

# Eastgate Early Childhood & Family Center Preschool Parent Handbook

2024-2025  
School Year



Stark County Board of  
Developmental Disabilities



# **Stark Co. Board of Developmental Disabilities**

## ***BOARD MEMBERS***

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Jessica Falvo-Lang	Vice President
Jennifer Moff	Recording Secretary
James Anderson	
Maria Heege	
Carmelita Smith	
Cindi Sutter	

## ***ADMINISTRATION***

William Green	Superintendent
Tammy Maney	Early Childhood Director

### **MISSION STATEMENT OF THE STARK COUNTY BOARD OF DD**

***Serving People with Developmental Disabilities  
and their families.***

### **CORE VALUES OF THE STARK COUNTY BOARD OF DD:**

***Committed ~ Valued ~  
Person Centered ~ Supportive***

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# EASTGATE PRESCHOOL STAFF

2024-2025

Classroom Teachers:

Debbie Blackiston  
Kathy Correll  
Taylor Edwards  
Mary Ann Mastnick  
Sarah Parry  
Jennifer Petrick  
Holly Thomas  
Erin Truman

Classroom Assistants:

Mimi Fawver  
Dawn Fish  
Savannah Kuzak  
Lisa Reusser  
Hannah Rhoads  
Erin Sawyer  
Lisa Tyler  
Tiara Vann  
Trina Wachtel

Autism Program Staff:

Ann Williams, BCaBA  
Faydra Young

School Secretary:

Millie Morehead

Nurse:

Connie Hull, B.S.N., R.N.

Director:

Tammy Maney

Custodians:

Ken Anderson  
Vicki Lincoln

Teacher Substitute:

Karen Parrish

Food Service:

Anna Kennedy, Head Cook  
Emily Weisend, Dishwasher  
Jared Gammon, Sub Cook

Follow Alongs:

Jessica Collins, Lisa Esberger, Rheta  
Feller, Brad Hamilton, Terri Huntsman,  
Valarie Lancaster, Kimberly Martina,  
Madelyn Mayle, Olivia Mayle, Natalie  
Mudd, Krystal Spurrier

Assistant/Follow Along Substitutes:

Jeff Schering

Therapy Staff:

Rachel Christopher, Speech and Language Pathologist  
Lori Gowins, Speech and Language Pathologist  
Melinda Kristoff, Occupational Therapist  
Tara Mizner, Occupational Therapist  
Amanda Tabellion, Physical Therapist  
April Woolf, Licensed Physical Therapist Assistant

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# ***A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR***

Dear Preschool Families:

On behalf of our staff, I would like to welcome you and your child to preschool at Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center. Eastgate is designed to serve both children with special needs and those who are typically developing. Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center's preschool program is licensed by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth who conducts yearly inspections to make sure we continue to meet all requirements of that licensure. In addition, we are proud recipients of the highest ranking of a Gold Level in the Ohio Department of Children and Youth's Step Up To Quality program.

The goal of your child's early learning experience is to help him/her develop competence in the areas of communication, attention to classroom activities, displaying appropriate emotions, and developing friendships. Research has demonstrated that these skills are directly related to kindergarten readiness. In addition, the emphasis of our curriculum is to provide learning opportunities and experiences in the areas of the Ohio Department of Children and Youth's Early Learning and Development Standards. These standards include the traditional academic areas such as language and literacy, math, social studies, and science, but also add areas such as social emotional development, physical well-being and motor development. Our staff enjoys teaching with these standards as they look at the whole child.

I extend an invitation to you, as your child's most important teacher, to be involved in every aspect of your child's preschool experience at Eastgate. Please take time to read through the handbook, as it will answer many of your questions and give you an overview of our day to day operations. If, at any time, you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me during the school day (8:30am-4:00pm), either by phone or email. See below for contact details.

Again, welcome to Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center. I look forward to a great year!

Tammy Maney  
Early Childhood Director  
330-479-3440  
maneyt@starkdd.org

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# GENERAL PRESCHOOL INFORMATION

## REGISTRATION & ELIGIBILITY

Our center's focus is to serve children with multiple disabilities and those on the Autism Spectrum with a nice mixture of children who are typically developing in each room. Preschool children identified with these types of disabilities may attend Eastgate upon the recommendation of the child's IEP team, which originates in the child's home school district. Parents are important members of the IEP team. Once the team makes this recommendation, the family's local school district will make a referral to Stark DD for our preschool services. For typical peers, parents must complete an application and children go through a screening session to make sure the child's development is age appropriate.

As we are typically at capacity each school year, enrollment is based on a first come, first serve basis and will be dependent upon space availability for both our children with special needs and typical peers. Annual Registration is done electronically and all forms must be completed and approved by administration and nursing staff prior to the start of each school year. Parents/guardians may access the electronic registration at <https://starkdd-oh.finalforms.com/>.

## SCHOOL HOURS/SIGNING IN AND OUT

Students at Eastgate Preschool attend classes from 9:10am-3:00pm, Mondays through Thursdays. As a parent, you may choose to transport your child to Eastgate or use our bus transportation. For safety reasons, if you are transporting your child or picking him/her up early for any reason, it is important that you sign the daily IN/OUT page that is located at the secretary's window in the vestibule at Door B. This lets the bus loaders know that your child came in late and/or left early on a certain day.

## CLASS SIZE AND STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Eastgate Preschool serves students 3 through 5 years of age. This year, each class has six students with special needs and four peers who help provide role modeling of typical language and social behaviors.

All staff providing direct services to students must be certificated/licensed by the Ohio Board of Education. All employees also must meet the rules and regulations of the Ohio Departments of Developmental Disabilities and Administrative Services.



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# GENERAL PRESCHOOL INFORMATION

(continued)

*Safety is the first priority of every staff person employed by the Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities. During the decision making process of each day, safety must guide and rule every action. Each staff person is responsible to account for the safety and whereabouts of each child under their care. That responsibility does not end until or unless that obligation is assumed by another authorized person.*

## EMERGENCIES

Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center strives to provide an environment in which children are safe from accidents. If a minor accident does occur, the classroom staff will immediately contact the school nurse who will evaluate the situation, administer first aid if necessary, and send home a note or call letting you know the incident occurred and how it was treated. If a child becomes ill or has a more serious accident occur the parent/guardian will be contacted to take the child home or for further medical care. An electronic emergency authorization form will be completed by each parent/guardian at the beginning of the school year. Parents must give at least two other names and phone numbers of relatives/neighbors whom the school may contact in the event the child's parents/guardian cannot be reached. **IT IS AGENCY POLICY THAT A CHILD MAY NOT START PRESCHOOL WITHOUT THIS EMERGENCY FORM COMPLETED.**

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

**Fire/Evacuation Drills:** Fire drills are held monthly as required by the State of Ohio. The drills are a precautionary measure for the safety of the students. Students will leave the building in the manner prescribed for each classroom. Instructions are posted in every room.

**Tornado Drill:** Tornado drills are held once a month during tornado season. A signal for a tornado drill is given over the public address system. Students and staff are to follow directions given by the administration and remain quiet until the all-clear signal is given over the public address system. Instructions are posted in every room.

**Other Drills and Procedures:** Building Lock-down, Evacuation, and Shelter In Place Drills are held yearly. Earthquake, Bomb Threat, Chemical Spill procedures are reviewed on an annual basis. Active shooter drills are held on a regular basis but with staff only.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If there are demographic changes during the school year, for example of home address or telephone number, parents/guardians need to log into FinalForms at [starkdd-oh.finalforms.com](http://starkdd-oh.finalforms.com) in order to update any changes in address, phone numbers, email address, emergency pickup people and transportation arrangements. A current address as well as current home, work and emergency telephone numbers must be on file at all times.

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# GENERAL PRESCHOOL INFORMATION

(continued)

## EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION

During severe winter weather conditions or other calamity, it is sometimes necessary to close the school on short notice. The determining factor in such a decision is the safety of students and school employees. When Eastgate is closed, all other activities at the school are automatically cancelled. Please tune in to radio station **WHBC 1480 AM** for notification of school closings or delays. The announcement will say “Stark County Board of DD—2 Hour Delay, Code 1 or Code 2.” **No matter what is announced—2 hour delay or Code 1 or Code 2—they all mean that Eastgate Preschool is closed for students that day.** In addition, our agency uses an automatic notification system. As per your choice of notification manner, you will receive a call, text or email for calamity days or whenever the need arises to contact all parents and staff quickly.

## DRESS GUIDELINES

We ask your cooperation in providing proper clothing for your child. Shoes should be safe and comfortable **BUT NO CROC-TYPE SHOES!!** These catch on the tile floor causing children to trip. Numerous injuries have occurred as a result of children wearing cros in the past. Clothing should be suitable to the season. At times the rooms may be chilly, so it is recommended that you keep a sweater/sweatshirt at school for your child, if possible. If weather permits, students will go outdoors for exercise and recess. Students should come to school dressed appropriately for the weather, including warm coat, hat and mittens during cold weather.

## LUNCH

Hot lunches (pureed/modified as needed) are available daily. We again are using a cycle menu system as many of the school districts use. Free and reduced lunches are available to those who qualify. Applications for the free/reduced lunch program may be completed online or on paper. Online applications are preferred as you receive your response right away. Packed lunches are permitted in plastic, cloth or paper (no metal) containers. Milk maybe purchased by itself. For the 2024—2025 school year, full price for lunches at Eastgate will be \$2.00, with those qualifying for reduced price paying 40 cents, and milk only will be 50 cents. Lunches may be paid online as well or you may send it in on the first day of the school week. Our electronic lunch payment system keeps track of money paid and each lunch purchased. If not using the electronic payment system, lunches may be paid in cash or check made out to Stark County Board of DD. Please call Eastgate Preschool for additional information if needed, 330-479-3440. A separate mailing regarding the online meal application and payment system was sent out to all preschool families in early August.



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# GENERAL PRESCHOOL INFORMATION

(continued)

## NAP TIME

Nap time is typically starts anytime between 12:30-1:00pm, depending upon a classroom's lunch time, and lasts until about 2:00pm. Children may bring their own blankets, small pillow and favorite animals to have during nap time. Blankets are sent home on Thursdays to be washed. Nap rooms are monitored at all times. Quiet activities are planned for the children who do not nap during this time. Cots are marked with a child's name so that they are always used by the same child. The cots are disinfected daily.

## PROGRESS REPORTING

Parent-teacher conferences for all families are scheduled in October and March. A progress report will be sent home every nine weeks (four times per year) for all children. The progress reports are to keep you informed of your child's progress on their IEP goals, the Early Learning and Development Standards, as well as kindergarten readiness skills. Of course, you may request a conference with the teacher ANYTIME THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR.

## VISITORS

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the school at any time. All visitors and family members of students need to enter the building through the main entrance, Door B. You will be asked to sign in and will receive a *Visitor's Pass* for identification. You will typically be escorted to your destination by a staff member.

## OBSERVING YOUR CHILD

Eastgate Preschool has an "open door" policy. If you would like to observe your child in class, we ask that you do so by watching the classroom through our excellent closed circuit system. Typically, you will not see a true representation of your child if you are present in the classroom. The camera allows you to truly observe your child's behavior and actions during a typical school day without the distraction of your presence. Please call the office to set up a time to come in to the school so we are sure to have the camera system's computer and cameras all up and running for you. The staff will be informed that you will be observing .



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# GENERAL PRESCHOOL INFORMATION

(continued)

## ATTENDANCE

Consistent attendance at preschool is very important in order for your child to learn, progress, meet his/her IEP goals and get ready for kindergarten. We do understand, however, that children need to be absent from time to time. When a student will be absent from school for illness or any other reason, parents should **first notify whomever transports your child (Stark DD at 330-484-6451 or your district bus garage) and then the Eastgate Office (330-479-3440) as early as possible** to report the absence. Per requirements of state law, the school will be calling the parent of any child who is absent who is not called off. Parents are asked to report if their child has contracted a contagious disease so we may monitor the other students.

We also realize that there may be instances when your child may come late to school, but please try and avoid this whenever possible. (Exceptions are scheduled therapy and physician appointments.) Should your child arrive late to school, you will need to sign in your child on the appropriate form at the reception window in the vestibule at Door B. Please let the secretary know if you want the bus to take your child home.

We are always available to assist our parents with any attendance problems or concerns they may be experiencing. Please call us at Eastgate (330-479-3440) at any time and let us know how we may help to resolve any issues that may affect your child's attendance at preschool.

## TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

Children are eligible to enter kindergarten programs when they are 5 years old by their district's adopted entrance date, either August 1st or September 30th. (It varies by district so be sure to check with your home district in order to be prepared.) For children with IEPs, transition meetings will be scheduled in the spring of the year a child will be eligible for kindergarten that next fall. In attendance at the meeting will be the parents, teacher, Stark DD administrator and district representative, which is typically the director of special education. Possible placement options will be discussed along with the activities that will take place in order to make the transition to kindergarten as smooth as possible for the family and child.

For our children enrolled as typical peers, transition will be discussed at the March parent conferences. In addition, be sure to watch for any kindergarten registration fairs or events the districts hold each spring. This is the best time to make sure your child is registered and ready to go for kindergarten the next fall.



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# TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

330-484-6451

A message from the staff at the Transportation Department:

We would like to welcome your child to Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center. Please feel free to call us with any concerns you may have throughout the year regarding transportation of your child. Communication with your bus driver and rider is very important for your child's daily needs.

The following policies and procedures have been developed to make your child's ride to and from school as safe and pleasant as possible:

- A child may only ride the bus assigned by the Transportation Department .
- Please have your child ready 10 minutes before their bus arrival time. Once the bus is at your stop, if no one is present, the bus will wait 3 minutes past your scheduled pick up time before proceeding on to their next stop.
- Please allow for additional time with the start of a new school year and any time there is bad weather as these instances can cause delays for the buses.
- We try to adhere to the pick up and drop off times that we give you for your student; however, due to a variety of circumstances, such as bad weather or traffic, we know that buses can run behind 15 minutes or more. If we know this is the case, we will give you a call letting you know this information. If you have any concerns about the location of your student's bus, please feel free to call the bus garage: 330-484-6451.
- For the safety of everyone, no food or drink is permitted to be consumed on the bus. Balloons are also not allowed on the bus at any time.
- It is important that you or whomever you have identified on the emergency form are available in the afternoon to get your child off the bus. The bus driver and rider cannot leave your child with a person who is not listed on the emergency form. It is imperative that they have an ID, so the bus staff can identify that they are giving your child to the person you approve upon arrival at their drop off location.
- If no one is at home in the afternoon, the bus driver will attempt to return your child to Eastgate; however, if Eastgate is closed your student will be returned to the Bus Garage where you will be required to provide transportation for them from there.
- If you are planning to move, please notify the Transportation Department at least **two weeks** in advance of the move and provide them with your new pick-up/drop off location.
- A car seat is provided for any child who is under four years of age and forty pounds. When over that age and weight, the child is allowed to ride in the bus without restraints, per the Ohio Department of Transportation. The reasoning is that in case of an emergency, the child has to be able to exit the bus quickly. However, if you would like your child to have a seatbelt, you may obtain from the driver a "Seatbelt for Safety" form. Please sign and return to the driver. This form will be kept on file as a record of your permission.
- Please call the bus garage to report your child off or to be picked up if they have been off for any reason. If your child does not ride the bus home for some reason, you will need to call the bus garage to arrange for pickup on the following day. Please call at any time to report your student on or off of the bus: you can leave us a message if it is after hours. By doing this you will help us to save fuel and avoid any confusion with your child's transportation needs.
- The bus drivers and riders are not permitted to relay messages to the teaching or bus garage staff. Please contact Eastgate if you need to relay a message to your child's teacher or therapist and contact the Bus Garage with any relative transportation messages.
- **All medications that are to be transported to and from school must be handed to the bus driver who will then pass it onto school personnel.**

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# HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

Public Law 108-265, The Child Nutrition and WIC ACT, set forth that each local educational agency ....shall establish a local school wellness policy. Our agency, with input from families, board members, administration, teaching staff, nurses, adapted physical education instructors, dietitians, our food service manager, and the Stark County Health Department, developed a thorough and comprehensive Health and Wellness Policy for Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center. Legally, several main points had to be included in the policy:

- Goals for nutritional education and physical activity
- Nutritional Guidelines for all foods available during the school day
- A plan to measure implementation
- Responsible persons to oversee the implementation of the policy



The Health and Wellness Policy was revised and approved by our Board at the May, 2015 Board Meeting. The main impact of the Health and Wellness Policy for you as a parent is that all food brought into the school for school parties or functions must be store bought. This will help control the ingredients in the food to avoid problems with food allergies. Also, party foods are encouraged to be healthy and nutritious.

As in the past, all food served in the cafeteria will follow USDA (United States Department of Agricultural) guidelines. All snacks given at Eastgate must be healthy and nutritious, with emphasis on fruits and vegetables. Portions are determined by the age and nutritional needs of each individual child. Beverages have been and will continue to be 100% fruit juice, along with low-fat milk and water.

*Physical activity will be encouraged. Our children have gym class each week, daily recess, and outdoor play when the weather permits.*

*Our curriculum will continue to emphasize healthy foods and healthy bodies. This falls under the Early Learning Science Content Standards and has always been part of our curriculum themes.*



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# HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

*(continued)*

When needing behavioral reinforcements for children, food items such as candy, etc., will be limited in duration and part of the child's goal implementation plan. The primary food reinforcer will be replaced with a non-food reinforcer as soon as possible.

Parent communication and family involvement is also encouraged. Newsletters containing information about healthy lunches and snacks will be sent home. Please share your ideas for healthy eating in your home through e-mail or sending in a recipe idea.

If you are interested in participating as part of our Wellness Committee, please contact the school principal.

A complete copy of our Health and Wellness Policy is available upon request.



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# PHILOSOPHY AND ROLES

## EASTGATE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER'S PHILOSOPHY

Our early childhood program believes all learning should reflect each child's individual needs while creating an environment that incorporates the following areas: language, fine motor, gross motor, cognitive, social emotional, self help and daily routines.

The program provides a variety of diverse environments that are stimulating, developmentally appropriate and safe, while promoting student independence.

Children learn through play, which may be enhanced through modeling technology, adaptive equipment and guided play.

Children are encouraged to make choices and direct their own learning based on their capabilities.



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# **DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICES**

## **GOALS FOR OUR CHILDREN**

- Each child will progress to the least restricted environment.
- The staff and families will evaluate, select and implement a mode of communication for each child with speech concerns.
- The staff and families will evaluate, select and implement functional mobility for those with walking concerns.
- Children will learn to respect differences in color, ability and cultural diversity and appreciate similarities among all people.
- Children will appreciate the power of language and the written word.
- Each child's best mode of learning will be identified and shared with the child's team.
- The staff and families will help each child develop self-control and develop a repertoire of behaviors that are socially appropriate.
- Staff and families will foster each child's independence in the area of self-help skills such as; toileting, dressing, eating and proper hygiene.
- Each child will be encouraged to creatively express themselves through art, music, movement and dramatic play activities.
- Each child will progress in their cognitive and fine motor development by exploring and playing with a variety of manipulative and imaginative toys.
- Each child's self esteem will be fostered through problem solving, positive reinforcement and success.

## **LICENSING**

The Ohio Department of Children and Youth licenses Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center. This license is posted in the office for review along with the results from their most recent site inspection. A copy of the laws and rules governing our program are in the office and are also available for your review upon request. Our license records include reports from the Health and Fire Department, staff certifications and trainings. All children's records are kept up to date with current health, educational and safety records.

## **CLASS STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS**

Each preschool classroom every day will have a teacher and at least one assistant to work with no more than six children with special needs along with children who are typically developing. We will not have more than 10 students enrolled in any of our classrooms for the 2024-2025 school year.



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# SERVICES AND CURRICULUM

For more than 25 years, Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center has been a viable alternative of educational services that is specially designed to meet the varying needs of Stark County's preschool children with significant disabilities. For these children, our staff works together with area school districts on each child's Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

Eastgate Preschool offers services specifically designed to meet your child's needs. For children with developmental delays, these services include:

- ♦ Specialized instruction for children with multiple disabilities
- ♦ Specialized instruction for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders
  - ♦ Speech and Language Therapy
  - ♦ Occupational Therapy
  - ♦ Physical Therapy
  - ♦ Physical Education
  - ♦ Nursing Services
- ♦ Positive Behavior Support Services
- ♦ Discrete Trial Teaching
- ♦ Transition to Kindergarten support and planning
- ♦ Transportation

All students benefit from our curriculum and ongoing assessment programs known as Creative Curriculum and Teaching Strategies Gold, respectively. Creative Curriculum is aligned with the Ohio Department of Children and Youth Early Learning and Development Standards. To view these standards, please go to: <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Early-Learning/Early-Learning-Content-Standards>



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# PRESCHOOL ASSESSMENTS

In addition to our school assessment for tracking progress, the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Early Learning requires two other assessments annually. Results are reported to the Ohio Department of Education who uses them to determine the need for preschool funding, assessing staff development needs, and to monitor progress in preschool for kindergarten readiness. Here is an explanation of the assessments.

## **Early Learning Assessment**

What is it?	A review of your child's overall readiness for learning
Who gets it?	All children on IEPs until they go to kindergarten
How is it done?	After specific training on the instrument, it is completed by the child's teacher and team
How is it reported?	Scores are reported to you and your local school district each fall and spring

## **Childhood Outcomes Summary**

What is it?	A combination of formal and informal assessments that includes parent input to determine how well your child functions in the following areas: Social-Emotional Skills, Acquiring and Using Knowledge and Skills, and Taking Appropriate Action to Meet Needs. Each area is rated from 1 to 7.
Who gets it?	All children on IEPs
How is it done?	Staff compile evidence based on observations, parent reporting, therapists input, formal and informal assessments.
How is it reported?	Scores are reported in the fall and in the spring to your child's local school district.

In addition to the above assessments, your child's team will be assessing your child's progress throughout the year in various informal ways. These include observations, checklists, and taking data for specific skills or behavior. As parents, you are an important part of the evaluation and assessment process.

See next page for some of the non-required assessments we use to help us teach your child.

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# PRESCHOOL ASSESSMENTS, cont.

In addition to the required assessments, our preschool also uses other instruments to assist staff in monitoring growth as well. These assessments are:

## **Ages and Stages Questionnaire/Social Emotional**

What is it?	A parent interview of your child's social and emotional development to help determine if there is a problem in this area and to give family ideas and resources if necessary
Who gets it?	All children with IEPs up to their fifth birthday
How is it done:	Parent interview in person or by phone by teacher

## **Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP)**

What is it?	HELP is a flexible curriculum-based assessment tool that identifies needs, monitors growth and development, and helps establish IEP goals to address developmental "next steps" for a child. The HELP examines 6 specific skill categories that are observed through play: cognitive, communication (expressive and receptive), gross motor, fine motor, social-emotional (how child relates to others), and adaptive/self-help (sleeping, eating, dressing, toileting, etc.).
Who gets it?	All children with IEPs.
How is it done:	Staff observation of child within classroom.

## **Ages and Stages Questionnaire—Complete**

What is it?	A parent interview and classroom observation of your child's development to help determine if there is a problem in any area and to give family ideas and resources if necessary
Who gets it?	All typical peers to use as a screening tool to make sure everything is on target for each child prior to attending kindergarten.
How is it done:	Parent interview in person or by phone by teacher and classroom observation.

Our staff uses all of these evaluations and your information to help develop student learning goals, lesson plans, and interventions that will allow your child to progress in all areas of our curriculum (communication, gross and fine motor skills, cognitive skills, and adaptive skills, such as dressing, eating, and using the bathroom).

The results of the assessments are shared with you during home visits, parent conferences, through progress reports, and at the annual IEP meeting.

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## LEARNING CENTERS

Your child's weekly schedule will include learning centers designed to facilitate play, communication, fine motor skills, and expand knowledge in the early learning content areas. You will receive a schedule of your child's weekly activities within the first month of school. The following is a description of the centers in the classrooms.

*EARLY LITERACY (READING/WRITING):* The purpose of this area is to provide a quiet place for children to enhance both expressive and receptive language through encouraging an interest in reading. Whole language experiences are emphasized through a "print rich" environment that provides opportunities for children to see words in print through classroom labeling, printed books, and child created books. Pre-writing and pre-reading skills are emphasized in this area.

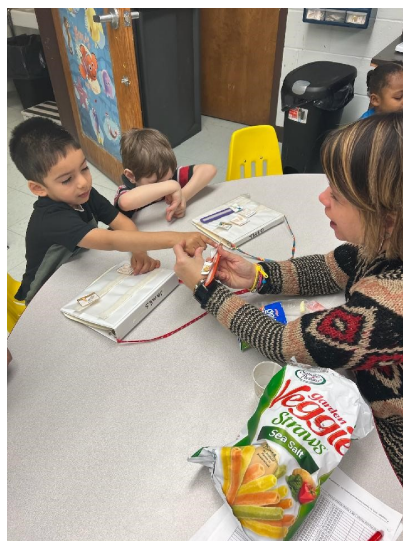
*BLOCKS /MANIPULATIVES (EARLY MATH):* This purpose of this area is to assist the child in his/her ability to organize the world around him. Blocks and other materials provide opportunities to experiment with math concepts such as shape, weight, quantity, counting, sequencing, and patterning. This area also fosters fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination.

*SCIENCE:* This center is designed to expose the children to living things, physical properties of objects, the earth, and the environment. Each room has some form of live animal, fish, and/or plants to help our children explore the wonder of nature.

*DRAMATIC PLAY(SOCIAL STUDIES):* Dramatic play teaches children about the world around us (such as community helpers), as well as to practice and develop language skills and to play cooperatively with other children.

*CREATIVE ARTS and SENSORY:* This center provides opportunities for fine motor development and creative expression and to provide sensory experiences with shape, colors, and texture.

*COMPUTER:* The purpose of this area is to provide opportunities for children to enhance and extend learning that has occurred in the areas of cognition, motor, social, and language development. This area enhances the development of eye-hand coordination, too.



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# INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS

Parents want their children to develop to their individual potential and to become the very best they can be. As parents and educators, we can assist children with special needs to achieve this goal through an education that meets their needs as individuals. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) identifies any additions, changes and adaptations or modifications to the regular curriculum that should be made for an individual child to make certain that a prescribed educational program is meeting their unique needs.

To create an effective IEP, parents, teachers, and other school staff come together to look closely at the student's unique needs. These individuals pool knowledge, experience and commitment to design an educational program that will help the student be involved and progress in the general curriculum. The IEP guides the delivery of special education supports and services for the student with a disability. Without a doubt, writing and implementing an effective IEP requires teamwork.

Each year at Eastgate Early Childhood and Family Center, Intervention Specialists (special education teachers) and support staff (OT, PT, SLPs, nurse) have an opportunity to discuss future educational directions at an individualized staffing. After this initial staffing, a draft IEP is developed and sent to the parent and the local school district. Shortly after, an IEP meeting is held with the school district, parents and our school-based team (teacher, director, therapists). At this meeting the IEP is reviewed and additions or changes can easily be made. The IEP then becomes, as its name states, an individualized plan to help the child develop to his or her potential.

## **IEP components consist of the following:**

- A Present Level of Performance that describes your child's current skills, strengths and needs that have come from assessment results
- Future Planning Goal that describes the overall goal for each child as we look toward their future. This overall goal is to help guide the IEP team in its direction for planning what the child will work on during the next year.
- Initiation & duration dates, the person responsible for data collection, how progress will be reported
- Individualized, measurable goals for your child which are in addition to the regular curriculum
- Short term objectives which provide direction and are indicators of your child's progress toward his/her goals
- A list of the support services required by your child. The services might include the time, setting and frequency of special programs, roles of staff who will be involved and the strategies and teaching methods to be used

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# PRESCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY\*

## **Stark County Board of DD Policy 5.10:**

The Board is committed to creating positive learning environments within the preschool program. The focus shall be on the prevention of behaviors and promoting students' social-emotional and behavioral health. The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for creating and using developmentally appropriate practices for discipline and behavior management within the preschool program. This policy addresses the expectations set forth when corrective action needs to be taken so that students' health and safety may be maintained. It is the Board's goal to prevent, severely limit, and ultimately eliminate the need for aversive actions as a response to challenging behavior. The written policy and procedures shall be on file at each preschool location for review. Behavior management/discipline policies and procedures shall ensure the safety, physical and emotional well-being of all individuals on the premises. Stark DD's discipline policy shall comply with Ohio Administrative Code sections 3301-37-19 and 3301-35-15 along with section 3319.46 of the Ohio Revised Code.

## **PROCEDURES:**

Constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques are to be used at all times and shall include such measures as redirection, separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation, and positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior. A preschool staff member in charge of a child or group of children shall be responsible for their discipline. The preschool staff will be creating a favorable climate for the children. The time spent at preschool will be relaxing, fun, and enriching for all. Discipline is a part of this climate and is the ongoing process of helping children to develop inner controls so they may manage their own behavior in a socially approved manner. Setting limits gives the child the security of knowing that one's strong emotions will not lead the child to do things that will later be regretted. The child knows an adult will take the responsibility of stopping unacceptable behavior until the child is able to do so for him or herself.

## **Staff members shall:**

- Explain all rules in a cheerful manner to make them understandable and acceptable to the child.
- Be consistent, firm, and fair.
- Enforce the rules in a positive, impersonal way, not humiliating, shaming or frightening a child
- Redirect an uncooperative child to another activity or redirect the entire activity into a more wholesome direction if needed
- Encourage the shy child to stand up for him or herself and encourage the aggressive child to verbalize and learn other ways of expressing frustration or anger.
- Help the children understand one another's actions.

**Desirable behavior will be complimented or otherwise rewarded and undesirable behavior will be kept at a minimum by intervention before problems arise.**

**Staff members will not use physical restraint to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, to allow the child to regain control unless otherwise directed by a specific behavior plan developed by an individual child's IEP team. The team will consult and communicate with the parent prior to implementing a specific behavior management plan. Any such plan will be consistent with this rule and in writing and signed by the child's parents and/or guardian.**

Stark DD Preschool is a positive environment in which students have the opportunity to grow and learn, not only academically but also emotionally. Actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows: At no time will cruel, harsh, corporal or any unusual punishments, including but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting occur nor will food or toilet use be withheld from a child as a form of discipline. At no time will another child be given the responsibility or permission to discipline a classmate. Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use and food shall not be used as a reward for behavior. Children will never be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or similar cubicle. Separation when used as discipline shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability. The child shall be in sight and within hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, well ventilated space. For example, if a child needs to have some time away from his classmates, a "Thinking Chair" may be used on which a child will sit for a period of time (equal to his/her age) in a different part of the classroom in order to calm down and get ready to be with the group again. At all times, a child sitting on the "Thinking Chair" will be supervised by a classroom staff member. A child will not be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family or other verbal abuse. Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, sleep or for toileting accidents. Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame or frighten a child. Stark DD Preschool staff shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

Finally, as mandated by Ohio law, if an employee has reason to suspect a child is being abused or neglected in any environment, he or she is required to report this suspicion to the Stark County Department of Jobs and Family Services Child Protective Services Division and a serious incident report is to be completed and submitted to the Ohio Department of Education in accordance with section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code. In addition, as an employee of the Stark County Board of DD, all incidents of abuse or neglect to a child with a disability must be reported to the agency's Major Unusual Incident department.

Parents of preschoolers attending Stark DD Preschool will receive a copy of this Discipline Policy and Procedures within the parent handbook each year. All preschool staff members will receive a copy of the Discipline Policy upon employment and shall sign off as having read. This sign off shall be kept on record in the preschool administrative offices.

*\*Stark County Board of DD has a comprehensive positive behavior support policy. No restrictive behavioral strategies will be implemented in the classrooms without your prior knowledge and consent..*

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## NURSING SERVICES

To promote a healthy school environment, we need your cooperation. If your child shows any of the following symptoms, we ask that you keep him/her home. If your child shows any of the following symptoms during the school day, we may also send them home.

1. Fever, feverish, or chills: Elevated temperature of 99.4 degrees F or higher taken under the arm or forehead or 100.4 degrees or higher with tympanic (ear), or infrared noncontact thermometer
2. Frequent severe cough or cough causing gagging/vomiting or causing child to become red or blue in the face or make a whooping sound)
3. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
4. Excessive nasal drainage and/or sneezing
5. Fatigue
6. Muscle or body aches including stiff neck
7. Skin rash, bumps, or untreated infected skin patches
8. Diarrhea (more than 1 abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period)
9. Vomiting more than 2 times in one day
10. Persistent earache or draining from ear canal without accompanying fever
11. Persistent pain such as abdominal/stomach pain, severe headache, sore throat, chest pain.
12. Evidence of lice, scabies or other parasitic infection
13. Eye Symptoms: redness or yellow in white of eye or inner eyelid, yellow, green, or white discharge from eye, and/or swelling, an/or crested eyelids.
14. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
15. Child too ill to participate in school activities

If a child becomes ill at school, the school nurse shall immediately notify the parent or guardian. If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, another person, designated by the parent for emergencies, will be notified. Therefore, there must be two “backup” numbers on your emergency form. Also, as per Medical Guidelines for Schools, you will be called if your child has two or more episodes of diarrhea to take your child home.

**Your child should be observed for 24 hours.** The temperature should be normal, that is below 99.4 degrees under the arm or forehead or 100.4 degrees ear or infrared noncontact for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications. The child should have no other symptoms of illness before returning to school. Your school nurse will guide you on your child’s safe return to school.

Children absent due to communicable disease and/or requiring treatment by the physician or emergency room must have a Return to School form signed by the physician. (Electronic signatures are accepted/stamped signatures are not accepted)

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# NURSING SERVICES

## Administration of Medication

All medication, prescription and over-the-counter (OTC), requires an *Administration of Medication Form and/or Electronic Treatment Plan* for the administration of medication which meet ORC 3313.713 to be completed and signed by the physician and legal guardian. Stamped signatures are not accepted.

A new *Administration of Medication Form and/or Electronic Treatment Plan* is required at the beginning of each school year and each time the medication dose or time is changed or a new medication is ordered.

Medication should be sent to the school the first day of each week or the first day the student is to receive the medication. Only a one (1) week supply should be sent in a “pharmacy labeled” container. The label must include:

- |                       |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Student's name     | c. Time to be administered |
| b. Name of medication | d. Correct dose and route  |

The medication should be given to the bus driver when the student boards the bus at home. The bus driver is responsible to see that the medication is delivered to the school staff assigned to bus duty who will then take it directly to the nurse.

**No child will be given medication without a completed *Administration of Medication and/or Electronic Treatment Plan* form signed by both the physician and legal guardian, including over-the-counter medications.**



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# IMMUNIZATIONS EXEMPTIONS/ EXCEPTIONS

Children enrolled in the preschool program must meet the minimum requirements for students in public or non-public schools as established by the Department of Health.

Per the Ohio Revised Code, required immunizations may be waived only for the reasons that follow:

1. A child whose physician certifies in writing that such immunization against any disease is medically contraindicated is not required to be immunized against that disease
2. A pupil who presents a written statement of the pupil's parent or guardian in which the parent or guardian declines to have the pupil immunized for reasons of conscience, including religious convictions, is not required to be immunized.

Stark County Board of DD has an Immunization Exemption form that may be requested from the school nurse.

Children who have not been properly immunized due to the above reasons will be excluded from school during any school based outbreak of the following diseases: Influenza B (HIB vaccine), diphtheria, pertussis (DTaP vaccine), Polio (OPV or IPV vaccine), rubeola, mumps, rubella (MMR vaccine), chicken pox (Varicella vaccine),

NOTE: Upon entering preschool, the nurse will review your child's immunization information. If your child's immunizations do not meet what is required by law, and you do not present documentation to meet numbers 1 or 2 above, you must have the required number of DTaP, Polio, HBV, Varicella and HIB immunizations given in a timely manner, in order for your child to remain in school.



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# COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

## *OR “SOMETHING IS NOT RIGHT HERE”*

The Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities has several avenues to resolve problems and concerns.

The first is the informal procedure of bringing any concerns, issues, problems, or conflicts to your teacher’s attention. If you feel that you would like to discuss an issue or concern with the Early Childhood Director, she is available by phone Monday through Friday, from 8:30am to 4:00pm, at (330) 479-3440. If she is not at her desk, please be sure to leave a voice-mail message, and she will return your call within 24 hours if at all possible. Should she not be available within this time frame, the staff person answering the phone will advise you of her return and direct your call to the appropriate person.

Second, our Board has a formal Complaint Procedure. The procedure is distributed to each family annually at the beginning of the school year.

If your concern is specifically related to your child's special education services, you may also consult your procedural safeguards handbook, “A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education.” that you are given each year at IEP time. If you need a copy of “A Guide to Parent Rights in Special Education”, you may notify your child’s teacher or our school secretary or contact your local school district.

Open communication at all times is the key to a successful home and school partnership. Please call when you have questions or concerns.



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# RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

## First step:

Present your complaint in writing to the supervisor of the department with which you have a complaint. The supervisor will conduct an investigation of the complaint within ten (10) calendar days. If you are not satisfied with the supervisor's report, you have ten (10) calendar days after receiving the report to request an administrative review of the supervisor's report. That request must be in writing to the Superintendent.

## Second step:

When the Superintendent receives the request, he/she or a designee has ten (10) calendar days to set up a meeting with you. During this meeting, the Superintendent/designee may ask questions to clarify and review the circumstances and facts of the situation. This is also an opportunity for you to explain why you believe the supervisor's decision should be reconsidered. Within five (5) calendar days after the meeting, the Superintendent/designee will have a written decision for you including the rationale for the decision and a description of the next step in the process.

## Third step:

If you are unsatisfied with the Superintendent's/ designee's decision, you can give a written request of appeal to the DD Board President within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the report of the Superintendent/designee. A copy of the appeal letter should be sent to the Superintendent/designee.

The Board President/designee will conduct a hearing no earlier than seven (7) calendar days and no later than the next regularly scheduled Board meeting after receiving your request. The hearing will be a place and time convenient to all parties. The Board may hear the case as a full Board or the President of the Board may establish a committee of two or more Board members to hear the case.

No less than seven (7) days before the hearing, you will be provided with access to Board records pertaining to the specifics of the appeal. The hearing will be a closed meeting unless you request an open meeting. You have the right to have legal counsel represent you at the hearing, but it is at your expense. At the hearing, you may question any official, employee or agent of the Board who may have evidence pertinent to the appeal.

The decision of the Board will be based solely on evidence presented at the hearing. The hearing will be recorded either electronically or steno-graphically at the Board's expense.

Within five (5) calendar days of the end of the hearing, the Board will issue a written

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# RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS

*(continued)*

report and recommendation. It will explain the Board's rationale and will describe the next step in the process. The report and recommendation will be served to you by certified mail.

Fourth step:

If you are unsatisfied with the report and recommendation of the Board, you may file a written appeal to the Director of the Ohio Department of DD within fifteen (15) calendar days of receiving the Board's report. Copies of the appeal letter will be sent to the Superintendent, the Board President and the legal counsel of the parties involved. Upon receiving the appeal letter, the Board will send the Department copies of the transcript of the hearing, any exhibits incorporated into the hearing and the Board's written decision.

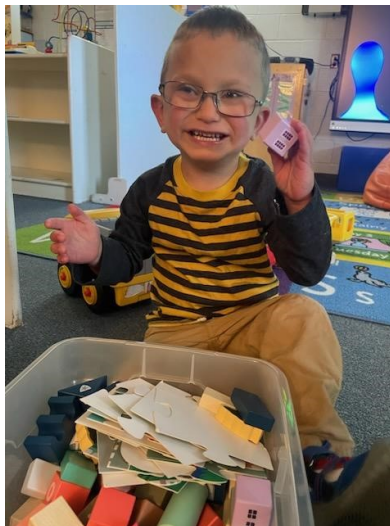
The Director/designee will review the appeal with thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the appeal. The Director/designee will determine if the decision of the Board is based on applicable statute and/or administrative rule.

Within fourteen (14) calendar days following the Department review, the Director/designee will give a written decision to all parties. The written decision will include a rationale for the decision.

Fifth step:

You have two options. You may file a complaint against the Ohio Department of DD as permitted by rule 5123:2-17-01 of the Ohio Administrative Code or begin civil action against the Board.

*All of the above timelines may be extended if mutually agreeable to all involved parties.*



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# UNUSUAL INCIDENTS AND MAJOR UNUSUAL INCIDENTS

## WHAT IS AN UNUSUAL INCIDENT?

An Unusual Incident (UI) is an event or occurrence involving an individual that is not consistent with routine operations, procedures, or the care of that individual. Examples of Unusual Incidents may include, but are not limited to medication errors or related concerns, minor medical situations, peer to peer conflict without injury, law enforcement without arrest, behavior support. Unusual Incidents are logged in a database and tracked for patterns. This helps the administration and staff to determine what may be occurring on a regular basis and help with intervention strategies.

## WHAT IS A MAJOR UNUSUAL INCIDENT?

A Major Unusual Incident (MUI), is an alleged incident that can reasonably be expected to result in harm to an individual. An MUI includes, but is not limited to: abuse (physical, sexual, verbal), neglect, misappropriation, death, law enforcement, attempted suicide, relocation, missing person, or other incidents that have to be reported to Child Protective Services.

## HOW IS AN MUI REPORTED?

There is a contact at each county board of DD to receive reports of possible MUIs. Reports must be made on all children and adults who are served or are eligible to be served by the county board when a provider, county board or department staff becomes aware of an incident. For our county, possible MUIs are reported to the Stark DD Department of Investigative Services at 330-477-4477 or to any county board employee. The Ohio Department of DD also has a hotline that may be used if there are concerns or difficulties in reporting MUIs to the county board, 866-312-6733.



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# UNUSUAL INCIDENTS AND MAJOR UNUSUAL INCIDENTS

## WHO DO I CALL IF I HAVE A SAFETY CONCERN?

Safety is the first priority of every staff person employed by Stark DD. During the decision making process of each day, safety is the guide and rule of every action.

If you have a safety concern to discuss with Stark DD, please contact Early Childhood Director at 330-479-3440. Further contact can also be made with our Department of Investigative Services.

All contact numbers are as follows:

**Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities**  
Department of Investigative Services  
Telephone (330) 477-4477 Fax (330) 477-0016

**Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities**  
Hotline Number (866) 312-6733  
Questions (614) 995-3810



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# INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

## The Rights Of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

*5123.62 of the Ohio Revised Code, the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities include, but are not limited to:*

- *The right to be treated at all times with courtesy and respect and with full recognition of their dignity and individuality*
  - *The right to an appropriate, safe and sanitary living environment that complies with local, state and federal standards and recognizes the individual's need for privacy and independence*
  - *The right to food adequate to meet accepted standards of nutrition*
  - *The right to practice the religion of their choice or to abstain from the practice of religion*
  - *The right of timely access to appropriate medical and dental treatment*
  - *The right of access to necessary ancillary services including, but not limited to, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language therapy and behavior modification and other psychological services*
  - *The right to receive appropriate care and treatment in the least intrusive manner*
  - *The right to privacy, including both periods of privacy and places of privacy*
  - *The right to communicate freely with persons of their choice in any reasonable manner they choose*
  - *The right to ownership and use of personal possessions so as to maintain individuality and personal dignity*
  - *The right to social interaction with members of either sex*
  - *The right of access to opportunities that enable individuals to develop their full human potential*
  - *The right to pursue vocational opportunities that will promote and enhance economic independence*
  - *The right to be treated equally as citizens under the law*
  - *The right to be free from emotional, psychological and physical abuse*
  - *The right to participate in appropriate programs of education, training, social development and habilitation and in programs of reasonable recreation*
  - *The right to participate in decisions that affect their lives*
  - *The right to select a parent or advocate to act on their behalf*
  - *The right to manage their personal financial affairs, based on individual ability to do so*
  - *The right to voice grievances and recommend changes in policies and services without restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal*
  - *The right to be free from unnecessary chemical or physical restraints*
  - *The right to participate in the political process*
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- *The right to refuse to participate in medical, psychological or other research*

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# BILL OF RIGHTS FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

*Parents are acutely aware of their responsibilities to provide for their off-spring, but are seldom aware of the rights they also have as not only parents of a child who has a disability but as just plain people.*

## **Parents of Children with Disabilities Need Freedom To:**

Feel that they have done the best they can

Enjoy life as intensely as possible, even though they have a child with a disability

Have hostile thoughts one in a while without feeling guilty

Let their child with a disability have his or her own privacy

Enjoy being alone at times

Have a two-week vacation yearly without the children; have dates, celebrations, weekends away and time together to enhance their marriage

Say at times they don't want to talk about their problems.  
Say, "I'm tired of talking about my child with a disability."

Lie once in a while. Say everything is fine.  
Not feel compelled to tell the truth to everyone who asks

Tell their child that they don't like certain thing he/she does

Not praise their child gratuitously even though they have been told to offer much praise

Devote as much or as little time as they choose to support the cause of students with disabilities

Share with teachers and other professionals what they are really feeling about their child's education and services; and know that their opinions are respected

Share their child's progress and achievement with a real sense of pride

Have their own hobbies and interests

Spend a little extra money on themselves even though they feel they can't afford it.

(Excerpted from *A Survivor Guide For People who have Handicaps* by Sol Gordon, Director, Institute for Family Research and Education, Syracuse, N.Y.)

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# Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:** [Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

2/15/2023