



## Giggles and Grins Preschool

*You teach your child their first and most important lessons.  
Our goal is to be your partner in your child's education!*



### **Wheeler Central Public Schools Early Childhood Program**

Giggles and Grins staff and program partners would like to welcome you and your family as partners in your child's education. We are looking forward to working with you and your family. We are excited about the upcoming year and want you to know you are a vital part of our program and we are glad you and your family will be a part of it.

### **Who are we?**

The Wheeler Central Public Schools Early Childhood program includes partnerships of varying degrees with agencies and institutions including: Wheeler Central Public School, Educational Service Unit # 8, Chambers Public School, and Little Renegades Daycare. We offer developmentally appropriate learning and play opportunities for all preschool children regardless of ability or income. Giggles and Grins promotes mental, social, emotional and physical growth in children and families. The staff recognizes that, as parents, you are the first and most important teacher of your children. We welcome your involvement in Giggles and Grins activities. Together we will work as partners! Giggles and Grins offers you a sense of belonging, support services, and opportunities to be involved in activities that benefit your whole family. and Educational Service Unit # 8 Professional Development Partnerships along with Giggles and Grins sponsor a variety of activities that are available to you. If you have a family member with special needs, Giggles and Grins can help.

### **Enrollment Eligibility**

Giggles and Grins Preschool is open to all children ages 3 and 4 as of July 31 of the ensuing/current school year. Children who will be 4 by July 31 of the ensuing school year will take preference over younger children. Children from outside the Wheeler Central School District are welcome so long as space permits: preference will be granted first to children in the district, then to children from outside the district having older siblings who are Option Enrolled at Wheeler Central K-12; then, finally, students from outside the district (with no K-12 siblings). We will NOT be taking mid-year enrollment at semester, unless enrollment is below 14 and your child will have had to turn 3 before July 31, in order for that to occur. The administration reserves the right to make changes to this policy as they see fit and to use their professional judgement on a case by case basis. In a case where there are more applications than available spots, we will first consider age of the applicant and then look at other criteria, such as special needs, socioeconomic status, whether the child was born premature or with low birth weight, and/or professional judgement.

*Enrollment is capped at 20 students.*

## Program Costs

### Sliding Fee Scale

- Special Education No Cost
- Free Meal Program Eligibility \$20/month per child
- Reduced Meal Program Eligibility \$30/month per child plus cost of meals
- Full Pay Meal Program Eligibility \$45/month per child plus cost of meals

The Sliding Fee Scale will be reviewed on an annual basis, depending on program funding.

(If tuition costs presents a hardship, please contact the Superintendent's office.)

*\*Payments for fees and lunch money will need to be provided at the beginning of the month rather than a bill sent out at the end. The school will notify you when lunch funds are getting low and more money needs to be sent.*

### Giggles and Grins Preschool Staff

Shawna Schlenger - Teacher

Susan Sanderson - Full-Time Paraprofessional

Sherry Tetschner - Part-Time Paraprofessional

All teachers and paraeducators will meet the requirements of NDE Rule 11. The teacher involved in the Wheeler Central Early Childhood Education possesses a Nebraska Teaching Certificate with an endorsement in Early Childhood Education. Professional development opportunities will be coordinated through Educational Service Unit # 8

### **Where is the Giggles and Grins Preschool?**

The Giggles and Grins classroom is located within Wheeler Central Schools on the west side of the lower elementary school.

### Important Phone Numbers: Wheeler Central School 308-654-3273

### **What is the daily schedule?**

The Giggles and Grins preschool normally operates Monday through Thursday during the school year and follows the Wheeler Central Public School calendar. There are exceptions, and it should be noted that our first day of operation will be 2-3 weeks after the rest of the school starts. The preschool day begins at 8:00 am and concludes at 12:00 pm for 3 year old/half day students. Four year olds can enroll in a Kindergarten Readiness Program from 12 noon to 3:30 P.M. Monday through Thursday. All day students will have a rest time after lunch. **Parents are asked to provide a travel size pillow and blanket for their child to use at rest time.** A detailed calendar is provided to all parents and partners on our school website <https://wbrncs.org/>. There are exceptions to these "general rules" so please pay close attention to the school calendar and extra notes/papers in your child's school bag.

- **The Preschool will automatically close when Wheeler Central Schools is closed.**
- **If there is a LATE START there will be NO Preschool for half day students.**

## Parent and Emergency Contact Information

Parents/guardians are asked to provide contact information and to keep that information current. We want to be able to reach you when necessary and know whom we should contact if you are unavailable. If any information changes, for example: phone numbers, place of employment, childcare... it is very important that we know right away to update your child's file. Emergency numbers need to be kept current at all times.

## Children's Book Bag

Please send a book bag daily with your child. Book bags should be large enough to fit a full size folder and library books. Be sure and check their bag daily for important notes and papers that are sent home on a regular basis. Some might also need to be returned. It is easiest to have a book bag to transfer these notes and papers so they do not get lost in the shuffle.

## Rest Time

Children attending the full day program will have a rest period in the afternoon. Each child will be required to participate in rest time, laying quietly on their cot during the time. After they have rested for at least 20 minutes, then they will be given a quiet activity to do for the duration of rest time (books to read, coloring, puzzles, etc.). *Please send a blanket and a travel size pillow to be kept at preschool.*

## Children's Clothing

Please send an extra set of clothes to keep in your child's cubby in case of spills, accidents or getting wet during play.

Children's clothing should be comfortable and suitable for the weather. Straps on tops should be two finger widths wide. Girls should wear little shorts under their dresses. Shoes should be suitable for running and climbing. Boots are needed for rainy and snowy days. On days boots are worn, please send shoes for indoor use. A warm coat, mittens, and a hat are needed for cold or chilly weather. Snow pants are encouraged during snowy weather to use for outdoor play. We try to follow the weather guidelines in the chart below for outdoor play.

### Understand the Weather

#### Wind-Chill

- 30° is *chilly* and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is *cold*
- 0° to 15° is *very cold*
- -20° to 0° is *bitter cold* with significant risk of *frostbite*
- -20° to -60° is *extreme cold* and *frostbite* is likely
- -60° is *frigid* and exposed *skin will freeze* in 1 minute

#### Heat Index

- 80° or below is considered *comfortable*
- 90° beginning to feel *uncomfortable*
- 100° *uncomfortable* and may be *hazardous*
- 110° considered *dangerous*

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit  
 Weather Guidelines for Children

## Weather Guidelines for Children

		Wind-Speed Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)									
		Wind Speed in mph									
Air Temperature	Calm 5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	
	40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27	
	30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13	
	20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1	
	10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15	
	0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29	
-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43		

 Comfortable for outdoor play       Caution       Danger

		Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)												
		Relative Humidity (Percent)												
Air Temperature (F)	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100	
	80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
	84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
	90	91	93	95	97	100	103	105	109	113	117	122	127	132
	94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
	100	109	114	118	124	129	130							
104	119	124	131	137										

## Curriculum

Giggles and Grins Preschool utilizes the **Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum**. This curriculum has been around for over 30 years. Its mission is to develop the best resources and services in order to enhance the quality of early childhood programs. From research on *Creative Curriculum*, when it is implemented well, the curriculum improves program quality, promotes positive teacher-child interactions, and leads to positive outcomes for children. Each new edition uses the latest child development theory and research as the basis for defining the practices that lead to effective teaching and meet the needs of all children. Other curriculum utilized includes *Handwriting Without Tears*, *Grow It, Try It, Like It*, and *Animal Trackers*, a physical fitness program. The Wheeler Central Public Schools Early Childhood Education program will provide children with a wide variety of materials and plan experiences that build on their interests and current skills in order to expand their learning. We also encourage children's early development by observing, understanding, and supporting what they do.

### **As teachers and caregivers:**

- Adults listen to children's spontaneous comments, and understand how children think about their activities.
- Adults converse naturally with children as they work and play, focusing children's actions and encouraging them to elaborate on their thoughts and actions.
- We avoid asking children too many questions knowing that such interference can make children stop talking. Rather than asking questions that require a specific answer, we ask open-ended questions that may draw any number of responses.
- We are on hand if children become frustrated or if situations become unsafe, at most other times we encourage children to try different solutions.
- We encourage children to help one another solve problems whenever possible.

### **Curriculum Goals**

- To plan experiences based on children's interests and their developmental level.
- To learn to make choices and plan many of their own activities, carry them out, and talk to other children and adults about what they have done and what they have learned.
- To gain knowledge and skills in important content areas that pertain to their development including: language (speaking and listening), literacy (reading and writing), initiative and sense of self (problem solving and self help skills), social relations (forming attachments and interacting with others), creative representation (pretending and creating), movement, music, exploring and early logic (what it is and what it does), classification (sorting and matching), seriating (arranging things in a series), number, space (where things are in relation to each other) and time.
- To foster children's primary language while supporting the continued acquisition of English
- To teach children to become independent, responsible and confident-ready for school and ready for life.
- To ensure that no child is excluded based on race, religion, gender or family backgrounds and cultures.
- To encourage diversity and respect the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual.
- To promote active learning through involvement with families, children, staff, communities, materials, events and ideas.
- To provide mental and physical health/safety education, materials, experiences and discussions that benefit children & families.
- To provide families with education and opportunities that supports their role as their child's first and most important teacher.
- To offer opportunities for parents to take an active role in planning, implementing and evaluating the program.
- To provide support in the transitions that families experience.

### Safety Drills

All Preschool students will participate in school wide safety drills. Prior to any safety drills, students will be instructed in procedures which will need to be followed. Typical safety drills will include fire drills, tornado drills, bus/van evacuation, school evacuation, lock downs, lock out and reunification.



### Transportation

**Transportation of a child is not guaranteed due to the large service area covered by Giggles and Grins Preschool.**

At this time we plan to provide before and after school transportation for preschoolers so long as a driver can be coordinated for such.

•Wheeler Central Public School will provide transportation to preschool and home, within the Wheeler Central School District.

**Please keep travel/transportation consistent and safe by using the following safety rules:**

- The staff, prior to the first day of school/activity will make a transportation schedule. If there is a change in pick- up or delivery, a written notice or phone call must be made to the school office, notifying them of the change.
- Parents must notify the staff when a child or family will not be attending.
- Parents should notify staff a week prior to moving.
- If no one is at home or at the designated caregiver's address, the child will be returned to the school until an adult can be contacted.
- There is no food or drink on the bus/van.**
- Toys or other items must be in a bag. These bags will not be allowed in the seats but will be secured in a designated area.
- All van/car preschool passengers are required to use a car seat that meets Nebraska's Car Seat Safety Laws.
- When bringing your child to school they must be accompanied into the building. Please do not leave younger siblings in the car unattended. You must also come to the building to pick up your child.

### Disabilities

Every effort is made to meet the needs of all enrolled children. Screening and assessments are completed with your child on an ongoing basis and referrals may be made for future evaluations by you or by staff with your permission. If you are concerned about your child's development, please visit with the staff. You are the best advocate for decisions or plans involving services for your child. If you pursue an evaluation we are here to support you and your family. If your child is verified, following an assessment, with a delay or disability, and it is determined that an early childhood program is the best placement site, we want to be involved and support you during this process, by participating in your child's IFSP/IEP. The preschool staff will utilize the IFSP/IEP goals in planning for your child on an ongoing basis.

## Illness Policy



**Children may not come to school (or may be sent home) and Family members may not participate in activities when:**

- Elevated temperature: 100 degrees F. (must be below 100 degrees without Tylenol or Ibuprofen for 48 hours)
- Thick, foul smelling, bloody, or (PUS) drainage from wounds, nose, eyes, or ear.
- Uncontrollable coughing, causing vomiting or spitting up of mucus.
- Vomiting (within the last 24 hours) or stomachache
- Diarrhea, watery stools or blood in the stools (within the last 24 hours)
- Sore throat, enlarged glands or stiff neck.
- Persistent pain, including earaches, stomach pains, pain when urinating or injured limbs.
- If a child has an infectious condition, a written doctor's note must be obtained before the child can return to the school such as:
  - Chicken pox, Influenza, RSV, Strep Throat
  - Skin conditions and rashes that itch or that are blistered. (must be treated at least 24 hours)
  - Scabies or ringworm
  - Parasite infections such as lice, or pinworms, until after proper treatment is given. (A child with head lice should return when they have been treated and are "Nit-Free")

### PLEASE NOTE:

- Please call the school if your child will not be in preschool or is unable to attend an activity.
- Please do not send your child to preschool if he/she cannot go outside with the group. All staff and volunteers must remain with all the children in order to maintain staff to child ratio. There are not enough staff to have one person stay in with a sick child.

### Medications

**Over the Counter Medications:** We **CANNOT** give over the counter medication without a statement from the doctor. If your doctor suggests a non-prescription medication, the doctor must sign a statement giving the name, dosage and frequency of the medication to be used.

**Prescription Medications:** If your child's condition requires a staff member to give the medications or treatment, you must bring the medication in the original container from the pharmacy or doctor's office. The container must be clearly marked with the child's name, date, name of medication, doctor name and a frequency and amount to be given along with a medicine sheet that outlines possible side effects we should be watching for. Parents/guardians must fill out a signed permission to medicate form. Staff will attach the form to the original bottle of medication.

### **Things To Remember:**

- Medication will be kept in the office. Children must not handle medication. (Includes cough drops, ointment, inhalers, etc.). Be sure the staff understands directions and knows if the medication needs to be refrigerated.
- A designated staff person will be responsible for giving medications to children. This person will be trained on an individual basis by nursing staff or professionals.
- Each time a medication or treatment is given, the person administering will indicate time and sign their name on a form for your child's records.

## HEALTH

Health care for children is an important part of the preschool program. The health component includes screenings, immunizations, and physicals, dental and mental health. Wheeler Central Public Schools' partnership with ESU 8 makes available a nurse to monitor the health component and ensure your child is up to date in all health areas. Open communication between families and the nurse is very important.

**HEALTH HISTORY:** At enrollment a health history will be completed. The history will include past health information as well as current health needs. This information will help staff get to know you and your child. Children with serious health conditions are required to have a health plan signed by a physician on file.

**GROWTH AND NUTRITION:** Your child's height and weight will be taken throughout your child's participation in the program. All participants receive a nutritional assessment that is evaluated by a registered dietician within 45 days of entry into the program. Feedback is given by written comments on the form. The preschool nurse reviews the comments, if there are any concerns she will address them with preschool staff and the parents. Discussion can be done per phone, nurse's notes and/or at parent-teacher conferences. Discussion is documented on health forms. Any children with nutritional allergies must have on file a nutrition plan signed by their physician. This is essential in planning for school lunches, snacks, and other activities.

**MENTAL HEALTH:** Many questions from the health history form relate to your child's mental health. It is our goal to help children to develop skills to deal effectively with the environment they live in. The questions you answer and information given along with observations, help staff in relating to your child's mental and physical health. It is our goal to help you and your child feel successful.

**IMMUNIZATIONS:** State law requires that all children in Early Childhood Programs be up to date on their immunizations. For those children who are not up to date, the series must be completed according to Regulations/Wheeler Central Public Schools policy standards. Remember, no child can participate in activities without an immunization record on file. And, they must be kept current!

## Positive Guidance Procedure

Giggles and Grins Preschool Program feels that children must have a safe, orderly environment so that they can have a positive and successful learning experience.

### **Goals of all Staff**

- ☺ Promote positive social interactions between children.
- ☺ Help children learn self- control.
- ☺ Develop a healthy self-image.
- ☺ Communicate clear expectations, limits and rules.
- ☺ Be partners with families and other caregivers to meet these goals

### **Steps to Be Taken For Positive Guidance:**

1. Staff makes sure children understand rules and boundaries.
2. Staff may reinforce rules and boundaries by talking, making visual contact, modeling proper behavior, physically helping them, reinforcing good behavior, encouragement, offering new activities, planned ignoring, redirecting and moving the child. The teacher's response depends on his or her own style and each individual child.
1. When a teacher feels that a child does not understand, they will involve the parents in helping to solve the problem. They will also look at the classroom and at things that may be affecting the child's behavior, such as schedule, daily routine and room arrangement.
4. Staff and / or other professionals will observe and record unacceptable behaviors that appear in the classroom on a regular basis. Families will meet with staff (and professionals if applicable) to problem solve.
5. Physical disciplining methods such as spanking, slapping, shaking or biting are not allowed. Neither food, rest nor bathroom privileges can be used as punishment. Restraining children is prohibited.
6. Parents and other volunteers should refer problems to staff.

### Early Childhood Program Code of Conduct

All Staff, Consultants, and Volunteers must follow the Code of Conduct.

1. They will respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability.
2. They will follow program confidentiality policies concerning information about children, families, and staff members.
3. No child will be left alone or unsupervised while under their care.
4. They will use positive methods of child guidance and will not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, or humiliation. They will not use methods of discipline that involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, or the denial of basic needs.

## Family Involvement

Families have several ways to be involved with the program. We would like all family members to know that **without your participation we do not have a program**. You are the backbone of the quality services available to your child. Please ask staff how you can help. We also would like any suggestions, as you are your child's first teacher. The following are just a few ways to be involved. Please contact the staff to let them know what works best for your family.

- \* **Volunteering** - Time that parents are spending doing activities at the center or at home can count as volunteer time (in-kind) to the program.
- \* **In-Home In-Kind** - Time families spend doing Education Goal activities together at home.
- \* **Family Involvement Activities:** Family/Child(ren) activities are also planned by the group throughout the year (including, but not limited to, Donuts with Dads, Muffins with Moms, Holiday program, and Spring Open House/Promotion ceremony). All parents are invited to attend. Meeting notices will be sent home in the student's bag in advance, usually with a reply back notice.
- \* **Family Contacts** - Program staff and families have continuous contact. Together they complete assessments that help families identify areas of strength and also set manageable goals.
- \* **Families are surveyed** at various times during the year. A questionnaire is given to each family annually to find out how they felt about the services they received. Your comments and suggestions on these surveys are used to plan for future services.
- \* **Early Childhood Advisory Group** meets four times per year to discuss various issues. Our advisory group consists of representatives from partnering agencies, parents of enrolled students, and community members. Any parent may attend.

Volunteer hours are a vital part of the program. A quality program calls for many people working together, sharing talents, knowledge, and energy so that families receive the greatest benefits available. Individuals of many ages are needed to provide this quality.

**If you know of any one who would like to volunteer, contact the Giggles and Grins staff.**



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## Helpful Hints For Volunteers

- Each time you come to the classroom please sign the volunteer sheet. Your volunteer service provides the program with the necessary "Match" for our government funds.
- Be sure to wear comfortable clothing. Children are very busy and active and will keep you busy and active.
- The teacher will review the lesson plan with you each time you volunteer. Please let the staff know how you would like to be involved that day. We want to ensure you feel comfortable and enjoy the day as much as the children. (Please feel free to offer comments and suggestions about the day, and share your ideas on activities that could strengthen our curriculum.) **Remember this is your program, too.**
- If you are ill or cannot volunteer on your scheduled day, please let the staff know so they won't be short handed.
- At the center we move quietly, slowly and speak softly as this has a calming effect.
- Be generous with affection, encouragement, and praise. Feel free to hold, hug, read, and visit with the children. By learning each child's name, you will be helping each child feel significant and will be helping build their self-esteem.
- We would like each of you to share ideas on classroom activities, fieldtrip suggestions, or share your talent by offering special project suggestions. We need you to help us strengthen our curriculum.
- **When you volunteer it is a special day for your child.** Make sure your child knows how much you enjoyed the time you spent with him/her.
- Part-time daycare can be very challenging to find on your volunteer day, so we encourage parents to offer each other/trade childcare for siblings.
- Without involvement from people like you our program would suffer. We truly appreciate each time you have the opportunity to volunteer. **We ask all volunteers to follow the confidentiality policy so when things happen at the center such as behavior or a child having a bad day, we need to respect the child's feelings and leave this situation within the program. A good rule of thumb is "What happens at the center stays at the center."**

## Tips for Working with Children

- It is very important we keep in mind that children have different rates of development. Giggles and Grins Preschool Program works with a wide variety of ages, so remember all children are not at the same level of learning.
- When working with children, adults get down to their level. We sit on the floor or on a small chair.
- Don't feel like you must constantly be "doing something" to be useful. Just being at child level monitoring children's play, promoting language development and problem solving by asking questions about their activities etc., is the important work we do.
- At Giggles and Grins children learn to interact in a group. They are learning to share and take turns, which is a very important developmental task.
- When conflicts arise we redirect behavior, and suggest a substitute activity that will meet the needs of the child.
- When redirecting use positive statements rather than "No". Example "We sit on chairs" or "We use walking feet."
- Children also learn the importance of cleaning up after themselves. Do work along side the children when possible.

## Family and Community Partnerships

Giggles and Grins Preschool believes that family is the most important part of a child's life. For this reason staff is employed to serve and support the entire family. Staff can answer most questions, provide support, and link parents to community services and resources that will help them meet their needs. Together the parents and staff will develop a plan to meet the family's goals and needs.

## Child/Adult Protection

State law requires staff to immediately report suspected child abuse or neglect. Giggles and Grins strives to work with community agencies in providing positive support services to families. Crisis assistance and support is available through program staff and community resources. All staff is checked through the Nebraska Child and Adult Abuse Central Registry. All information is confidential.

## Grievance Procedure

There is a written procedure for program concerns. It is meant to guarantee the quality and unity of the Giggles and Grins Preschool Program. There must be open communication between the partners, staff, parents and the community. In an event there is a concern or problem, it will be handled as follows:

- The person should inform the program teacher and/or staff of the concern or problem.
- If the problem or concern cannot be resolved within the program, the staff **MUST** contact the Wheeler Central Principal/Superintendent.
- To ensure proper communication, the person stating their concern or problem should fill out the grievance form and submit to the Principal within 5 days.
- The person then will receive a follow-up letter from the Principal stating the results.
- If the person feels the problem or concern has not been resolved, then the concern will be forwarded to the Wheeler Central Public Schools Board of Education. Once again working together to resolve problems within the program, a reply from the President of the Board of Education will be sent to the aggrieved person.
- Our Goal is to be sure that the children and families of our programs gain from positive experiences. Working together and helping each other is what it's all about.

# Rights and Responsibilities Of Parents In Early Childhood Programs

## **Confidentiality of Records**

Each staff, family and volunteer signs the *Giggles and Grins* Confidentiality Policy. All family information is kept in a locked file cabinet and is confidential within the agency. This policy will be explained in depth by our program staff. Violations of the Confidentiality Policy are handled by the Early Childhood Program Director and/or School Administrator. Information will be shared with a Release of Information form, or in the event of an emergency.

### PARENT RIGHTS

- To take part in the major policy decisions affecting the planning and operation of the program.
- To help develop adult programs which will help improve daily living for my family and me.
- To be welcome at all activities
- To choose whether or not I participate, without fear of endangering my child's right to be in the program.
- To be informed regularly about my child's progress in the program.
- To always be treated with respect.
- To expect guidance for my child from staff, which will help his/her total individual development.
- To be able to learn about the operation of the program including the budget and the level of education and experience required to fill various staff positions.
- To take part in planning and carrying out programs designed to increase my skills in areas of possible employment.
- To be informed about all community resources concerned with health, education, and the improvement of family life.

### PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- To learn as much as possible about the program and to take part in major policy decisions.
- To accept the program as an opportunity through which I can improve my life and my children's lives.
- To take part in the programs as an observer, a volunteer or paid employee, and to volunteer my services in whatever way I can toward the enrichment of the program.
- To provide parent leadership by taking part in elections, to explain the program to other parents, and to encourage their full participation.
- To welcome staff into my home to discuss ways in which parents can help their child's development at home in relationship to school.
- To work with staff and other parents in a cooperative way.
- To guide my children with firmness, which is both loving and protective.
- To offer input on services provided through the program.
- To take advantage of programs designed to increase my knowledge of child development and my skills in areas of possible employment.
- To become involved in community programs, which help, improve health, education, and recreation for all.

## Early Childhood Programs Philosophy

### **What we believe about each child in Giggles and Grins early childhood program:**

- Each child has their own experiences and strengths and can learn.
- Each child needs an on-going, consistent program, which fosters development.
- Each child needs high quality educational services, in a safe setting.
- Each child needs a curriculum and materials that meet their individual needs.
- Each child needs socialization experiences.
- Each child needs positive, supportive, nurturing, caring and well-trained staff.
- Each child needs complete health screenings and necessary follow-up treatment.

### **What we believe about families:**

- Families are the child's first and most important teacher and continue to be the main influence on the child's development.
- Families must participate directly in the child's education and development.
- The child's family as well as community must be involved.
- Families must be connected to on-going services within the community.
- The family and child's self-esteem can be strengthened through the program.
- The family and child's ability to relate to one another and others will be increased.

### **What we believe about the program:**

- The program must work to provide high quality standards.
- The program should strengthen each child's own experiences and abilities.
- The program must build community relationships to provide high quality services to children and families.
- The program is designed to prepare children for life.
- The program evaluates its services through input from families, children, staff and community.
- The program must strive to provide families with continuity of staff and services.

### **Meals/Snacks**

Breakfast and lunch are provided through the school lunch program. Meals, and learning how to eat and dine, are part of the curriculum. Meals will be served in the lunchroom. **The full price charge for breakfast is \$.93 per day and the full-price charge for lunch is \$1.40 per day.** We encourage families to complete a free/reduced meal application, as this will benefit the preschool program. Children are offered morning snack and afternoon snack on regular preschool days. Families with children enrolled in the full day program are asked to pay a **\$20 yearly snack fee.**

## Meals, Snacks & Nutrition Policy

In an effort to provide the best possible nutritional environment for the children in our facility, we have adopted the following policies. The Administration and staff appreciate support from the parents in promoting the health of our children.

### Fruits & Vegetables:

- We offer fruit two times per day or more. (We offer fruit that is canned in juice (not in syrup), fresh, or frozen.)
- We offer vegetables two times per day or more. (We only offer vegetables boiled, roasted, or lightly stir-fried with little added fat.)
- Fruits/Vegetables that are grown on the school's tower gardens are offered to students for meals/snacks, when available.

### Meats, Grains, & Fats:

- We offer meats or meat alternatives that are lean or low fat.
- We offer high fiber, whole grain foods at least two times a day.
- We rarely offer the following foods: high sugar, high-fat foods (such as cookies, cakes, doughnuts, etc.) or high salt, high-fat snacks (such as chips, Ritz crackers, etc.)

### Beverages:

- We offer only 1% or non-fat, non-flavored milk for meals and snacks
- During indoor and outdoor physical active playtime, teachers remind children to drink water (@ least 1x/play period).
- When indoors and outdoors, we make drinking water visible and freely available so children can serve themselves.
- We limit the amount of 100% fruit juice we offer to two times per week or less and never offer sugary drinks, such as soda, Kool-Aid, etc.

### Menus:

- Our menu is provided through the Wheeler Central school lunch program and offers a variety of healthy foods and includes seasonal change.
- Preschool children always choose and serve most or all foods themselves at meals and snacks.
- Televisions or videos are never on during meal or snack times.
- Teachers and staff rarely eat or drink unhealthy foods in front of the children.
- Teachers always enthusiastically role model eating healthy foods at meal and snack times.
- We provide visible support promoting healthy eating in classrooms and common areas through the use of posters, pictures, displayed books, and other learning materials.
- Teachers always encourage and praise children for trying new or less preferred foods.
- Teachers never require that children sit at the table until they clean their plates.

### Nutrition Education for staff, children, & families:

- Teachers incorporate planned nutrition education into classroom routines at least one time per week.
- Teachers talk with children informally about healthy eating each time they see an opportunity.
- Teachers and staff receive professional development on nutrition two times per year or more.
- Families are offered education on child nutrition at least two times per year.

## Physical Activity, Outdoor Play, & Screen Time Policy

In an effort to provide the best environment for the children enrolled in our facility, we have adopted the following policies surrounding physical activity, outdoor play, and screen time. We appreciate your support in promoting the overall health of our children.

### Active Play

- We provide 60 minutes of indoor/outdoor physical activity each day (45 minutes of which are outdoors, weather permitting)
- We ensure that children are not seated for periods of more than 15 minutes (excluding nap and meal times).
- Brain and movement breaks are built into our daily routine

### Outdoor Play & Learning

- Children are provided opportunities for outdoor play in the morning and afternoon (for full day students).
- Children are allowed to utilize free play during this time. Structured learning opportunities, seasonal outdoor activities, and outdoor field trips are offered throughout the year.
- We have an open area for games and activities for children to run around safely.
- Children are able to play on the fixed play equipment, which includes slides, climbing, balancing, crawling.
- Portable play equipment, including riding toys, trikes, balls, stepping stones, sand/water table, etc.
- Other areas available for play include the playhouse, picnic tables, sand boxes with sand toys, tool bench, toy kitchen, sidewalk chalk.
- A shaded area is made available through the use of an umbrella, when weather conditions permit putting it up.
- Parents are asked to provide sunscreen and/or insect repellent for their children. We apply when needed.

### Indoor Active Play

- Indoor play space is available when weather does not permit going outside
- Portable play equipment provided includes balls, hoops, cones, bouncy toys, ribbons, etc.

### Teacher Practices

- Staff encourage children to be active and often join in in active play.
- The SMART board is off, unless being used during instructional time.
- When utilized, videos or activities are always educational and commercial free.
- If a video is shown, children are given the opportunity to do an alternate activity.
- Screen time is not used as a reward.
- Screen time is NOT used as a way to manage challenging behaviors.
- When screen time is offered, teachers talk with children about what they are seeing and learning. It is utilized as an interactive tool.

### Education for staff, children and families

- Preschool students participate in planned lessons focusing on building gross motor skills at least once per week.
- Teachers talk with children informally about the importance of physical activity when the opportunity arises.
- Teachers and staff receive professional development on physical activity, outdoor play, and screen time when available.
- Families are offered education on children's physical activity, outdoor play and learning, and screen time through educational materials sent in monthly newsletters.