

# Skaneateles Early Childhood Center

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**Skaneateles Early Childhood Center**  
Est.1978

## Parent/Guardian Handbook

### Introduction

We welcome you and your child to the Skaneateles Early Childhood Center. We sincerely hope our program enriches the life of your child and contributes positively to his or her growth and development. We are aware of the hesitation parents feel about giving their child into the care of relative strangers; it requires a great leap of faith. We will build a relationship with you built on mutual trust. That trust is a requisite for success in sharing the care of your child with you.

The purpose of this handbook is to explain how the Center works and the policies which guide its practice. We depend on your cooperation to help run our Center efficiently and maintain the quality of child care we provide. Quality is dependent upon many factors, not the least of which is having parents become good consumers of child care. This means being informed, involved participants in their children's program.

### Pre-Entrance Requirements

The following forms must be completed and returned to the Center prior to your child's admittance:

- SECC Registration/Information Form
- SECC 12 Month Enrollment Contract or Teasetime 10 Month & 10 Week Summer Contract
- NYS-OCFS Medical Statement (**OCFS-LDSS-4433**) filled out with Current Immunization Record dated and signed by physician.
- NYS-OCFS Registration Card (**OCFS-LDSS-0792**)
- Authorization for Consent to Medical Treatment of Minors
- Field Trip Permission Slip/Photo Release/ Over-the-Counter Permission Form.
- Child And Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Income Statement Form
- Sliding Scale application

If there are changes in address, employment, home or work phones, please inform the Center. It is critically important that we be able to reach you during Center hours.

### Operating Hours

The Center opens at 6:45am and closes at 6:00pm Monday through Friday. Staff members have been hired until 6:00 pm only. For this reason, and because our licensing requires us to do so, we enforce a strict Late Pick-Up Policy. The following fees have been instituted:

6:01pm - 6:05pm - \$5.00

\$10 for every additional 5 minutes of tardiness.

### Arrival and Departure

The Center arranges staffing schedules based on the arrival and departure times that parents designate on their enrollment contract. This is necessary to maintain the quality of our program as well as to meet state mandated

child/staff ratios. For this reason, we ask that you give at least one day's notice of any changes in your child's arrival/departure times so that additional staffing can be arranged if needed.

### Holidays/Staff Development Days

SECC will close in observance of the following holidays:

New Years' Day	Memorial Day	Independence Day
Labor Day	Thanksgiving Day	Day After Thanksgiving
Christmas Eve Day	Christmas Day	Day After Christmas
New Years Eve (Center closes at 3:00pm)		

If Christmas should fall on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, the Center will be closed on the following Monday.

The Center may need to close for additional days to accommodate any Capital Improvement renovations or construction being done to the building or landscaping. Parents will be given advance notice if this is required.

### Emergency Closings

In the event of an emergency (weather, power outage, or otherwise) that might affect the operation of the Center, the Executive Director or their designee will make the decision about whether to open late, not open for the day at all, or to close early. If the decision to close the Center or delay opening is made prior to the start of the normal opening time, the Executive Director or Assistant Director will be responsible for notifying staff and parents. This will be done through a combination of emails, alerting the local news sources (WSTM-3, WTVH-5, and WSYR-9) including their websites, and the Center's Facebook page. Due to our early opening time, the Center will try to make many decisions at least one hour before our opening time.

In the event that the Center should need to close early, after children have arrived, we will send out a mass email through our [seccnews@yahoo.com](mailto:seccnews@yahoo.com) account with the initial announcement. Families will then be called informing them of the emergency closing time. Routine classroom activities will continue until parents are able to arrive and pick up their children.

### Teasetime Before & After-School Snow Closing & Delay Procedures

As we tell parents of children enrolled in the Teasetime Before & After School Program, SECC does not follow the closings & delays called by the Skaneateles Central School District (SCSD). If the SCSD calls a snow day or a delay, SECC may still be open.

- If the SCSD declares a snow day **before** the buses begin picking up children, Teasetime will be remain open for full-day care.
- If the SCSD decides to delay opening, your child will remain at the center until the buses begin running. These delays are usually 1 to 2 hours. In this case, children will stay for the delay until the bus arrives to pick them up. Should the schools decide to ultimately close schools during a snow delay, your child will remain here at SECC for the day. The appropriate fee will be added to your bill accordingly if your child stays for the day. Fees are outlined in your 10 Month Contract.
- Should your children arrive at Waterman or State Street Elementary Schools, however, and Skaneateles decides to have an unscheduled early-dismissal, children will **NOT** be bussed back to Teasetime. Please take note of this and please ensure that your child's school does not have SECC listed as your Emergency Contact. Unless it is a previously scheduled half-day, children will not be bussed to Teasetime in the event of an early dismissal.

### Tuition and Attendance

During your intake interview, you will receive a copy of your enrollment contract which outlines your tuition rate, payment options, and due dates. Parents have a choice to pay their child's tuition by check or through the ProCare Tuition Express automated payment processing system. Information regarding both methods are covered in your intake meeting.

The fee noted on your contract (your weekly tuition) is due by 6:00 pm each Friday for the following week's care. For parents who use the ProCare Tuition Express, payments are taken out of your assigned accounts bi-weekly on a pre-determined schedule. Failure to pay tuition on time results in \$25.00 late fee, which will accrue weekly until the outstanding balance is paid.

Should you wish to discontinue your child's enrollment, you are required to give two weeks' notice and are responsible for payment of tuition for those two weeks regardless of a child's attendance.

### Fundraising/Spring and Fall Clean Up Days

Although child care is expensive, tuition does not cover the full cost of care for your child. Periodically the Center sponsors fundraising events and asks parents to participate in these events. We cannot over-stress the importance of these events in helping the Center maintain the quality of care children receive. Families and staff generally find these events help us get to know each other better as we work together in a community effort for our young children. One fundraiser that families are required to participate in is our annual spring/summer ticket fundraiser. All families are required to sell/purchase \$20.00 raffle tickets. This requirement will automatically be added in with your tuition on a monthly basis from January until May (\$20/month). We also strongly encourage our families to help us with our spring/fall clean up days. Since most of our landscaping and housekeeping tasks are done by staff, we welcome volunteer help from our families to support this effort.

### Health and Nutrition

The Center provides nutritious lunches and snacks, which are overseen by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services and by the US Department of Agriculture as part of the Child And Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Menus are posted on the main bulletin board in the front hall. We encourage you to participate in the program by sharing in cooking activities that reflect your family's culture; this is a wonderful way to help children begin to appreciate and respect human differences and similarities.

Please do not bring lunches or beverages for your children unless your physician has verified that she/he has special dietary requirements. Children with food allergies, intolerances, or special dietary needs should have a signed policy statement on file from their physician. If a child has a severe allergy that would be considered life threatening and requires medical attention (an EPIPEN or other form of medication) the family will be required to provide all meals and snacks for their child. If a child is medically certified as having a special medical or dietary need that is not life threatening, the Center will ask for a medical statement from your physician and the parent may be responsible for providing a substitute meal component.

### Visitors to the Center

Any visitor to the Center who is not a staff member or an authorized parent or authorized pick-up person, must sign in at the front door before being allowed to proceed beyond the sign-in area. The visitor is also required to sign out before leaving the building. Staff members who have visitors are responsible for ensuring this occurs.

The Center allows parents to stop in anytime to visit with their children, provided this short visit doesn't disrupt the child's day or add additional separation anxiety for the child. The Center does not allow other family members or

friends of the family to visit with enrolled children. If an unexpected visitor should arrive at the Center this person should be immediately directed to the Executive Director or Assistant Director. In extenuating circumstances, the Executive Director or Assistant Director will contact the parents of the child being visited and escort the visitor to the classroom to allow for a short-supervised visitation period.

### Naptime Policy

SECC requires that all children be provided with a regularly scheduled nap or rest time. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be expected to lie quietly for a period of time. The length of time a child should have to remain resting varies by age. Please refer to our Naptime Policy provided at the time of intake for more details at each age of development.

### Illness

Group care of children brings with it concerns regarding illness and contagion. Some children seem never to become ill while others contract many illnesses from one another. This can be a major problem for parents who must lose work time and for children who need to be home when they are ill. Please read and retain the Medical and Health Policy that is provided for you at your intake. The Center must enforce these policies for the welfare of all children in our care. Should your child become ill while attending the Center, we will contact you so that you can make arrangements for your child to be picked up. Please have a plan ready for such circumstances; a backup person is very important if you cannot come yourself.

If a child or staff member is found to have a confirmed communicable illness, a notice will be posted on the door of all affective classrooms. All parents and staff in the Center will be immediately notified as soon as possible of any confirmed communicable illnesses present in their classroom.

In the event a child is reported to have a severe communicable disease, the Director will notify the health department.

If a child receives an injury while at the Center, staff will fill out a Health Incident Report (**OCFS-4436**). Parents are asked to sign the form either at pick-up that night or at drop off the following day. A copy of the form will be given to the parent and the signed original will be placed in the child's permanent file in the office.

### Medication Authorization

Staff members may not administer medication to any child unless a parent has completed a NYS-OCFS Medication Consent Form (**OCFS-LDSS-7002**). Only staff members who have undergone the Medical Administering Training (MAT) are authorized to administer medication at the Center. Parents must indicate a start and end date, reason for the medication, and the proper dosage or medication cannot be administered. If a child becomes ill while at SECC, and a parent requests that medication be given, verbal authorization can only be given to a MAT certified staff member. A NYS-OCFS Verbal Medication Consent Form (**OCFS-LDSS-7003**) will be completed by a MAT certified staff member and must be signed by the parent upon pick-up. Parents are responsible for bringing in the specified medication in its original box of container for their child. Medicine will be returned to the parents after the end date has expired. A list of current MAT certified staff members is posted in every classroom and in the office.

### Clothing and Belongings

We ask that you dress your child in washable play clothes. This is very important for your child and for staff. Your child should be able to participate in enriching sensory or art activities critical to development without being anxious about getting dirty. We often ask that you not bring anything to the Center you value. This gets somewhat

complicated when children are choosing their own clothing to wear, which we applaud, but again, we want to caution that clothing may become soiled in spite of smocks and paint aprons.

Please check periodically to see that your child's cubby or bag has a complete set of clothing.

We also would ask that children who are potty trained or in the process of training be dressed in clothing that they can easily remove so they can use the toilet independently. This not only limits the amount of dirty clothes but also fosters a sense of independence in a child's training.

Clothing needs to be labeled, as do mittens, boots, sweaters and so on. One of the most frustrating problems for staff (who work with an abundance of children's belongings in a week) is tracking items without names. Parents also struggle with locating clothing and toys on a daily basis. We have found that initialing things with an indelible marker works well for staff and families. Additionally, each child needs:

- blanket for naptime (crib size, please)
- one complete change of clothes, including underwear and socks. Please keep checking to replace.
- Appropriate wear: winter jacket, boots, mittens, snow pants in winter; bathing suit, towel in summer.

Once again, other than a very special item such as a blanket or soft animal for naptime, please do not bring anything to the Center you feel is too valuable to lose. Please check the various "lost-and-found" for missing items.

#### Parent - Teacher - Child

We will try to communicate with you about your child as often as possible. Please check with your child's teacher about the best times to reach them to discuss concerns or questions you may have or just to check on how your child is doing that day. Please also touch base often with teachers about anything that will help us better understand your child. The Bees, Butterflies, Owls, and Turtles classrooms all participate in the Brightwheel App, allowing teachers to communicate directly with parents throughout your child's day with notes or photographs. The Pre-School programs post a daily summary of activities and may send home notes from time to time. Changes in your pickup time or pickup person should be given to a teacher when you arrive with your child or phoned in later; these will be posted on our message boards.

#### Babysitting Policy

SECC requires that staff members be free from personal interests or obligations which may be in conflict with or adversely affect the interests of the Center. Due to this policy outlined in our Employee Handbook, we ask that parents do not approach staff members to babysit or provide transportation for children of families in our care or their siblings.

#### Assessments

SECC uses an ongoing assessment system, Ages & Stages, that allows staff to continually watch, observe, and document each child's development. The tool is used from birth through kindergarten, to allow a more complete picture of a child's development. By tracking a child's development, our staff members are able to plan activities that are appropriate for each child's developmental abilities. Parents are offered to have a conference or conversation regarding their child's progress, but not mandated, unless the Center feels a parent meeting is critical.

Often a child care setting is the first place in which a child's special needs may be identified. This can be a troubling and painful discovery for parents and families. We make every effort to work sensitively with parents and children should we notice children showing difficulties or delays. We would start by meeting with you to suggest referrals

for diagnostic and follow-up services. Many of these services can be provided here at the Center through early childhood intervention agencies.

### Guidance and Discipline Policy

SECC prohibits the use of corporal punishment by any staff member, visitor, volunteer, or parent. Corporal punishment is any act of physical force used to guide, discipline, or punish an individual enrolled in our program. SECC has the right to discipline a staff member for a reported episode of the use of corporal punishment. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may be taken immediately at the discretion of the Director.

One of the main objectives of the Center is to help children to develop self-discipline and self-control. Our guidance techniques offer children clear expectations and options which help create a positive environment. To encourage this, we practice guidance techniques which:

- show each child understanding and patience
- redirect the child when necessary to another vicinity
- set reasonable limits
- are consistent, loving, and firm
- help the child talk about misunderstandings rather than hurting another child

In rare instances, children may be brought to the main office and the Director or Assistant Director will assist the child in calming down and/or help manage the classroom. If at any time a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, or staff members, the Director and/or Assistant Director will be immediately notified and the child will be removed from the room.

If a child's behavior becomes a chronic problem and is unresponsive to staff members' attempts to alter the behavior, SECC may utilize any of the following steps appropriate to the situation:

- meet with parents, staff members, and Executive Director to discuss the situation and develop methods to help the child correct their behavior
- ask a parent to have the child evaluated by a child guidance professional or examined by a pediatrician

There may be time when some social-emotional and behavioral problems can be so detrimental to the safety and well-being of a child's peers that we find the Center cannot serve that child. We must provide a safe environment for all young children in our care, which may be impossible in the presence of a child with behavioral difficulties. Typically, children who exhibit frequent hurtful/acting-out behaviors do not thrive in group care settings without one-to-one adult supervision, which the Center cannot provide. Please refer to Section 11 of your Enrollment Contract regarding our probationary period for children.

If no progress is made and the quality of care for the other children is jeopardized, SECC reserves the right to request the immediate withdrawal of a child.

### Life Changes

If there should be a critical change in your child's life, such as divorce, death, serious illness of a parent, etc., please let your caregiver/teacher know about it. Sometimes bizarre or atypical behaviors result from major life changes. Such changes can profoundly affect young children though they may have no way of articulating this to parents and caregivers. If we know what's going on in a child's life, we can be more tolerant of such behavior and help them use language to gain understanding of how they are feeling. With help from adults, they can begin to exert some control

over their own behavior. Very young children may simply need more holding and rocking and time alone with a caregiver, while older ones may need more individual attention and patience. The Center has several resources to help us and families when changes occur and we would be happy to share them with you.

#### Emergency Preparedness

Throughout the course of the year, the Center must conduct monthly fire drills. Rooms will be expected to evacuate the building and meet at two designated meeting spaces at the side and rear yards, far from the building.

The Center is also mandated to enact 2 separate Shelter in Place drills throughout the year. There are several different scenarios that might play out that would require SECC to initiate a Shelter in Place situation. For the purpose of a drill, we would practice either moving from our classrooms to various spaces throughout the building, away from windows and doors or simply having classes congregate in a specific space within their rooms for a brief period of time. Parents will be informed beforehand of a scheduled Shelter in Place Drill.

Should a situation arise where staff and children must be evacuated from the Center, we will all move to

**Grace Chapel**  
**1674 Cherry Valley Turnpike**  
**Skaneateles, New York 13152**

Children and staff will remain there until it is deemed safe to return to the building or until parents are able to arrive at Grace Chapel to pick up their child.

#### Child Abuse

Our Center is mandated to report cases of suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment to the NYS Child Abuse Reporting Unit. When a staff person feels that a child is reporting or showing signs of abuse, she/he will then contact the Abuse Unit. This includes our exercising the right to not relinquish your child into your care if we suspect substance abuse.

Parent/Guardian Handbook Acknowledgement

I \_\_\_\_\_ that I have received a copy of the SECC Parent/Guardian Handbook; that it  
parent/guardian's name  
is my responsibility to familiarize myself with all information in the handbook, and to abide by all policies  
contained  
therein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
parent/guardian's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
date