child contact any contagious

disease, such as chicken pox, mumps, measles, Rosella, scarlet fever, whooping cough, etc... please report it to us immediately so we can notify other parents that their children may have been exposed.

Outdoor play

To protect the children against cold, heat, sun injuries, and insect-borne disease, please dress your children in layers for warmth in the cold weather. When in the heat, please dress your children in protective clothing and apply sun block or sunscreen that has UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher. If the staff needs to apply the sunscreen, please be sure to complete the consent form and return it to your child's teacher or administrator.

In the event that the Cook County Department of Public Health recommends use of insect repellents due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, please use repellents containing DEET only. If staff needs to apply the insect repellent, please complete the consent form and return it to your child's teacher or administrator. Insect repellent will be applied only once per day.

Medication

We prefer not to administer medication in our center, if your child needs antibiotics, ask your doctor to give you a prescription that is given twice a day. You can give it to them once in the morning before bringing them to the center, and once again in the evening after you pick up your child. If medication needs to be administered in our center, it must be in the original container, not past the expiration date and properly labeled (child's name, doctor's name, medication name, and dosage), and a consent form completed and signed. We will not administer any over the counter medication.

Change of name or address

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the center in writing of the following changes:

- Name and Address.
- Home or work phone number.
- Emergency names or phone numbers.
- Authorized pick up names or phone numbers.

Fund Raising

We welcome your involvement in our fund-raising events. The proceeds from these events go directly to benefit your children with new materials, equipment, teaching aids, etc. Your participation will greatly enhance the success of the functions. Ideas and suggestions are also appreciated.

Parent Committee/Advisory board

We encourage parent involvement in our program. Any parent is welcome to join our parent committee, which meets as often as necessary. At these meetings you will have the chance to make the decisions regarding our program, policies and plan events. To sign up for this committee please see the Director.

Visitation

At Picket Fence Learning Center we have an open door policy. You are welcome to visit anytime. You can join your child for lunch or join in during activity time, share a story, or just say hi. Most children understand visits, but some might have a hard time at the beginning letting go of mom or dad in the middle of the day. Just until they understand that you are visiting and not here to pick them up. Be sure to make it clear to your child that you will be visiting. Another option would be to come close to pick up time and spend some time then.

Field Trips

We will be going on field trips throughout the year. An additional charge will be incurred to cover the transportation (bus) and any admission fee. Permission slips are to be completed before any child can attend. In most cases, the center is closed during the time we are away. If the permission slip and fees are not returned by the “due date” requested, your child will not be allowed to attend. Please pay close attention to those dates. Chaperones are invited to attend, admission fee will be charged. There is NO smoking allowed during our field trips. (Indoor or Outdoor). First aid kits and a cell phone will be taken with in case of an emergency. Alternate transportation arrangements are handled by the bus company in the event of a stalled vehicle.

Technology

The children in the three, four, and five year old rooms have access to computers for educational software only.

Confidentiality

This confidentiality policy has been adopted to assure confidentiality and protection of individual rights to privacy for children, families, and employees of Picket Fence Learning Center. The individual dignity of children, families, and employees shall be respected and protected at all times in accordance with law.

Information about children, families, or employees must not be divulged to anyone other than persons who are authorized to receive such information. This policy extends to both internal and external disclosure.

Picket Fence Learning Center follows the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethics. Protecting the privacy, interests and special relationships between co-workers, children and families is essential to maintaining professional and quality care.

Confidentiality of Children’s and Families’ Information

- A. All children's records must be locked in a secure file.
- B. Access to children's records is limited to appropriate employees.
- C. Children's records must not be removed from the center.
- D. Children's records must never be left out on desks, tables, etc. where other people may have access to them.
- E. Children's or families private information must never be discussed among employees except on the 'need to know' basis. Employees must be particularly aware of their surroundings when discussing this information. Special caution must be taken to be sure other children, families, or employees do not overhear information which is private.
- F. Discussion of children's or families' information with volunteers, other families, friends, or community members is prohibited.
- G. Information and documents which are considered confidential are medical records, educational records, special needs records, family records, financial records and any other private information about the children or their families.
- H. All requests for release of information will be coordinated by director.
- I. Information will only be released with the express written consent of the child's parent or legal guardian.

Integrated Pest Management

All licensed childcare centers are required by Illinois law (93-0381) to use Integrated Pest Management to control pests. Centers must notify parent's if pesticides are to be used inside the facility (bait pesticides do not require notification). One staff member is assigned as the center's IPM coordinator and regularly maintains the center's IPM plan. All staff members that see a pest in the IPM Coordinator. The coordinator will complete the IPM Plan and communicate actions to be taken with the Director and staff.

Picket Fence follows the Safer Pest Control Project guidelines supported by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Financial Policy

Tuition is due of each Friday in advance of the next week's attendance. In case of an absence of a child, tuition is payable on the first day the child returns to the center. In case of a holiday that falls on Friday, tuition is due on the last operating day your child attends prior to Friday. When the center is closed for a holiday, REGULAR TUITION is still charged. If your child is absent for a whole week (5 days WITHIN that one week), half of the regular tuition fee is required for each week up to TWO weeks per calendar year.

If tuition is not paid on Friday by 6:00 pm, a late fee of \$10.00 PER DAY will be added. In addition, all checks returned by the bank will incur a \$10.00 late fee as well as the bank fees. If there are two returned checks, the tuition will be payable by cash only. If tuition becomes two weeks delinquent, your child will not be able to attend school and your space may be lost.

The tuition schedule is as follows:

Toddlers – full time		Toddlers – part time		2 Year olds – full time		2 Year olds – part time	
5 days	\$216.00	5 days	\$188.00	5 days	\$195.00	5 days	\$166.00
4 days	\$208.00	4 days	\$181.00	4 days	\$183.00	4 days	\$160.00
3 days	\$196.00	3 days	\$176.00	3 days	\$170.00	3 days	\$155.00
2 days	\$185.00	2 days	\$144.00	2 days	\$159.00	2 days	\$133.00

3 Year and older – full time		3 Years and older – part time		Before and After Care	
5 days	\$188.00	5 days	\$159.00	Before School	\$40.00
4 days	\$177.00	4 days	\$154.00	After School	\$70.00
3 days	\$165.00	3 days	\$149.00	Before & After	\$85.00
2 days	\$153.00	2 days	\$127.00		

Department of Human Service families are required to make their co payments in full on the first of every month or weekly payments are acceptable with permission from the office. If not paid on the first a \$10.00 fee **per day** will be charged. If payment becomes two weeks delinquent, your child will not be able to attend school and your space may be lost.

The child care assistance program is a program for the families and it is extremely important that your case stays active; this means you are responsible to submit all your paperwork in a timely fashion. We are glad to help, however, you are responsible. If your case ends during your time in our program, we will give you a 2 week extension, however, after two weeks you are responsible to pay regular tuition rates until your approval is received. When your case is approved, we will reimburse you.

***Management Team
Board of Directors***

Toni Chakchay	President/Executive Director/Owner
Dolores Salemi	Vice President/Bookkeeper/Owner
Nicole Gibbons	Director

Professional Staff

The staff at Picket Fence Daycare and Learning Center meets the requirements of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and under goes a thorough background check through Springfield, include fingerprinting. A physical examination, including a tuberculosis test is required. Most important, all staff love and understand children and teach them while having fun. Staff meetings are held regularly for the purpose of enriching, improving and evaluating the program.

Teachers encourage the learning process by providing work/play areas consisting of many different materials and learning opportunities. Materials are used which provide concrete experiences and are adaptable to the different levels of individual children.

The staff is one of the most important parts of any program. Research and experience clearly shows that children's earliest years are crucial learning years.

Taken from Illinois News (a publication of the Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children) is this comment: "Early Childhood programs are an essential part of the education of young children, and a crucial service for families and communities, yet we still pay early childhood teachers less than hairstylists and garbage collectors", said Kathy Thornburg, Ph.D, President of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Remember, if we want our children to succeed, we need to support the teachers, administrators and programs that give them a great start.

Curriculum

Our curriculum areas include:

1. Block area (representational play)
2. Housekeeping area (dramatic play)
3. Manipulative/Discovery (math, thinking skills)
4. Library area (books, tapes, pre-literacy)
5. Sensory area/sand and water table (pre-math, science)
6. Art area (creative art experiences and techniques)
7. Music (creative and appreciation)
8. Science Area (discovery and exploration)
9. Large motor (coordination)
10. Group experiences (language, socialization)
11. Field trips (community education)

Curriculum is the design of experiences and activities developed to help children increase their competence. Developmentally appropriate curriculum provides for all areas of a child's development through an integrated approach. Children learn by active participation and first hand experiences.

Children's development and learning is assessed in the context of classroom activities. Teachers objectively observe children in play, collect facts about each child's interest and abilities, analyze and evaluate the collected information and then use what they have learned to plan the curriculum. This assessment is the key to planning for the individual needs of children and the group.

The Components of Our Environment

Art

Doing the activity (the process not the product) is what our program views as important, not the end result (product). Art education is a meaningful force in the total learning program and its goal is to motivate the children to pursue art activities and enjoy experiences that lead to general overall development. Children will be allowed to grow and learn at their own pace and in accordance with their own abilities and interests, this helping them develop sound and positive self-concepts. Art offers an emotional release for children, the opportunity for socialization and language development, and the opportunity to further develop fine motor skills, including eye-hand coordination. These opportunities lead to increased perceptual growth, and subsequently to greater cognition.

Housekeeping

Dramatic play happens in the housekeeping area. This is a place for the spontaneous, imaginative role-playing children engage in during free play. Role-playing takes on a special meaning for each child. Children express their thoughts and feelings about family members and the people in their past experiences as they act out roles. Through role playing children confront their fears, learn to distinguish what is "real" and what is "fantasy" and develop an understanding of the world around them.

Books

Books are for reading, sharing, enjoying, and for communicating ideas, both at school and at home. We have classroom books, library books, books and tapes. The children also make their own books as well. We encourage children to look at books alone or with other children or adults. We read to children everyday. All activities lead to important pre-literate skills.

Manipulative

Manipulative help children develop small motor skills, eye-hand coordination, pre-reading and prewriting skills. The children generally move in and out of these areas (science, math and small motor), as they become interested during the free exploration time. The child can use most of the materials alone.

Some of the materials are self-correcting in nature in that a child can see when he/she has made an error and can make the correction without adults telling him/her.

Games

Games help children further discover and learn about classification, seriating and visual discrimination. Games may be played by one child or may be enjoyed by a small group of children. Playing games is an excellent opportunity for children to develop social/coping skills. In our program the emphasis is on fun and learning, not “winning”, “better”, or “faster”.

Mathematics

Mathematics for young children is learning about concepts of size, classification, seriating, and patterning. Learning comes from manipulation of materials and exploration of the relationship between objects. Activities for the children will provide opportunities for verbalizing thought, clarifying ideas and exchanging viewpoints.

Music

Singing and dancing are creative arts. The goal of our music program is to bring the children sheer enjoyment through song and dance, and hopefully make their lives richer. Music gives children another medium through which they can express their thoughts and feelings.

Science

Science is a continuous wondering and discovering process with young children. Science is thinking and doing. Learning comes through direct participation – planting seeds, experimenting with water, and caring for animals. Science activities offer opportunities for children to question, investigate, experience the joy of discovery, and further develop the ability to solve problems.

Large Motor Activities

Running, climbing, jumping, gymnastics, and loud, exuberant voices are part of childhood! Activities in this area assist the child in becoming aware of the manner in which his/her whole body is coordinated. This awareness allows the body to move freely and release the child emotionally and intellectually to explore all areas of learning. We go outdoors daily for walks or to the playground (Ditka Park).

Blocks

Blocks are a medium, which promote the development of many concepts and skills such as size, shape, ordering and classifying. These concepts and skills are basic to the disciplines of mathematics science, social studies and language arts. Blocks stimulate creativity, offer opportunities for social and emotional development, and give a child a “sense of mastery”, or accomplishment.

Food Study

Preparing food is enjoyable, exciting, and a source of never-ending knowledge for young children. It is an opportunity for them to sharpen observation skills through use of the senses. They taste and compare sweet, sour, bitter and salty. They smell the aromas of various fruits, vegetables and spices. They touch and feel consistency, soft, smooth, wet, dry, and sticky. They listen and hear snapping, beating, grating, pouring, and popping. The experience of preparing food introduces new vocabulary (measure, teaspoon, baking powder, etc...), naturally encourages socialization, and promotes a positive self-concept through a sense of accomplishment, I did it myself!

The annual calendar is printed in January of each year.

We are closed for the following days:

Thursday, December 31, 2015	New Year's Eve
Friday, January 1, 2016	New Year's Day
Thursday, May 5, 2016	National Teacher Appreciation Week
Friday, May 6, 2016	National Teacher Appreciation Week
Monday, May 30, 2016	Memorial Day
Monday, July 4, 2016	Independence Day
Monday, September 5, 2016	Labor Day
Thursday, November 24, 2016	Thanksgiving
Friday, November 25, 2016	Thanksgiving
Monday, December 26, 2016	Christmas Break
Monday, January 1, 2017	New Year's Break

This copy of our Parent Policy Handbook is printed by Picket Fence Daycare and Learning Center in May 1997 and revised in July 2012. This booklet replaces all previous parent manuals. The Picket Fence Daycare and Learning Center reserves the right to revise this policy booklet as needed.

I/We have received and read the Picket Fence Daycare and Learning Center Parent Handbook and will adhere to the policies therein. I understand them and will comply with them.

Signature_____

Date_____

Signature_____

Date_____

Please sign and return to office before your child's first day of school. Thank you.

Comments: