



# **Early Childhood Education 2024-2025 Parent Handbook**

**Guadalupe Center DCF License #C20CO6406**

**Monaghan Family Campus**

**DCF License # C20CO0143**

**Lake Trafford Campus DCF License # C20CO0124**

**van Otterloo Family Campus for Learning**

**DCF License # C20CO0160**

Dear Parents and Families,

Welcome to the Guadalupe Center! Our goal is to provide the highest quality care, while creating a nurturing and supporting community of children, parents, and highly skilled staff. We strive to create a safe and nurturing learning environment for each child that promotes their emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development. Children's experiences both at home and at school are the foundation for life long feelings of self worth, competence and a love of learning. Mutual understanding and respect between home and school is essential for children's future success.

This handbook is designed to ensure that your family has a rewarding experience with our program. The purpose of this handbook is to outline the program's policies and procedures. We strive to work closely with parents in a partnership that will facilitate the transitions between home and school. Daily communications and a sense of trust between parents and center staff are vital.

Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and education for children and to ensure that families always feel welcome as observers and participants. To accomplish this we depend on parents to be responsible and active partners. We expect parents to read this handbook, follow the policies and procedures outlined, provide us with all necessary information, and be open and honest with us regarding your feedback about the program. We welcome your comments, questions, concerns and suggestions about your child's experience and the program. We understand that nothing is more important than your child's early education and care experiences.

Given the nature of an ever-changing quality early education and care program, this handbook is a "living" document. You will be notified of formal policy changes during the year via a written policy notice. In addition, the handbook will be updated as needed. Come and talk with us should you have any suggestions, questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Angela Anderson, Senior Early Learning Director

# INDEX

Guadalupe Center Mission and Philosophy	4
Program Goals and Objectives for Development	5-6
General Center Information	7-11
Admission Policies, Procedure & Enrollment	12-13
Attendance, Arrival, & Departure	14-17
Curriculum	17
Assessment/Individualized Education Plans	18-22
Nap/Rest Time & Potty/Toilet Training Policy	23-24
Health, Safety, & Emergency Procedures	24-30
Health & Sick Child Policy	30-33
Medication Administration	33-34
Biting Policy & Child Abuse Reporting	35
Discipline Policy	36-40
Food Program	41
Family Engagement & Participation	42-45
Grievance Procedures	45-46
Governance & Closing Statement	46

## **GUADALUPE CENTER MISSION & PHILOSOPHY**

### ***Mission Statement***

The Guadalupe Center of Immokalee serves children between the ages of 6 weeks to 5 years. The mission of the Guadalupe Center is to break the cycle of poverty by providing educational, social, and other support programs and resources. Our programs are developmentally appropriate for the age group served, and are implemented with attention to the needs and differences of children and their families. Our teachers are committed to providing a safe and loving environment in which children explore, discover, learn and play.

### ***Guadalupe Center's Philosophy***

The Guadalupe Center and its staff believe that children learn best in a supportive, loving environment where they are encouraged by caring adults who observe and learn beside them. Children learn best through active exploration and by making choices about the activities they would like to pursue. Primary tasks of the early years of life are learning about relationships and learning about the nature of objects and materials. The best context for learning is an environment where children are supported and guided by adults who encourage learning through trial and error, repetition, imagination, and identification with peers and significant adults. The teachers in our center are advocates for children who love and encourage them to develop academically and socially. As they listen and learn with each child, they assess and guide the learning process and empower children to make sense of their world.

Children are provided with appropriate materials in our educational setting. Classroom environments are carefully thought out and reflect a child centered view. Materials are displayed in a functional yet inviting manner which nurtures the child's inner creativity. Children's varied abilities are accounted for in the preparation of the centers. Tools and props are rotated frequently to reflect the needs and interests of the group.

The role of families to our center is vital. Family engagement and connectedness is an integral piece of what makes our program strong. Families are frequently visible in and around the center, sharing life and what they love with the children.

## **Program Goals and Objectives for Development and Learning: Birth through Pre-Kindergarten**

The Guadalupe Center aims to meet the needs of ALL children and families. We provide care and developmental stimulation through play-based academic growth opportunities for young children as well as educational opportunities for families through our parent resource center and family nights. Teachers at our Center see themselves as researchers, learning about each child's development and simultaneously furthering their own pedagogical knowledge. They specialize in developing and implementing the newest techniques based on the growing body of research that shows positive correlations between home-like indoor environments and strong interpersonal relationships and the ability to concentrate. In our indoor and outdoor classrooms, we are constantly "Discovering and Caring Together!" The young child is a member of his/her family. It is our aim to work with each family to create the best possible environment for their child while in our program. The staff of Guadalupe Center focuses on the total and unique growth and development of each child. We promote:

### **Social-Emotional**

- Regulates own emotions and behaviors
- Establishes and sustains positive relationships.
- Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations.

### **Physical**

- Demonstrates traveling skills.
- Demonstrates balancing skills
- Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
- Demonstrate fine-motor strength and coordination

### **Language**

- Listen to and understand increasingly complex language
- Uses language to express thought and needs
- Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills

### **Cognitive**

- Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
- Remembers and connects experiences
- Uses classification skills
- Uses symbols and images to represent something not present

## **Objectives, Cont'd.**

### **Literacy**

- Demonstrate phonological awareness
- Demonstrate knowledge of the alphabet
- Demonstrate knowledge of print and its uses
- Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
- Demonstrates emergent writing skills

### **Science and Technology**

- Uses scientific inquiry skills
- Demonstrate knowledge of the characteristics of living things
- Demonstrate knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
- Demonstrate knowledge of Earth's environment
- Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks

### **Mathematics**

- Uses number concepts and operations
- Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
- Compares and measures
- Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

### **Social Studies**

- Demonstrate knowledge about self
- Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
- Explores change related to familiar people or places
- Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge

### **The Arts**

- Explores the visual arts
- Explores musical concepts and expressions
- Explores dance and movement concepts
- Explores drama through actions and language

## **GENERAL CENTER INFORMATION**

### ***Accreditation and Licensing***

The Guadalupe Center follows the standards and criteria for quality held by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The Center is also licensed by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) - Division of Child Care Licensing of the State of Florida.

### ***Non-Discrimination Policy***

The Guadalupe Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, national origin, or sexual preference.

### ***Hours of Operation***

The Guadalupe Center program runs from 7:00am to 5:30pm Monday through Friday. We observe the holidays listed below:

Labor Day	New Year's Day
Thanksgiving Day	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Day after Thanksgiving	Good Friday
Christmas Eve	Memorial Day
Christmas Day	July 4th
New Year's Eve	

Winter Break 12/23/2024-1/3/2025

### ***Early Dismissal***

The Guadalupe Center dismisses children at 12:00pm six times per year to give teachers the opportunity to participate in professional development events. Parents will be informed of the early dismissal date with ample time to make other childcare arrangements.

### ***School Closings***

In the event of weather or other emergency, the school will follow the decision of the Collier County Public School District. School closings will be reported by local radio and television stations. If a school closing is deemed necessary during a school day, each child's parent will be notified at the emergency number given to the office.

### ***Confidentiality***

All information gathered about a child is kept confidential. Records are kept in a secure area with limited access except by authorized personnel. No information shall be shared with an outside agency without the written consent from the parent or legal guardian.

### ***Photographs and Videotape***

Photographs and videotapes are a component of the programmatic approach in maintaining portfolios for each child. There may be times when the newspaper, television, or another entity takes photos or videos of our children involved in their work and play. By signing this photo release form in your application packet, you are allowing the center or others approved by the Center to take photos of your child related to the Guadalupe Center of Immokalee. You as a parent however, may not take pictures or videos of any children other than your own.

### ***Visitor Policy***

Visitors must sign in and out at the front desk. Guadalupe Center has an open-door policy. Parents are always welcome in the classrooms and can provide wonderful experiences for their own children and their peers. If you would like an extended visit in your child's classroom, please make prior arrangements with the classroom teacher.

### ***Safety Drill***

The center has monthly safety drills to familiarize the children with the correct procedure of exiting the building. Children are evacuated by the staff to a safe location outside the center until the building is checked and deemed safe for return. Should you arrive for drop off/pick up during a safety drill, remain in your vehicle and wait for the drill to conclude. Once the drill is over, you may then follow the usual procedures for arrival and drop off.

### ***Volunteers***

The Guadalupe Center is a non-profit organization. We depend on donors and volunteers. The Center plans to use some volunteer staff and could not continue to provide services without their assistance. All volunteers are assigned to teachers and remain with the teachers throughout their entire time volunteering.



### ***Smoking***

Smoking and vaping are not permitted on the grounds of the Guadalupe Center.

### ***Cell Phone Usage/No Phone Zone***

The Guadalupe Center has a “**no cell phone**” policy inside the Center. If you must take or make a phone call, please step outside to do so. Transitions are made easier when your child has your full attention at drop off and pick up, and your full attention allows for clearer communication between teachers and parents. Please note that we will strictly enforce this policy.

### ***Birthdays***

Children’s birthdays may be celebrated at school. If you would like to celebrate your child’s birthday here at the Center, please see your child’s teacher to make arrangements. Due to child care licensing regulations, all snacks must be commercially prepared packaged food in factory-sealed containers or whole fruits.

*We strongly encourage families to bring healthy alternatives for the children to enjoy, such as: muffins, fruit salad, smoothies (made in class), frozen fruit bars, etc.*

### ***Emergency Preparedness Plan***

In extreme cases of emergency due to weather or other dangerous conditions where students must be evacuated to a secondary location for safety, the Guadalupe Center has developed a plan to seek temporary shelter until parents can arrive to pick-up their child(ren) or it is safe to return to our center.

### ***Access to the Building***

Families that are arriving at the Guadalupe Center will enter and exit through the door located in the building’s main lobby. Please do not enter or exit through any other door. When entering the center you will be given access by the front desk personnel.

### ***Program Hours***

Our program runs Monday through Friday from 7:00 am – 5:30 pm. Your child's attendance is very important! In order for your child to fully benefit from our program he or she should be in class every day. Bring your child to the center every day, Monday through Friday.

### ***Parking***

The personnel from the Guadalupe Center are doing their best to stop unauthorized parking in the entrance of the main parking lot. We ask for your patience and cooperation by getting in and out of an authorized parking space as quickly as possible.

As a part of our Asthma Policy we ask that you turn off your vehicle while dropping off and picking up your child. Idling vehicles spend more gas and release harmful emissions into the air that you and your child are breathing.

### ***Parking Safety***

The parking lot can be a dangerous place, please use the sidewalk when walking to your vehicle. Do not allow your children to run ahead of you in the building or out to your car. Please do not leave children unattended in cars while dropping off or picking up children. Walk with your child on the walkway at all times. Walking in the driveway behind cars is dangerous. Help your child learn "parking lot safety" and avoid accidents.

### ***Intoxicated / Impaired Behavior***

Anyone, including parents, on the child's contact list who is visibly intoxicated or impaired by a substance will not be allowed to pick up the child. The spouse or another person on the child's contact list may be able to pick up the child provided they are also not intoxicated or impaired. The Department of Children and Families and the Collier County Sheriff's Office will immediately be called should an intoxicated parent insist on entering the building to pick-up their child.

### ***Toys from Home***

Bringing toys from home is discouraged. A snuggle toy is permitted for rest time for children one year and older if they are experiencing separation anxiety. This accommodation needs to be approved by the center director. Guadalupe staff cannot be responsible for toys and other items brought from home. If children bring toys from home, the teacher may ask the parent to take it back with them or for it to be kept in their cubby for the day. Sharing is not an easy task for some young children and avoiding this dilemma can save much angry and hurt feelings.

## ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### ***Pre-Enrollment Procedure***

At the Guadalupe Center, admission is based upon classroom availability and may be subject to the rule of “priority enrollment”, (e.g., siblings of attending children, children residing in Immokalee, number in the waiting list, age of the child). A pre-enrollment form needs to be filled out and returned to the Administrative Coordinator. The family’s name is placed on a waiting list without payment of a registration fee. When a space becomes available, the Administrative Assistant invites the family to visit the center with the child to discuss the enrollment process. Parents have to **be working or enrolled in school** in order to be eligible for their child to attend the Guadalupe Center.

### ***Enrollment Process***

During the enrollment process, the parent(s) complete the registration forms. An updated physical and immunization record is required for each new child prior to start. Parent(s) are also expected to read and sign an enrollment agreement that outlines the program’s policies. This will ensure that the new family is familiar with Guadalupe Center operating procedures. The last step of enrollment is to set the child’s weekly fee using the Guadalupe Center’s sliding fee scale based on the parent(s) income. The procedure is as follows:

Parents need to bring in a copy of their 1040 US Individual Tax Return Form from the IRS from the previous tax year, one month of current pay stubs and if applicable proof of state financial assistance for example food stamps.

The parents’ financial information is then given to the Admissions Coordinator for review and then is passed to the VP of Programs for review. The VP of Programs uses the most current Parent Fee Chart to set fee. Once the fee has been set, the file is returned to the Admissions Coordinator who gives the parent the “Tuition Agreement/Fee” form indicating the set fee.

Parents must sign and return this form indicating their understanding of the payment process and that he/she is in agreement with the assigned tuition fee. Upon returning the Tuition Agreement/Fee form, the Administrative Assistant inputs the fee into the Pro Care Software.

### ***Enrollment Process, Cont'd.***

*If the new child's fee is subsidized by state and/or federal funding, the process of Guadalupe Center assigning a fee will be skipped.*

Parents must also complete and return an application for the Child Care Food Program that will be included with the enrollment packet. This must be returned with the application to complete the enrollment process.

The new child is assigned to a classroom. Teacher receives the child's new information prior to begin attendance.

## **TUITION/FEE PAYMENT**

### ***Registration Fee***

There is a onetime registration fee of \$10.00.

### ***Weekly Tuition Fee***

Tuition is due in advance with no deductions for any absences, holidays, illness, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond the Guadalupe Center's control. Payments need to be made out to the Guadalupe Center in form of checks, money orders or credit card payments. We will not accept cash payments.

### ***Deposit Fee***

The deposit fee is equal to one week's tuition fee. Parent(s) may pay in installment toward the deposit to be paid no later than the end of the second week. If parent(s) withdraw his/her child giving two weeks notice, the deposit will be used to cover the tuition for the last week.

### ***Late Payment***

If tuition is not paid on the day that it is due (Wednesdays by 9:00 am of that week), a late fee of **10% per day** of the assigned fee will be added to the tuition. When a payment is delinquent for **one week**, the child cannot attend the center until the balance is current.

### ***Returned Check***

A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for a check returned for insufficient funds. If this occurs for a second time, Guadalupe Center will refuse any future checks under this account.

## ***Refund***

If parent(s) withdraw a child giving two weeks notice and the child's account shows a credit, that amount will be returned to the parent within 7 days from the last day of child's attendance.

## ***Vacation Policy***

If your family is going on vacation please let the Center know two weeks in advance. Any absence longer than five days without notification and/or tuition payment may result in your child being removed from the roster. Your family would have to re-register and wait until there will be space available. All vacation tuition is due prior to the vacation. The child cannot be absent from the Center longer than 6 weeks even with advance tuition payment.

- \* If your family is experiencing economic hardship, please speak to the Director or VP of Programs and we will try to work with you and your tuition fee until your hardship passes.

## **ATTENDANCE/ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE PROCEDURE**

### ***Attendance***

If your child will be absent, please notify the center as soon as possible. Phone numbers for all centers are included in this handbook. As this will help when kitchen personnel are taking lunch count for each classroom, so the center does not order an extra or not enough lunches for the class. Multiple unannounced absences may result in suspension from the program.

To be on time for the beginning of our instructional program your child must arrive and be in the classroom no later than 9:15 am. If your child is going to be late due to lack of transportation, or any other reason, please call to inform the front desk personnel. The day you arrive late you must be at the center by 9:15 am. You are allowed one tardiness a week but we strongly encourage you to be here before 8:55 am each and every day.

**Children that arrive after 9:15 am without prior notification will not be allowed to stay.** If your tardiness turns into a recurrent problem, the Director of Early Childhood Education will contact you to discuss alternatives to alleviate the situation and this might lead to suspension from the program.

## ***Absence***

If your child will be absent, please notify the center staff as soon as possible at. When the child returns to school we ask that you provide us with documentation as to why they were absent, this can include but is not limited to a doctor's note, therapy letter.

WIC appointment notice, etc. In all cases where a child is absent for an extended period of time our center team works with parents in determining why the child is unable to attend class and we work to provide the appropriate social support so that your child can return to class as soon as possible. More than three unexcused absences will result in a follow-up meeting with staff. Sporadic attendance or extended absences may result in termination of enrollment from our program.

## ***Arrival***

Parents must sign their child in upon arrival at both the front office and in the classroom. **Anyone dropping off a child must be 18 years or older.**

During student drop off, any parent arriving after 9:15am will be considered tardy. If a child will be arriving late, parents must call in if they are arriving after 9:15am. If the parent calls in, then we will allow them to arrive as late as 11:00am. If the parent does not call in prior to arriving late, per this policy, the child will not be allowed to stay for the day.

Families will only be allowed 1 late call in per week.

\*The consequences for arriving after 9:15am will be as follows:  
(This sequence will cover a 6-month period. After 6 months it will start over again)

1<sup>st</sup> time tardy you will get a warning.

2<sup>nd</sup> time tardy you will receive a \$5 fine.

3<sup>rd</sup> time tardy, and every time after that within this 6-month period, you will be fined \$10.

\*With each tardy, parents must sign this acknowledge form.

\*The only exception to these consequences would be if the child comes with a doctor's note.

### ***Transition into the classroom & separation from parents***

- It is important to set up an arrival routine that your family can follow every day. This provides your child with a sense of security. A new classroom environment is a big transition and difficulty separating at arrival is typical behavior, which over time should decrease as children become more secure in their new environment. Parents can help their children by:
- Allowing time in the morning for arrival adjustment
- Talking positively about the Center, teachers and children.
- Acknowledging and validating all feelings (I know that you are sad, angry, excited, etc.)
- Communicating a matter-of-fact confidence in the Center.
- Saying good-bye when you are ready to leave and then leaving. It is confusing to children and teachers when parents say good-bye and then stay around for a while.
- Letting your child know when you are leaving. It is critical to your relationship that your child trusts that you will not sneak out to avoid upsetting him or her. It is much better for a child to experience momentary sadness than to have to deal with the possibility that a parent might disappear at any moment.

Usually, children calm down and begin to play soon after parents leave. Feel free to call us later if your child is upset when you leave, and we will let you know how he or she is doing.

### ***Departure***

You are required to pick up your child by 5:30pm. **During departure, sign your child out and check his/her mailbox. Once you have reunited with your child and begun departure, the Guadalupe Center is no longer responsible for your child.** Be sure he/she remains with you both inside and outside of the building.

If there are any changes in individuals who are authorized to pick up your child, please update the information with the personnel from the Front Desk immediately. If someone we do not know is to pick up your child, please inform the teacher. This person must be listed as authorized to pick-up your child on the enrollment paperwork. Remind the authorized person that we may ask for picture identification to ensure your child's safety. We are not allowed to release your child to anyone younger than 18.



### ***Departures Cont'd.***

During departure, is not a good time to have a full conference with the teachers. If you feel you need a conference, please ask the teacher to set a separate time for you to meet. On the way out, sign-out your child and check his/her mailbox. Once you have reunited with your child and begun departure, the Guadalupe Center is no longer responsible for your child's safety. Please be sure he/she remains with you both inside and outside of the building. Please use the sidewalk when going to your vehicle in the parking lot.

### ***Late Pick Up***

Guadalupe Center services end promptly at 5:30 pm. Picking up your child after 5:30 pm results in additional expenses. **After 5:30 pm parents are considered late and are charged a fee for these additional expenses. Fees are as follows: First offense \$1 per minute, per child. Second offense within 6 months \$3 per minute, per child. Third offense within 6 months results in a one week suspension at full tuition payment,** and continual offenses may result in the removal of the student(s) from the program. The same rule applies to early dismissal days.

## **CURRICULUM**

The Guadalupe Center has adopted the Creative Curriculum as a frame work to create a high quality learning environment for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschool children that enables each one of them to become a creative, confident and independent thinker. To help preschool and pre-kindergarten child acquire and use the necessary pre-reading, writing, language, and reading skills, the Guadalupe Center uses an enhancement literacy curriculum known as Early Literacy and Learning Model (ELLM).

### ***Curriculum Cont'd.***

The Guadalupe Center adopted "Conscious Discipline" by Becky Bailey, Ph.D. as the character development curricula to meet the requirements of the Office of Early Learning from the State of Florida. "Conscious Discipline" is a comprehensive social- emotional and classroom management program that uses everyday life events to teach children and adults self-control, conflict resolution, character development and social skills.

The instructional program for classrooms Two's through Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) follows a constructivist model using Project Construct as a teaching strategy to promote critical thinking skills. This curriculum is child-initiated, providing opportunities for the children that support and enrich their development, learning, and growing independence. Curriculum development provides the framework for planning and carrying out work with young children and their families.

The Guadalupe Center's curriculum is child-centered, interest-based, and hands-on to encourage each child's growing independence. Although planned themes may be used on occasion, children's interests are considered and the curriculum is adapted by using teacher-children planning "web" technique. Each room is designed with interest centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulative, art, sensory, library, music & movement, computers, etc.) and children choose from a variety of developmentally appropriate activities throughout the day. Each program includes a balance of child- and teacher activities designed to actively engage children in learning throughout the day and promote their creative expression.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Children develop in so many ways; no child follows the exact same path as another. With this in mind, it is imperative that caregivers know where each child in their class falls in their development in order to help the teachers' plans and practices meet the child's needs and bolster their strengths. The data collected from assessments are also used at the program level to help the center to develop its skillset through targeted training aimed at any areas of concern.

## ***Assessment Cont'd.***

### ***Teacher Training***

Teachers are given initial training in the assessments to be seen as reliable in their screenings; the ASQ has online training available at <https://www.asqonline.com/home>, and all teachers at our center are required to be reliable raters through Teaching Strategies' Interrater Reliability Certification, which is kept up-to-date by renewal every three years.

### ***The ASQ-3***

The first assessment a child receives is a screening called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). This brief screening is completed within 45 days of a child's enrollment in the center. Teachers use a rating scale to answer "Yes," "Sometimes," or "Not Yet" to a variety of questions related to the child's age. A child's overall performance on the screening enables teachers to see where the child lies in relation to their peers in the same age bracket; children who score below in an area are given extra help for the chance to "catch up" to the level of typically developing children. This is called an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), and it lasts for eight weeks, at which time the child is re-screened.

If there has been progressing, the child's development is monitored, and the ILP is discontinued. If no progress has been made, or there are greater concerns, the teacher or director may recommend a referral to Early Steps (for infants and toddlers) or FDLRS (the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System) for preschool-aged children.

Children are screened annually around their birthdays, so any gaps in development can be found and addressed earlier, rather than later.

### ***Teaching Strategies***

The Guadalupe Center also utilizes The Creative Curriculum's Teaching Strategies online program to collect and analyze data for our children. Educators observe and document children's behavior and compare it to the widely held expectations for typically developing children at their age.

These documentations are saved in the child's online portfolio at MyTeachingStrategies.com and digitally shared with the family at the time they're created. Teachers also assign preliminary ratings for the Checkpoint, a summative review of the children's growth in a three-month period running in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. Each documentation may contain up to five standards to be assessed and rated. source gives the teacher access to curricula developed by experts in the field of early childhood development, complete with an assessment with targeted questions to help the teacher pinpoint the child's ability in that moment.

### Sharing Assessment Information

Teachers share children's documentation and other assessment through several channels, including reviewing ASQ reports together, sharing documentation and checkpoint information digitally, and meeting during our three parent-teacher conferences.

Conference 1 takes place at the first PACT meeting of the year. Teachers review the Parent Handbook, including the Child Assessment Plan, with the families in a context where moms and dads feel comfortable asking questions, either during the meeting or afterward in 1:1 conversation. The teachers give in-depth information about how they use assessment to plan for children's individual needs.

Conference 2 occurs in October after the first Checkpoint is completed. Teachers utilize the Family Conference Form in the meeting, highlighting the child's strengths and areas for growth. They explain to the family what they are doing to help the child to develop appropriately.

Conference 3 takes place in May. Teachers review the year with the family, offering them the opportunity to see the overall growth of their child throughout the school year, and to point forward to ways the child can continue to grow during the summer months.

## ***Checkpoints***

The Checkpoint is a benchmark assessment in which teachers use all of the data they've collected in the Checkpoint period to give a holistic view of the child's development in that time. Teachers assign Checkpoint ratings which allow them to compare the child's growth to the widely held expectations. This data, then, informs the teachers of which areas the child needs to grow.

## ***Using Assessment Data***

Teachers use the data they've gathered from the ASQ and the Checkpoints to plan for lessons and activities that will meet the child's particular needs. The lessons will focus on the standards the child is working towards and will utilize the modalities that work best for that child. These lessons may be presented in large group, small group, or individual activities, depending on the skill being learned.

An example of this would be a child scoring low on standard 7a, "Uses fingers and hands." The teacher would present that child more opportunities for hands-on experiences that focus on developing their fine-motor skills. Teaching Strategies also offers Intentional Teaching Experiences, which are research-based lessons that focus on a specific standard. This resource gives the teacher access to curricula developed by experts in the field of early childhood development, complete with an assessment with targeted questions to help the teacher pinpoint the child's ability in that moment.

Quality assessment looks not only at what is happening within the child, but also to the care that the child requires in order to thrive. For a child to develop and learn in a healthy and normal way, it is important not only to meet the basic needs for protection, food and health care, but also to meet the basic needs for interaction and stimulation, affection, security, and learning through exploration and discovery. All staff is trained in the use of assessment in an early childhood program which includes the purpose and value of assessment and appropriate assessment tools.

**Confidentiality** – All information gathered about a child is kept confidential. Records are kept in a secure area with limited access except by authorized personnel. No information shall be shared with an outside agency without the written consent from the parent or legal guardian.

### ***Screening***

Screenings help us find children who might need extra help to grow and learn. For instance, a vision screening will help find children who might need glasses. Hearing screenings will help find children who might not be hearing very well. Screening is not a diagnosis but it does alert adults to have a child checked by a doctor. While in our program, we will screen your child in many ways- such as vision, hearing and dental.

We know that children do not just grow in size; they develop and mature to understand more complex ideas about the people and things around them. All children develop in different ways. We use the *Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Third Edition* to evaluate how children are learning and developing across all areas: gross motor, communication, fine motor, personal-social and problem solving. The ASQ-3 asks questions about your child's development, which the parents and teachers answer based on what they have seen.

We cannot screen a child without parent's written permission. Parents have the right to deny permission for any screenings. All screenings are completed by trained center staff in partnership with parents.

### ***Individualized Education Plans***

We are committed to working in partnership with families whose children have Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plans (IEP). We will attend IFSP or IEP meetings when requested by parents. A copy of your child's IFSP or IEP is kept on file at the Center. Teachers refer to the child's plan to support the goals and objectives within the classroom. Additionally, we will collaborate with all professionals providing services for children with special needs. We will support the family in helping meet their child's needs. All fees charged by any consultants or professionals are the responsibility of the family.

### ***NAP/REST TIME***

Nap time is an important opportunity for growing, active children to rest, and re-energize. This is also a time for teachers to regroup, clean, do paperwork, discuss the day's activities, and plan future curriculum for the class.

All of the children rest in the afternoon. Children are asked to rest but are not required to sleep. Children are helped to relax by a variety of methods: darkened room, soft music or story tapes, rubbing backs, etc.

Those children who do not take a nap are asked to rest quietly on their cot for 30 minutes. After that time, they may get up and participate in quiet activities. We ask that parents bring a small soft blanket, and a crib sheet. We will send these items home weekly for the parent to launder and return to school the first day the child attends in the following week.

### ***POTTY/TOILET TRAINING POLICY***

The Guadalupe Center's toilet training procedures for children younger than 3 years of age follow the recommendations of the American Pediatric Association which is that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Thus, toilet training is generally more successful when it is started around that age. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet training is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities.

**When a child is enrolled in preschool or Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) programs, he or she must be completely toilet trained, unless the child has a medically diagnosed condition.** The child should be in cloth underwear and not in diapers, pull-ups, or training pants. Children are expected to use the toilets and clean up properly without assistance from teachers. Assistance with hand washing reminders and clothing fastening will be given if necessary.

- In the event the child is found not to be fully toilet trained as indicated by three "accidents" in one week (inability to reach the toilet on time, wetting or soiling undergarments), at the discretion of the director, the child will be asked to take a 1-2-week leave from the center to work towards readiness.

Soiled garments will be placed directly in a plastic bag with a note attached, to be sent home.

If upon returning the child still is not toilet trained as indicated by one or more accident(s) the child will be asked to take a month long leave. The month long leave will be repeated until the child returns fully toilet learned. During the times of leave the parents will be billed as if the child was attending as enrollment will be reserved for their child. Parents have the option to decline to comply with this policy, which would mean the child will be withdrawn from the program and his/her name would go on the Guadalupe Center waiting list if requested by the parent.

## **HEALTH, SAFETY & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

The Guadalupe Center makes every effort to ensure the safety of students from environment hazards and pollution through the use of environmental friendly supplies. Spraying for insects is not done when students are present and is done in a timely manner so that no students will be in the area immediately after treatment. All chemicals and cleaning agents are kept in locked cabinets or closets.

Guadalupe Center follows these emergency procedures:

- Emergency phone numbers are clearly posted by all phones.
- The parent/guardian provides, in writing, the names and phone numbers of persons to contact if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.
- In case of an emergency, a Guadalupe Center staff member may go with the child to the emergency room and remain until a parent/guardian arrives.
- Teachers report in writing any injuries that may occur while the child attends the Guadalupe Center. Parents must sign all incident/accident reports.
- Teachers notify the parent/guardian by phone of any injury requiring first aid treatment.
- Medicines are stored out of children's reach and administered only with written permission of parent/guardian.
- Each child with asthma is required to have a current asthma plan to keep the school and family up to date on how to help the child should he/she have an asthma incident.



- Individuals who serve food wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.
- Teachers report serious injuries to the Director immediately.
- Fire drills are practiced once each month and tornado drills every three months, to prepare children in the case of an emergency.
- Lock Down drills are held at irregular intervals throughout the year.
- Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each room, the hallway, and outside the Guadalupe Center office.

### ***General Safety Practices***

- Background screenings are conducted to all Guadalupe Center employees as per FL Department of Children and Families regulation.
- All staff members are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse/neglect. Staff members will not be penalized for making such reports, so long as they are made in good faith.
- Children are supervised at all times and appropriate child: staff ratios are maintained.
- Authorized pick-up information is on file and in the emergency directory.
- If we are not familiar with the authorized pick-up person we will ask to see identification and will match the person's ID with the emergency directory information provided by the parent(s).
- Each room is equipped with a first-aid kit.
- Teachers take roll and monitor the number of children in their care throughout the school day.
- Teachers move about the entire playground to ensure adequate and appropriate supervision.
- The playground is monitored regularly for safety and improvements concerns.
- A resilient surface is used under climbing equipment outdoors.
- All staff members are trained in Pediatric CPR, First Aid, and Choke Saving/Rescue Breathing.
- Medicines are stored out of children's reach and administered only with written permission of parent/guardian.
- Individuals who serve food wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.

### ***General safety Practices Cont'd.***

- Cleaning supplies are stored out of children's reach. Fragrance free, 3rd party cleaning supplies are used whenever possible.
- Teachers fill out documentation for accidents, incidents, and health-related situations. Parents receive copies of accident/incident forms.
- Teachers follow universal precautions as defined by OSHA for blood-related accidents and incidents involving other bodily fluids.
- Latex-free gloves are available in each room for emergencies.
- Toys are checked frequently and broken toys are discarded.
- Emergency numbers and first aid kits are included in fanny pack for walking and field trips.
- If there is a field trip, parents are informed in advance and must sign a permission slip.
- Teacher-child ratio is adjusted for field trips to ensure that there is a higher ratio of adults to children.
- On field trips children must stay where teachers can see them at all times and vice versa.
- Health and safety information is incorporated into the curriculum and taught to the children on a regular basis.

### ***Keeping the Children Safe***

All of our policies and procedures are in place to keep the children and Center staff safe. Before an employee can begin working at the Guadalupe Center they must pass a background screening per DCF regulations. If they do not pass this background check they cannot work at the Guadalupe Center. Children are supervised by Guadalupe Center staff at all times. We do not leave children alone with volunteers, community partners, or anyone else who is not an employee of the Guadalupe Center. Teachers are constantly counting the children to make sure that all children are accounted for.

Children are only released to those persons authorized by the parents. Authorized pick-up information is on file and in the emergency directory. If staff is unfamiliar with a pick-up person we will ask for and match the person's ID with emergency directory information provided by the family.

## ***Outdoor Play***

Outdoor play is an important part of the early childhood curriculum, and we consider the outdoors an extension of the indoor classroom. Toys, materials, and activities are available outdoors as well as indoors to enhance the children's play experience. Typically, children go outside twice each day, for a total of 60 minutes per day.

The playground for the infants and toddlers is completely separated from the playground of preschool children. Both playgrounds are regularly monitored for safety and improvements. Under all outdoor climbing equipment we use a resilient surface to protect the children in case of falls, trips or other accidents. Teachers have emergency phone numbers, first aid supplies and Latex-free gloves available on the playground in case of any accidents.

It is important for parents to provide the appropriate clothing and outerwear for the weather conditions (e.g., clothing for summer, clothing for winter, etc.). In warmer weather, the shade trees and/or canopy offer shelter to the children from the hot sun. Parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen daily. Children are also encouraged to get plenty of drinks to replenish body fluids. Typically, the length of time spent outside is reduced and often the children wait to go outside until late in the day or early morning when the sun is less intense.

Water is provided for children to access on demand at all times in the center, from the Performing Arts Hall to the playgrounds.

## ***Sunscreen***

Children spend a great deal of time outdoors. If you would like your child to use sunscreen, please apply it in the morning before coming to school. Parents who want to have a second application in the afternoon will need to fill out a Sunscreen Authorization Form. Parents are also responsible to supply a bottle of sunscreen and label it with the child's name

## ***Clothing***

Active indoor and outdoor play is a regular part of our school day. Please dress your child in clothing that is suitable for running, climbing, and other vigorous activity, and that is appropriate for the weather. Because the children work with paint, water and other messy materials, they should wear clothes that can be laundered easily. For your child's safety, tennis shoes or closed shoes with rubber soles are required. If a child arrives to the center in flip flops or sandal shoes we may ask the parents to provide the child with other shoes as soon as possible.

A complete change of clothes is essential. Please be sure to label *all clothing* with your child's name.

## ***Environmental Health & Safety***

The Guadalupe Center makes every effort to ensure the safety of students from environment hazards and pollution through the use of fragrance free and environmentally friendly supplies. In addition to an annual comprehensive health and safety screener, our teachers conduct Health and Safety Checklists every day in the classrooms to ensure a safe learning environment. Spraying for insects is not done when students are present and is done in a timely manner such that no students will be in the area immediately after treatment. All chemicals and cleaning agents are kept in locked cabinets or closets out of the reach of children. We utilize integrated pest control to ensure a clean environment for all who come to the center.

## ***Safety drills and procedure***

Throughout the year we conduct fire drills, tornado drills and shelter-in-place drills. We conduct a safety drills at least once a month to familiarize the children with the correct procedure. When exiting the building children are evacuated by the staff to a safe location outside the center until the building is checked and deemed safe for return. Emergency evacuation plans and emergency phone numbers are posted in every room, hallway, and office. Should parents arrive for drop-off/pick-up during a safety drill, they should turn off their vehicles and remain there until everyone has entered the building and returned to their classrooms. They may then proceed to follow the usual procedures for drop-off/pick-up.

### ***Emergency Preparedness Plan***

In extreme cases of emergency due to weather or other dangerous conditions where students must be evacuated to a secondary location for safety, the Guadalupe Center has developed a plan to seek temporary shelter until parents can arrive to pick-up their child(ren) or it is safe to return to our center.

### ***Emergency Supplies***

Center staff is trained in pediatric CPR, first aid, choke saving/rescue breathing and the universal precautions for blood-related incidents. Teachers follow universal precautions for bodily fluid-related accidents and incidents. In every classroom emergency phone numbers and contact persons are clearly posted, first aid supplies are accessible and toys are checked daily for broken or missing parts. Teachers also carry emergency phone numbers and first aid supplies for walking trips. In the main office we have a fully stocked first aid kit.

### ***Accident and Illness Policies and Procedures***

If a child is injured after arriving at school, the parents/guardians will be called at the phone numbers provided at enrollment. If we cannot contact a parent/guardian we will contact the persons identified by the parents/guardians as emergency contacts.

Any injury that requires first aid treatment is reported to management and the parents are notified as soon as possible. Parents are notified in writing of all known minor injuries or accidents. Parents are asked to sign all incident/accident reports.

In the event of a serious injury that needs immediate medical attention or treatment in the Emergency Room, staff will first call 911 and then the parent/guardian or emergency contacts. If the child would require treatment in the Emergency Room, the parent will be contacted and arrangements will be made for transporting the child to the Emergency Room.

### ***Accident and Illness Policies and Procedures, Cont'd.***

If neither the parent nor the emergency contacts are available, a management staff member will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing records and all parent permission forms. This person will stay with the child until a parent or guardian arrives.

## **GUADALUPE CENTER HEALTH POLICY**

### ***Physical and Immunization Records***

Every child must have a current health form and immunization history signed by a physician on file at the Guadalupe center within 30 days of enrollment and ongoing. The Guadalupe Center will not accept children who are not up-to-date on their immunizations. Parents will be given written medical referrals for Well Child Check-ups and immunizations throughout the program year. Classroom teachers will notify parents when certain communicable diseases are present and we ask that you notify the Center when your child is out with a communicable disease.

### ***Sick Child Policy***

Every day the teachers will perform a Daily Health Check on all children to see if there are any children who are too sick to be at the Center. There may be times when your child is sent home due to an illness according to the guidelines on the following page.

The Guadalupe Center has limited isolation space, children developing any symptoms that require dismissal must be picked up by a parent/guardian or emergency contact within **one hour. Failure to do so on two occasions will result in a week-long suspension.** Children with symptoms of illness will be kept under supervision in the classroom, lobby, and/or the Director's office. A child health referral or other instructions may be given to you when you pick up your sick child.

A child must be picked up if showing the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough and/or
- Sore Throat
- Body Aches and/or Fatigue

### ***Sick Child Policy Cont'd.***

Children sent home from the Guadalupe Center due to illness cannot return to school the following day. A child who is feeling ill needs to be in a quiet place where he/she can rest and have lots of attention and tender loving care. Children may return 24 hours after being sent home, and parents must provide a doctor's note. Upon the child's return, illnesses and symptoms will still be monitored per DCF Health and Safety Regulations and if there is a concern the parent will be notified.

Children returning with any symptoms or illness will be excluded from the Guadalupe Center immediately.

Children with the following communicable diseases may NOT be brought to the Guadalupe Center:

- Chicken Pox
- Conjunctivitis
- Whooping Cough
- Lice
- Measles or Mumps
- Scabies
- Rubella
- Scarlet Fever
- COVID-19
- Hand Foot and Mouth

Children with (1) ONE OR MORE of the following symptoms may NOT be brought to the Guadalupe Center or will be sent home if these symptoms occur:

- Diarrhea: more than one (1) abnormally loose stool within 24 hours
- Headache or stiff neck
- Severe coughing
- Unusually dark, tea colored urine
- Fever
- Vomiting (1) time
- Head lice

**HEAD LICE:**

The child will be sent home for the day. Before readmission to the Center a purchase receipt for treatment medication needs to be presented to staff as proof of treatment. The child must be completely free of **all nits**; otherwise you will be asked to take your child home until the hair is free of lice and nits. The child's hair will be rechecked after 7 days.

***Sick Child Policy, Cont'd.***

*Unusual behaviors* will be also monitored closely and parent(s) will be contacted if other symptoms develop. These behaviors include, but shall not be limited to:

- Cranky or less active behavior than usual
- Crying more than usual
- Feeling general discomfort or seeming unwell
- Loss of appetite
- Difficult or rapid breathing

Children may remain at the Guadalupe Center if they have only ONE (but not more) of the following symptoms:

- A child with a temperature of up to 99.9° Fahrenheit .
- After an illness has been evaluated by a physician, medication has been prescribed, and any period of contagion has passed as determined by a licensed physician.
- When a child has experienced loose stools only one (1) time with no further problems or symptoms.

The decision for a child to remain at the center is at the discretion of the staff and/or management.

Also, the child may not be brought to the Guadalupe Center if he or she is taking an antibiotic prescribed within the last 24 hours – children must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.



## ***Sick Child Policy, Cont'd.***

### ***Children Sent Home for Illness***

Children sent home from the Guadalupe Center due to illness shall not return to school the following day. Children may return to school 24 hours after the disappearance of all symptoms, including the disappearance of fever, fever-reducing medicine free. Children returning with any of the previous symptoms or illness will be excluded from the Guadalupe Center immediately.

### ***Medication Administration***

Prescription medications can often be timed to be given at home and this should be done. However, if your child needs to be administered medication three times a day while they are at the center, the mid-day dose will be given by the school nurse, Director or Assistant Director.

- The medication for the child will be administered only when prescribed by a physician. Each container must be child proof, carry the name of the medication, the date prescribed, the name of the child for whom it was prescribed, the name of the prescribing physician, and the physician's instructions.
- Parents need to fill out and sign a Medication Authorization Form, which includes an Asthma Action Plan for children who suffer from asthma.
- If your child needs medication on a continual basis because of a chronic condition, please speak to your Director.

### **All medicines are kept locked and out of the reach of children.**

For children with documented medical needs for medication on a long-term basis (i.e. albuterol via nebulization) a "special care plan" will need to be provided to the center with specific instructions defining the child's conditions, symptoms, and methods for administration of the medication. Signatures from the primary care provider and one of the child's parents/guardians must appear on the special care plan. Care plans should be updated as needed, but at least yearly.

The use of nebulizers - "Standing orders" guidance should include directions for facilities to be equipped, staffed, and monitored by the primary care provider capable of having the Asthma Action Plan modified as needed. Standing orders for medication should only be allowed for individual children with a documented medical need if a special care plan is provided by the child's primary care provider in conjunction with the standing order or for OTC medications for which a primary care provider has provided specific instructions defining the children, conditions and methods for administration of the medication. Signatures from the primary care provider and one of the child's parents/ guardians must be obtained on the special care plan. Care plans should be updated as needed, but at least yearly.

### ***Allergy Policy***

If your child is diagnosed with an allergy please let center staff know as soon as possible as this will affect the safe care of your child. There are certain forms we use to inform staff of child allergies. Some of these forms require a doctor's signature others require a parent signature. We ask parent permission to post a list of children with allergies in each classroom as well as in the kitchen. We do our best to accommodate food allergies and dietary needs by providing substitutes and/or alternative foods/beverages. In order for substitutions to be made we require a written note from your child's physician.

### ***Biting Policy***

One of the most upsetting yet normal behaviors of early childhood is biting. Infants may bite because their gums hurt, and to bite down hard on something gives relief. With toddlers and young preschoolers, social skills are still limited. It is difficult for young children to distinguish between what is loving and what hurts. When an older child bites, it is usually a means of expressing emotions. Young children do not have a social conscience as we adults know it. They may fully understand that when they bite, someone cries, but they have not yet connected to all of the social consequences.

### ***Biting Policy, Cont'd.***

Parents will be notified if their child has been bitten and of the procedures teachers have taken. The name of the child who did the biting will **not** be included when informing the parent of the incident. If the bite has broken the skin, it will be washed with soap and water. Both parents will be notified immediately and requested to call their child's physician for further instructions.

If biting becomes an ongoing behavior, the Director and the child's teacher will talk with parents. Together they will carefully analyze the circumstances. Anecdotal information noting when the incident happened, where it happened, what precipitated the bite, who was involved, and the times of day biting occurs will be recorded. A teacher will be assigned to stay in close proximity to the child to interrupt the biting behavior before it happens and to provide needed support. Reasonable action will be taken to modify the environment, routines or interactions within the group, to help diminish the biting.

## **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

### ***Mandated Reporting***

As professionals in contact with young children and their families, we at the Guadalupe Center are required by law to report any suspected child abuse and neglect to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). Daily health checks must be completed for each child to ensure that any marks or illness are documented. If a staff member suspects any sort of child abuse or neglect, including if a child has indicated that something at home may be considered abuse, it is the Guadalupe Center's policy to report the suspicion to DCF immediately by telephone and to follow up in writing within 24 hours. Center staff offer full cooperation, a non-judgmental attitude, and keep all information confidential during investigation of reported incidents. Staff members are immune to negative repercussions, so long as the report is made in good faith.

Should a staff member be accused of inappropriate actions with the child, the teacher in question will be asked to write a report of the event in question. (S)he will then be placed on administrative leave while an investigation is completed, including DCF, if necessary.

Should the staff member be found guilty as a result of this investigation or other information coming to light, the staff member will be terminated.

### **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

At Guadalupe Center's Early Childhood Education program, the terms guidance and discipline are positive terms. Our staff will serve as role models to provide a setting for children to develop internal self-control.

In following with Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline framework we have developed a set of core beliefs regarding Loving Guidance:

We believe that guidance begins as we design our environment for children in a developmentally appropriate manner.

We believe in positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior through modeling examples of effective problem solving, redirecting, and providing choices.

We believe in involving parents whenever possible in the development of self-control and guidance decisions.

We believe in fostering creativity, independence, and responsible decision-making through clear expectations and routines, adequate environmental planning, and problem solving with adult support in naturally occurring situations.

We believe that children's feelings deserve respect. Our expectations will be clearly stated in positive and proactive language. We will help children identify their feelings, discover common ground, communicate verbally, and learn to develop and negotiate friendships.

We will model and teach cooling down techniques and strategies for making choices that foster inner control and maintain self-respect and confidence.

If a child does not react to redirection or positive reinforcement, a parent/teacher conference is requested. The child will be under daily observation with weekly evaluations for thirty days. If the behavior has not improved, or because a child has become too much of a distraction to the other students, then termination may become necessary.

### ***Guidance and Discipline, Cont'd.***

If a decision is made to terminate enrollment, an administrative hearing will be held with the Director of the Early Childhood Program, Vice President of Programming, Teacher, and Parent.

This program complies with all federal, state, and local laws which prohibit the use of corporal punishment or abusive punishment in early childhood settings. Staff is expressly prohibited from using discipline which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest, or toileting. This includes physical punishment (shaking, hitting, spanking, kicking, pinching, hair pulling, etc.), psychological abuse (shaming, name calling, sarcasm, cursing at, threatening or frightening a child, ostracism, or withholding affection), and coercion (rough handling, forcing a child to sit, lie down or stay down, forcing a child to eat or withholding food until a child complies with teacher demands, etc.).

### ***Discipline Philosophy***

The discipline philosophy of the center is to help children develop a positive self-image. We hope to encourage children to be self-directed, exhibit self-control, and become problem-solvers. A philosophy based on providing a positive, supportive environment that focuses on prevention and the teaching of appropriate behaviors guides the staff in their interactions with children.

Children are redirected and given choices to encourage appropriate behaviors. The use of threats and derogatory language by staff is not acceptable behavior in handling children who have misbehaved.

### ***Discipline Strategies Used by the Guadalupe Center Staff***

- Maintaining realistic expectations of children based on knowledge of child development.
- Providing clear and simple limits.
- Planning an environment that facilitates a caring atmosphere.
- Providing appropriate activities that keep children engaged to prevent challenging
- Modeling appropriate and respectful behaviors.
- Redirecting inappropriate behaviors toward desired outcomes.
- Giving children choices between two appropriate alternatives.
- Encouraging children to work together to solve problems.

## ***Conscious Discipline***

An additional strategy used with preschoolers and school-aged children is to help them learn how to solve their own problems and resolve conflicts. Teachers provide support and guidance as children develop and practice these skills. The staff at the Guadalupe Center recognizes that similarities in principles at home and at school make children more successful in their experiences.

## ***Behavior Improvement Procedures***

At the Guadalupe Center we recognize that every child wants to be loved and to belong in their classroom. Behaviors that challenge teachers in the classroom are the child's attempt to receive help. These "misbehaviors" are indicative of a child's need to learn social skills, and we treat each incident accordingly.

There are several stages of our Behavior Improvement Plan that go into effect as soon as any child enters the classroom. If a child displays challenging behaviors the level of support will increase in the following manner. This process will begin with in house services with parent permission, from our Behavior Health Manager and Specialist.

### **Level 1: Environment**

The classroom environment is designed in a way to allow children ease of motion, freedom to explore, and independence in selecting and using materials. Teachers will continuously strive to engage their children, which focuses them on constructive learning in a safe manner.

### ***Level 2: Teacher Guidance***

Every child at some point has a time when (s)he needs reinforcement and instruction in how to solve problems appropriately. Teachers will use the Conscious Discipline model to help the child choose a helpful way of solving their problems instead. Teachers will communicate with families daily to keep them informed of their child's day, successes, and ways to work together to support the child's development. In incidents where a child is injured by another child an Incident Form is completed with as much detail as possible to describe what happened before the event.

### ***Level 3: Voicing Concerns***

If a child is in the classroom and injures self, others, or damages class property, refuses to comply with teacher directions, especially in cases where safety is a concern (e.g. fire drills), or is otherwise showing unsafe and disruptive behavior, the teachers will voice their concerns to their Assistant Director, who can then inform the Registered Behavior Technician. The administrator will observe the child in the natural environment to see what may be triggering the behavior. She will offer suggestions for strategies to help support the child and check in with the teacher for up to two weeks. Parents will be informed of the process, and can give their feedback on possible issues taking place and which strategies are working or not working for their child in the home. The teacher may record ABC (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence) data during this time to collect more information.

### ***Level 4: STAR Referral***

In the event that the child's behavior does not improve in a two week period, or if the behavior worsens to the point of endangering staff or students, the teacher will complete a referral to the Able Academy's STAR (Specialized Therapeutic & Analysis Resources) program. A completed ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE for the child provide documentation of the child's areas of need. Teachers will document communication with the family and ask them to sign a STAR consent form, which allows the process to begin. Teachers will complete the STAR Referral survey listing such aspects of the child as areas of strength, potential causes of inappropriate behaviors, current strategies to increase appropriate behaviors and decrease inappropriate behaviors, and to document the child's behavior skills by frequency of inappropriate behavior, with the ability to note information that will help document the child's needs.

### ***Level 5: Meeting with BCBA***

The STAR program grants the school access to a BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst) who will review the survey and observe the child. She will meet with the teachers to complete a Functional Behavior Assessment and to create a plan for decreasing inappropriate behaviors and replacing them with appropriate ones. The BCBA will give the teachers access to resources and techniques that range from proactive strategies to prevent the inappropriate behavior, to strategies for addressing the inappropriate behavior when it occurs.

### ***Level 6: Implementation and Data Collection***

The teacher will work for six weeks with her co-teacher to implement the plan and to record what actions are successful or unsuccessful. The ILP section of MyTeachingStrategies will be completed, with the option to include items from their evidence-based collection of activities that will scaffold the child's learning. After the six weeks of data collection the team will reconvene to assess the effectiveness of the child's plan. If the child's plan is successful, the teachers will continue to implement the strategies within. If unsuccessful, the team can determine what techniques were ineffective and use the new data to select techniques that may better fit the child. This is the final step for the majority of our children, with progressive meetings and fine-tuning to help the child learn appropriate behaviors.

### ***Level 7: Individual Consultation with Director***

There is a possibility that the child will not respond to the behavior plan, that the behaviors will become severe to the point of serious danger to peers and staff, or that the family requests a change. In this rare instance, the Director of Early Childhood Education will meet with the family to find a new option to best serve the family and the school. This may include any action including a change of classroom or, in the most extreme case, asking the family to withdraw their child. We want the best for every child in our program and we recognize that we may not be the best environment to help that child.



## **FOOD PROGRAM**

We believe that meals and snacks are critical to a child's health and development. The meals provided by the Center are carefully planned to meet all USDA food program standards. Menus are posted on a weekly basis on the parent bulletin board. We serve breakfast, lunch and snack, while children are eating we also encourage self-help skills and communication skills. Staff who serve food wear gloves when handling the food.

As a part of our Wellness Policy, a fruit and/or vegetable is served at each meal, children over 2 are served 1% milk twice each day, and pre-fried foods are served once per month.

Every effort is made to provide a variety of snacks that meet the standards and encourage children to try new and different food items. Your child will be encouraged to sample all foods served, but will never be forced to eat.

Parents who have children with food allergies must notify the Guadalupe Center with a written doctor's statement at the time of diagnosis or at enrollment. Food service may be able to accommodate most dietary needs (e.g. lactose intolerance). If this is not possible, foods may need to be sent with the child on a daily basis. If the child does not have any food allergies or dietary doctor orders, no outside food is permitted. Please talk to the Director if you have any questions.

Should your child have a special dietary need, the Guadalupe Center will keep the information in a guarded file for kitchen staff. Teachers will make a daily record of what was eaten and how much the child consumed.

## **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION**

### ***Family Engagement***

Family, school, and community engagement in education should be an essential strategy in building a pathway to college and career readiness in today's competitive global society. [Research](#) repeatedly correlates family engagement with student achievement. Now is the time to transform family engagement strategies so that they are intentionally aligned with student learning and achievement. ([Weiss et al, 2010](#))

### ***Parents are Full Partners***

Families and culture are celebrated in the Guadalupe Center. The role of parents is vital. Family involvement and connectedness is an integral piece of what makes our program strong. Families are frequently visible in and around the center, sharing life and what they love with the children. Their role in informing and working together with their child's teacher is the glue that keeps our center in place. It is important to us that we develop skills and knowledge to work effectively with our diverse families.

Our staff will use a variety of formal and informal strategies (including conversation) to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family dynamic, their preferred child-rearing practices and any other information families wish to share about their linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds. Program staff will use provided information from the families to enrich the learning environment and teaching methods.

### ***Parent Participation***

Your participation is eagerly welcomed in the programs. Your involvement can take many forms, and we hope that all parents will find meaningful ways to participate in their child's experience. Some ways in which you may choose to participate include, but are not limited to:

- Read a book
- Tell a story
- Assist with a special art lesson in drawing, painting, sculpture
- Do some science or math experiments
- Show photos from a past trip
- Tell about your job, hobbies, etc.
- Cooking activities, holiday foods, ethnic recipes, healthy snacks
- Play an instrument, teach new songs
- Teach a dance or exercise program, yoga
- Share information about your culture/country, teach a language
- Talk about your favorite artists, musicians, bring examples of their work
- Gardening and planting

### ***PACT– Parents and Children Together***

The monthly calendar will provide the dates and times for our PACT meetings. The topic will be identified prior to the meeting. We will be bringing in some guest speakers after examining your requests.

## **PACT meetings are mandatory!**

We will offer 8 meetings throughout the school year. Most meetings are specifically for the child and his/her parents. A few meetings are parents only. Missing more than 2 meetings may result in suspension from the program. The center will ask for parent feedback to ensure that these meetings are worthwhile and meaningful.

### ***Family Arrangements***

The Guadalupe Center recognizes that all families are not structured similarly and that some families may live apart due to a variety of circumstances.

The Guadalupe Center teachers and staff are sensitive to the needs of children in these situations and will work to support the entire family. We are happy to provide duplicate information in the child's mailbox to accommodate both parents' need for information.

If information is needed by the Guadalupe Center staff regarding custody, child pick-ups, etc., please provide us with the formal paperwork. Unless we have the appropriate paperwork, we cannot keep a child's biological mother and/or father from picking up his or her child.

### ***Parent Communication***

Weekly copies of the classroom routine and activities will be posted on the parent bulletin boards inside the classrooms. It is helpful for you to review activities planned for the day with your child. This is a great way to talk with your child about his/her day. You may find if you ask your child, "What did you do today?", you might hear, "Nothing". If you know about specific activities that occurred, you can ask more direct questions: "Can you tell me about the picture you painted today?" Because the curriculum is planned in advance, some changes based on spontaneous learning opportunities, as well as children's interests and needs can be expected.

We require you to provide the Guadalupe Center with an e-mail address. This can facilitate timely communication and notification of special classroom and Guadalupe Center events. The teachers also use email to send lesson plans and documentation of your child's work, including descriptions and/or pictures of your child learning.

A monthly school-wide newsletter will come home with your child on the first Friday of every month from September through May.

### ***Parent-Teacher Conferences***

Individual parent-teacher conferences will be offered three times during each school year.

Conference 1 takes place at the first PACT meeting of the year. Teachers review the Parent Handbook, including the Child Assessment Plan, with the families in a context where moms and dads feel comfortable asking questions, either during the meeting or afterward in 1:1 conversation. The teachers give in-depth information about how they use assessment to plan for children's individual needs.

Conference 2 occurs in October after the first Checkpoint is completed. Teachers utilize the Family Conference Form in the meeting, highlighting the child's strengths and areas for growth. They explain to the family what they are doing to help the child to develop appropriately.

Conference 3 takes place in May. Teachers review the year with the family, offering them the opportunity to see the overall growth of their child throughout the school year, and to point forward to ways the child can continue to grow during the summer months.

### ***Program/Center Evaluation***

Guadalupe Center conducts evaluations through parent input (informal visits/conferences and a formal parent survey), licensing requirements and NAEYC accreditation standards.

### ***Assurance***

By signing the Parent Handbook Verification form you agree that you have read this manual and will not hold the staff, volunteers, agents, Director, CEO, or the Board of Trustees of the Guadalupe Center of Immokalee personally liable for accidents and injuries.

### ***Grievance Policy***

Guadalupe Center is committed to responding to all family grievances within a 24-hour period and to resolving those grievances as quickly as possible. Concerns and grievances are most effectively addressed within the Center. If a specific classroom concern arises, parents will discuss the issue with the appropriate teacher. We encourage parents to discuss more general center concerns with center management, who will involve staff members as needed.

### ***Grievance Policy, Cont'd.***

If parents feel that their problem is not yet resolved, then parents are encouraged to meet with the Director of Early Childhood Education. The Director of Early Childhood Education can be reached by calling the telephone number are listed in the back of the parent's handbook, along with other important information. If concerns are not satisfactorily resolved at this level, the Vice President of Programs is available to pursue the matter further.

## **GOVERNANCE**

The Guadalupe Center is governed by the Board of Trustees. The Board is responsible for setting all policies. The VP of Programs is responsible for the implementation of policy. The Director of the Early Childhood Education program is responsible for all aspects of the daily operation of the Center.

We are governed by the regulations set forth by the State of Florida, the Department of Children & Families, the Florida Department of Health, and the local health department. The State of Florida Department of Agriculture oversees our food service program.

## **CLOSING STATEMENT**

A strong home and school environment is essential when building a good environment for young children. All of our staff will try to do our very best to keep you informed and involved in our preschool program. Clearly, ongoing communication and support from both families and staff make the connection between home and school a two-way street. Please share with us information about your child and report any changes especially during a major crisis. Anything you share with us will be held in confidence. We hope to nurture mutual trust and respect at every opportunity. There will be many ways for parents to become involved in the Guadalupe Center. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

## **The Guadalupe Center**

**Hope Circle Phone: 239-658-1999 Fax: 239-658-1997**

**Monaghan Campus Phone: 239-651-7009 Fax: 239-651-7003**

**Lake Trafford Campus Phone: Fax: 239-503-0553**

**van Otterloo Campus Phone: 239-651-7009 Fax 239-363-5010**

**Collier County Sheriff's Office: 239-252-9300**

**Emergency: 911**

## **RESOURCES**

The Guadalupe Center partners with a number of community service providers to bring services to our children.

***ABLE Academy***

***Early Steps***

***Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida***

***Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resource System (FDLRS)***

***Healthcare Network***

***Lions Club of Naples***

***National Association for Mental Health (NAMI)***

***Naples Children and Education Foundation (NCEF, Founders of the Winter Wine Festival)***

***Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA)***

***University of Florida Dental School***

***University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS)***

# Guiding Principles

*Use words and actions based on what is the right thing to do for our students;  
not a matter of you being right or wrong.*

## Integrity

Always have the courage to act with integrity and to work from a place of honesty and truthfulness in harmony with our vision and mission.

## Transparency

To be open and accountable in our relationships and communications with each other including students, families, stakeholders and partners.

## Purpose-Driven Ownership

Pursue the opportunities, relationships, and transactions that will allow the organization to benefit others and be successful. Attract, motivate, and empower as many people as possible to apply initiative, judgement and economic thinking to create new and better ways to break the cycle of poverty through education.

## Humility

Be humble, intellectually honest, and deal with reality constructively. Develop an accurate sense of self-worth based on your strengths, limitations, and contributions. Hold yourself and others accountable to these standards.

## Respect

Treat everyone with empathy, dignity, respect, and sensitivity. Embrace different perspectives, experiences, aptitudes, cultures, knowledge, and skills in order to leverage the power of diversity. We appreciate and recognize the generosity of the people and partners with whom we collaborate and enable us to fulfill our mission.

## Self-Actualization

Be an independent thinker and lifelong learner, develop your aptitudes into skills that create value and allow you the freedom to find, fulfill and live your purpose. As you become increasingly self-actualized, you will better deal with reality, face the unknown, creatively solve problems, and help others succeed.



# Guadalupe Center



We are a purpose driven non-profit organization that exists to create **possibilities through education** for the students of Immokalee fostering personal and academic success leading to economic independence.

We provide **high quality educational programs** that empower independent thinkers and life-long learners who positively influence their diverse communities and others.

We are a safe, nurturing, trusting, happy and fun environment for students, families, donors, volunteers, and employees, allowing everyone the **freedom to find, fulfill, and live their purpose.**

We **honor and respect all relationships** by operating with honesty, integrity, transparency and open communication. We appreciate and recognize the generosity of the people and partners with whom we collaborate and enable us to fulfill our mission.

Invested in what is possible for our Guadalupe Center students and families, we are **fearlessly and humbly committed to leading by example,** cultivating today's and tomorrow's leaders.

