

Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs

In collaboration and partnership with
**CHARTER OAK-UTE
COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

FAMILY HANDBOOK



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Charter Oak-Ute (COU) Early Childhood Programs (ECP) Family Handbooks are included with the registration packets given to families at the time of registration. They are also available upon request in the Charter Oak Elementary office or the Early Childhood Programs classroom at 321 Main Street, Charter Oak, Iowa 51439.

Early Childhood Programs Policies and Procedures

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I. WELCOME to Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs QPPS 10.1 *in collaboration and partnership with Charter Oak-Ute Community School*

The Charter Oak-Ute (COU) Early Childhood Programs (ECP) were awarded the Iowa State-Wide Voluntary Preschool Program grant in 2010. The programs' goal is to provide a high-quality preschool program that meets each child's individual needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background. The COU ECP provides a rich learning environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new skill development. It is a setting where children feel safe, respected, and nurtured. This is an opportunity for all 4 to 5-year-old children to take part in planned and active learning experiences to build their readiness skills. The COU ECP have adopted and meets the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards and Creative Curriculum are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices.

II. MISSION, PHILOSOPHY & GOALS for Children and Families QPPS 10.1 2.1

Mission:

The Mission of Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs in collaboration and partnership with Charter Oak-Ute Community School is to provide a quality small school atmosphere to enhance the abilities of students toward reaching their utmost potential.

COU ECP Philosophy of Education:

We believe:

- EACH CHILD is a unique individual.
- EACH CHILD grows at a different rate.
- EACH CHILD has different needs to be met.
- EACH CHILD will be given opportunities to explore his/her environment.
- EACH CHILD will be given opportunities to interact with peers.
- EACH CHILD will be given opportunities to solve problems.
- EACH CHILD will be given opportunities to become a good citizen through the Character Counts programs.

Goals for Children:

- Children will show competence in social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language developmental skills.
- Children will learn to be enthusiastic and curious learners.
- Children will be safe and healthy.

Goals for Families:

- Families will feel welcome in the classroom and school.
- Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to help their child be better prepared to learn life-long skills.
- Families will advocate for their child.

III. ENROLLMENT

Equal Educational Opportunities

The Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs in collaboration and partnership with Charter Oak-Ute Community School shall allow the students to have an equal opportunity for a quality education without discrimination, regardless of their race, religion, color, sex, marital status, national origin or disability. Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX, Section 504 or Title VI may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, Adam Eggeling (712) 678-3777 or to Section 504 Coordinator, Adam Eggeling (712) 678-3777 at 321 Main Street, Charter Oak, Iowa 51439.

Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of the Region VII Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 310 W. Washington Ave., Ste 800, Milwaukee, WI 53203-2292, (414) 291-1111, or The Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, (515) 281-5294. Procedures and levels are outlined in district policy for resolving complaints and are available upon request from the Charter Oak-Ute Community School Superintendent.

Eligibility

Children in the 3-year-old program must be three years of age prior to September 15th of the current school year and children in the 4-year-old program must be four years of age prior to September 15th of the current school year. Pre-registration will begin in the spring prior of the current year. Registration materials are available from the Charter Oak-Ute Preschool staff. Final registration will occur in the summer of the current year.

Hours

The 3-year-old program meets on Tuesday and Thursdays from 8:20 am-3:20 pm. The 4-year-old program meets on Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:20 am-3:20 pm. The Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs follow the Charter Oak-Ute Community School calendar.

General Information

QPPS 5.1, 10.4

The following information and documentation are required within six weeks after a child begins the COU early childhood programs:

- 1) Enrollment forms including, but not limited to, the child and parent/guardian name, address, telephone number, medical emergency consent, medical/dental service providers, emergency contacts (if the parent/guardian cannot be reached), and a list of individuals authorized to pick up the child from the early childhood classrooms.
- 2) Physical Report (dated within 6 months of enrollment).
- 3) Immunization Certificate indicating that the child is current on all required immunizations or submitted with a physician's waiver for immunizations not up-to-date.

4) Health Insurance Information card or other documentation of current health insurance information. (Please keep this information updated in our files, if parent/family insurance arrangements change during the year.) Parents shall be responsible for keeping all health insurance information updated for school files.

Class Size

QPPS 10.4

The maximum class size is 20 children in each session based on square footage of the current location and the guidelines of the Iowa State-Wide Voluntary Preschool Program grant. A teaching staff-child ratio of at least 1:8 for three year old children and a staff-child ratio of at least 1:10 for four year old children will be maintained at all times to encourage adult-child interactions and promote activity among children. The elementary principal will maintain a current list of available substitutes for both the teacher and teacher assistants. Should one of the teaching staff need to temporarily leave the room, the teacher will call the elementary office and

FUNDING AND FEES

There is no tuition fee for any student who is four on or before September 15. This is due to the Charter Oak-Ute Preschool Program involvement in the State of Iowa's Voluntary Preschool Program.

*Tuition/Fees are subject to change.

Inclusion

QPPS 9.10

The Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs serve all children, including those with disabilities, and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff is aware of the identified needs of individual children and is trained to follow through on specific intervention plans.

IV. A CHILD'S DAY

Staff

QPPS 10.2, 6.3, 6.4, 10.10

Program Administrator: The elementary principal at Charter Oak-Ute Elementary School is designated as the program administrator, supervising the preschool program. The principal meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.

Teacher: A full-time teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holding an early childhood endorsement is assigned to the preschool classroom.

Teacher Aide: A full-time teacher aide in the classroom carries out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher aide will have specialized training in early childhood education.

School Nurse: The principal and the secretary are trained in medication distribution. The preschool staff is certified in CPR and First Aid.

Support Staff: Northwest Area Education Agency (AEA) support staff provides resources and assistance to the teacher upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such support staff may include early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist and others.

Daily Schedule of Activities:

A daily schedule of activity times will be posted on or near the Parent Informational Board. Although a schedule helps children develop a sense of the routine that they will experience in the Charter Oak-Ute Elementary School, our goal is to be flexible enough to take advantage of spontaneous learning opportunities as well! Children will have an opportunity for the following types of activities every day:

- Large and Small Group Activities
- Self-directed Play
- Learning Center Activities: *Art, Science, Writing, Games and Puzzles, Numbers, Alphabet, Math Manipulatives, Books, Blocks, Barn and Farm, House and People, Imaginary Play, Computers, Sensory Table, Music and Movement*
- Story Time
- Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack
- Individual and Small Motor Activities
- Outdoor and Large Motor Activities

Lesson plans for each week are available in the classroom showing how these activities are incorporated into the daily schedule. Weekly Folder Notes will be sent home in the child's folder at the beginning of each school week to inform parents of the daily schedule and activities, as well. At the conclusion of each week, a newsletter will be sent home to the families in the child's folder informing them of the activities and events that occurred that week.

Water Activities

QPPS 5.9, 9.15

Water play delights the senses and is far more than simply pleasurable for young children. This type of sensory play is important for the development of the young child. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water play does not spread infectious disease. Children must wash their hands before and after participation in water play. Children are not allowed to drink the water. Children with sores on their hands are not permitted to participate in communal water play. Freshwater is used, and the water is changed before a new group of children come to participate in the water play activity. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets, as well as the water table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervises all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables.

Food Programs:**QPPS 5.12-5.21, 9.17, 10.6****Breakfast/Hot Lunch Programs**

Breakfast is served each day for our full day programs. Lunch is also served each day for our full day programs. Each child will have an electronic lunch account in the school office. A form will be available at registration or through the secretary to see if your family would qualify for free or reduced prices on lunch. You may put any dollar amount into your child's account. Prices may be raised as per board directive.

Snack/Nutrition**QPPS 5.12- 5.21, 9.17, 10.6**

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

Children may choose to have breakfast before class begins. A snack will be offered daily. We ask families to volunteer or to donate snacks. Meals and snacks are at regularly scheduled times, two hours apart and not more than three hours apart, from the end of lunch to the beginning of snack.

All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Snacks brought from home must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Clean, sanitary drinking water (city water source) is available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served. For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and the specialist involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, COU ECP can post information about the respective child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility that the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day.

COU ECP staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and provide parents with that information.

High-risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will not be served. For children younger than three years, these high-risk foods include hotdogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas; hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; chunks of raw carrots; and meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

The school district will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will teaching staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

It is our goal to not just provide a nutritious snack, but also to use snack time as a learning opportunity to teach manners, portion control, counting, measuring, and much more.

Outside Play and Learning

QPPS 5.5, 5.6, 9.5, 9.7, 9.8, 10.6, 10.7

We have opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. Sometimes we spend longer getting bundled up than we spend outside. We use the Child Care Weather Watch guidelines produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play.

In cases when we cannot go outside (due to weather conditions), children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities in the gym and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment. For example tumbling mats may be offered for upper body activities or rolling across the mat, and tricycles are used to work peddling and balancing.

There are areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. We encourage you to bring a hat or other clothing for your child to wear as another protection from the sun. Sunscreen with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher will be applied to your child's exposed skin (only when it is supplied by you, along with your written parental permission). We will also use an insect repellent containing DEET (only when it is supplied by you, along with your written parental permission) and we will not apply it more than once a day to protect your child from insect bites when the public health authorities recommend its use.

COU ECP staff will complete the National Program for Playground Safety's Suggested General Maintenance Checklist on a weekly basis.

Weather-appropriate Clothing and Extra Clothes at School

QPPS 5.6

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside, it is important to dress your child according to the weather. When it is cold outside, your child needs a warm coat, mittens/gloves, and a hat – all labeled with your child's name. In cases of snowy days, snow boots and snow pants are also needed for warm play time outside. For the warmer days, dressing your child in light-weight clothes is just as important. For those in-between days, dressing your child in layers is a practical idea, with a t-shirt and a sweatshirt.

We would like each child to have an extra set of clothes labeled with their name sent to school in a Ziploc bag and it will stay at the school in case of an accident. In the extra set of clothes, please include shorts, shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. And please label each of the clothing items and the Ziploc bag they are in with the child's name.

To help the teachers keep track of your child's clothes at school, please label all of their clothes with their name. This is so important when we are sorting a missing mitten or boot or sweatshirt at the end of the day. In order for children to enjoy their time at preschool, families are advised to dress them in play clothes and shoes that are suitable for the weather. Appropriate clothing includes coats, mittens, hats or hoods (with elastic), and snow pants and snow boots for winter weather. So children will be comfortable, parents should have their children dress in layers for those in-between weather days. Being outside playing on the playground, digging in the rocks, playing in the water table, working with playdough, painting, and coloring with markers may soil their clothing. Parents should take this into consideration when selecting clothes for their child to wear to preschool.

Drawstrings on jackets and hooded sweatshirts are a strangulation hazard. Hazardous items shall not be allowed on children's clothing in Preschool. Parents shall be responsible for removing drawstrings and other hazardous items from children's clothing.

Toilet Training

QPPS 5.7, 10.6, 10.7

It is understood that children of preschool age (and even older) can become so involved in their play that they "forget" to go to the toilet in time. It is recommended that an extra set of clothes be sent to Preschool with your child so that the staff can assist them with changing into clean clothes. Parents are asked to label all of their child's clothing with their name.

When accidents do happen:

Clothing that is soiled by urine or feces shall be immediately placed in plastic bags (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering and the child will wear their extra set of clothes that they have at school.

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. For children who are unable to use the toilet constantly due to special health needs, the following procedures are in place:

1. Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area, which is in the girl's bathroom by the lunch room.
2. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines:
 - Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
 - Staff checks children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every 2 hours. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
 - Staff changes children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.
 - At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.

- Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.
- Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can). Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children. The container will be clearly labeled to show its intended use.
- Diapering and Gloving posters will be posted in the changing area showing procedures through the use of visuals and words. These procedures are used by the program to evaluate teaching staff that change diapers.

Toys and Other Items from Home

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you do not allow toys brought from home. Also please do not send gum, candy, toy guns and money (other than tuition and lunch account money) to school. The COU ECP cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal items brought from home.

Non-Weapons Policy

QPPS 10.6

No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real or look-alike weapons on any school premises, in any school vehicle, or at/during any school-sponsored event. **“Look-alike weapons” mean any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon. A zero tolerance policy on weapons (real or toy) shall be in effect.**

Visiting Pets

QPPS 5.26

If you, as a parent or legal guardian, want to bring your family pet to share with your child’s classroom, you are welcome. The preschool teacher will ensure that the animal does not create an unsafe or unsanitary condition. The animal should appear to be in good health and have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animal is fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and suitable for contact with children. The classroom teacher is responsible for checking that the requirements have been met. The teacher will ensure that the staff and the children practice good hygiene and hand washing when coming into contact with the animal and after coming into contact with the animal. Teaching staff will supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Any children allergic to the pet will not be exposed to the animal. Reptiles are not allowed in the preschool room because of the risk for salmonella.

Birthdays/Holiday Classroom Parties

QPPS 5.13

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a preschool child. Birthdays give children the opportunity to have their own special recognition. Children may bring a snack for their special birthday if they want to. Cookies, cupcakes, and other not-so-healthy snacks are acceptable for special occasions, like birthdays and classroom holiday parties. **Foods that come from home must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers.** Those with summer birthdays will celebrate their ½ birthdays during the school year. Invitations to parties outside of preschool time can be distributed at preschool if an invitation is extended to the whole preschool class.

Each year, three-holiday parties will be held in the early childhood programs classrooms: Harvest Party, Holiday Party, and Valentine’s Party. For these special holidays, parent/guardian committees will meet to plan and organize the events for the parties.

V. CURRICULUM **Curriculum**

QPPS 2.1-2.3, 1.7

The curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities. COU ECP uses Creative Curriculum and High Scope, both research and evidence-based comprehensive curriculums designed for 3-5-year-old children. They are content-rich, developmentally appropriate programs that support active learning and promote children's progress in all developmental areas. The curriculum is designed to provide children with opportunities to learn in a variety of ways: through play, problem-solving, movement, art, music, drawing and writing, listening, and storytelling. Suggestions for modifications and adaptations are an integral part of the curriculum.

It is the policy of this district that the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, and physical disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a multicultural nonsexist society.

Child Assessments

QPPS 4.1-4.2, 4.8

Guiding Principles:

The Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs, in collaboration and partnership with Charter Oak-Ute Community School, believe that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in a natural setting by familiar adults. All results shall be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and stored in a secure filing cabinet.

Children are assessed in the following ways:

- *The Creative Curriculum*® *GOLD ASSESSMENT FOR BIRTH THROUGH KINDERGARTEN* has goals and objectives that are fully aligned with Iowa Early Learning Standards. It records each student's progress individually in all developmental areas three times a year: fall, winter, and spring above-assessed *observation data* provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities.
- *Child portfolios* are organized by the teaching staff and include the assessments, observational data, and child work samples collected all year long.
- *Families* are asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development.

The above assessed information will be used in the following way to aid in the student's learning:

- Provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities.
- Plan developmentally appropriate experiences for them.
- Provide information to parents about their child's developmental milestones.
- To indicate possible areas which require additional assessments.
- To plan program improvements.
- Arrange for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment if needed.

Special Needs Concerns

If the teaching staff suspects that a child has a developmental delay or other special need, this possibility is communicated to families during a conference, sharing documentation of the concern. Suggestions for follow-up steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents:

- The teacher requests assistance from the Building Assistance Team as an early intervention process.
- A request made to Northwest Area Education Association (AEA) for support and additional ideas or more formalized testing.

The preschool teacher will assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment. If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for

that child. Examples include sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

The program provides families with information about programs and services from other organizations, such as Northwest AEA, Department of Human Services, Child Care Resource and Referral, medical professionals, etc.

Program Assessment

The Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs, in collaboration and partnership with Charter Oak-Ute Community School, implement the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. The program just went through a verification visit during the 2011-2012 school year to confirm compliance with the preschool standards.

Administrators, families, staff and other routinely participating adults will be involved annually in an evaluation process that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives. The annual evaluation process includes gathering evidence on all areas of program functioning, including policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction. The program also uses the information to plan professional development and quality-improvement activities, as well as to improve operations and policies.

Supervision Policy

QPPS 9.2

Before children arrive at school, the preschool teacher or teacher aide will complete the following daily safety checklist indoor and outdoor:

- All safety plugs and electric outlets covered, heat/AC, lights, water temperature, and toilets, etc. in working order.
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of children's reach and stored properly.
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc., including the playground.
- Supplies checked - first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
- Daily monitoring of the environment - spills, sand, snow, ice, etc. Other serious problems are reported to the head custodian.
- Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.

No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently, who are in the library area, etc.) Indoor and outdoor spaces will be zoned by teaching staff, with special attention given to areas where injury could occur.

Behavior Management and Discipline

QPPS 1.11

Teaching staff will use positive guidance, redirection, and planning ahead to prevent problems. Staff will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent, clear rules and involve children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. The teaching staff will help children manage their behavior by guiding and supporting children to stay in control when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn to take turns and share.

Challenging Behaviors

QPPS 1.2, 1.8, 1.9, 10.6, 10.10

The teaching staff in the preschool is highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors, teachers promote pro-social behavior by:

- interacting in a respectful manner with all children
- modeling turn taking and sharing, as well as caring behaviors
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials
- engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in a relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. These techniques include:

- **Positive Reinforcement:** The child will be encouraged and praised when he/she is demonstrating acceptable behavior.
- **Redirection:** The child will be redirected to another activity and given an opportunity to try again at another time.
- **“First....Then” Statements:** A statement in which the child is encouraged to make a positive choice. For example: “FIRST you pick up the blocks, THEN you can go to another area to play!”
- **Time Out, also known as a “Cooling-off Period”:** The child is separated from the group for a child-regulated amount of time. The technique is used if the child is demonstrating a “temper tantrum” type of behavior or hurting him or herself, others or equipment. When the child shows that he/she is ready to demonstrate acceptable behavior, they are encouraged to rejoin the group.

If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behaviors, the teaching staff, parents, and ECSE/AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that supports the child’s inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. For acts of aggression and fighting

(biting, scratching, hitting) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff will: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident.; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

Prohibited Practices

The COU ECP does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

- harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children, nor make threats or derogatory remarks
- physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing
- any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect
- withhold, nor threaten to withhold, food as a form of discipline

VI. COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

QPPS 1.1, 7.5

COU ECP will promote regular, on-going, two-way communication between families and staff by using written notes, as well as in-person informal conversations, telephone calls, e-mails, and texts. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information concerning their child so that all of the staff who work with your child can share the parent's communication. Teaching staff will write notes for families in the form of weekly newsletters and also weekly folder notes that have daily notes of information for the parents to know how their child did that day at school. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular communication with the teachers and the teachers will maintain regular communication with the parents.

Open-Door Policy

Parents and legal guardians are always welcome at COU ECP. Parents and legal guardians are a very important part of our programs. Parents and legal guardians who plan to volunteer at the Preschool, like for Parent Readers, Motor Moms & Dads, and Classroom Parties, should check-in the Main Office each time that they come to the preschool to volunteer, and they will receive a visitor's badge.

Arrival and Departure of Children

QPPS 10.11

All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or others designated by parents or legal guardians are required by Iowa Law to include the use of age-appropriate and size-appropriate restraints.

When bringing a child to school, parents are asked to park their car on the West side of the school. We ask that you please turn off the engine before entering the building with your child. Parents are asked to hold their child's hand as they enter the building to eliminate the possibility of an accident. Parents shall accompany children to the classroom at the beginning of the day and leave their child in the care of one of the teaching staff. No child shall be permitted to leave the building without an adult.

Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior written authorization or verbal communication on the phone, shall be allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to the teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them.

If a child rides the school bus to preschool, the early childhood teaching staff shall go to the busses as they arrive, greet and assist the students off the bus. At dismissal, the early childhood teaching staff will accompany each student to the busses and assist the students onto the bus.

Child and Family Support Services

QPPS 8.1

In the COU Community School District, a listing of support services for families is available upon request. Teachers, administrators, and the guidance staff work together to provide assistance to families when help is requested. The district may also suggest early intervention screenings and services through the AEA, based on each child's individual needs.

Transportation

COU ECP will provide school bus transportation for rural 4- and 5- year-old preschoolers. Children living within the city limits of Charter Oak will be asked to provide their own transportation. Parents or legal guardians will be contacted, prior to the first day of preschool, with the pick-up and drop-off time and location. Parents or legal guardians are asked to keep their information current by reporting changes to the preschool teacher or elementary school secretary.

For children who have special needs for transportation: the administration, bus transportation director, and teaching staff will meet with the parents in order to develop a plan that will best suit the needs of the child. This plan will address special equipment, staffing, and care in the vehicle during transport. Any accommodations indicated in the child's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) will be implemented as described.

Field Trips

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant to and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. Parents will be informed of each field trip through a newsletter. A parent or legal guardian shall sign an informed consent form for their child before each trip. Most field trips will be walks around the school, to the park, or nature walks within a few blocks of the school. If a field trip is planned for another town, a bus will be provided and all safety concerns on the bus will be addressed.

During the field trip, all children shall wear identifying information that gives the program name and phone number. A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization information for the children in the group shall be taken on all trips. Children will be counted every 15 minutes while on a field trip. Children shall only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children shall never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

Attendance

Students who are enrolled for classes in COU ECP are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure times. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of a child and others, as teachers find themselves taking class time to repeat information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. Parents and legal guardians are asked to call the Charter Oak Elementary School office with the reason for a child's absence no later than 8:20 A.M. in the morning. If a student is absent without notification, the school secretary will attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school.

Ethics and Confidentiality

The early childhood staff follows an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. Children are people who deserve respect. One way we demonstrate this respect is to refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation. The early childhood staff also is to refrain from labeling a child negatively. No information about any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent. The early childhood staff continually strives to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children, as well as for other adults.

Children's Records

QPPS 4.2, 5.1

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest, are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's records during regular school hours. Parents may also file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if they feel their rights regarding their child's records have been violated. For a complete copy of the school district's policy on student records or the procedure for filing a complaint, contact the school board secretary in the administration office.

Parents or legal guardians will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and the way the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

Preschool Advisory Committee

QPPS 7.2

The COU ECP has a preschool advisory committee composed of parents, school staff, and other community members interested in the preschool program. This group meets quarterly to provide feedback on services that meet our children and family needs. They also serve as a sounding board for new ideas and services. Parents are asked to inform the preschool teachers if they are interested in being part of the Preschool Advisory Committee.

Access information and clearly understand the content

A translator will be provided when needed for those families who do not speak English. If the parents need the handbook read to them we can provide that service to them.

Grievance Policy

QPPS 7.6

Open and honest communication between families and COU ECP is an essential component of a high-quality early childhood program. The preschool staff wants parents to be confident that their child is being well cared for and is having a quality learning experience. If there is ever a time parents have a concern regarding their child, parents are encouraged to address their concern with the child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for the assistance from the Elementary School Principal, Mr. Adam Eggeling

If parents have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, they are asked to contact the Elementary School Principal, who is the program administrator and director for the Early Childhood Program. If you remain dissatisfied, you may contact the Superintendent of the Charter Oak-Ute Community School, Mr. Adam Eggeling.

As part of the preschool program assessment, in the spring of each year, the staff will provide parents with a family questionnaire to evaluate our program. This information helps the staff to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses.

VII. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

QPPS 7.1, 7.2

General Information for Family Involvement

Family members are always welcome at Charter Oak-Ute's Early Childhood Programs. Parents and family are a very important part of our program. Parents who plan to volunteer at the preschool, for any reason, need to inform the staff and they will get you on the schedule of volunteer projects and programs.

Teachers and Administrators use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure, their preferred way of child-rearing, and information that families wish to share about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds. Our early childhood teaching staff communicates with families at least on a weekly basis regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared caregiving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of their children.

Before the first day of school, an Open House will be offered for families to come to school to see the classroom and to visit with the early childhood teaching staff. At the conclusion of the school year, a graduation program will be presented and all family members are invited and encouraged to come and enjoy the evening with the children.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

QPPS 7.3, 7.4, 7.5

Parent-Teacher-Student conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters, as well as by special request. The Early Childhood Staff also plans Home Visits in August, prior to the first day of school. At registration time, families sign up for a Home Visit time, and the teaching staff comes to the child's home to talk about the program, the handbook of policies, the child's daily schedule and the curriculum and assessments that are used to teach the child in the program. At the Home Visits, any family concerns and questions about the program, or any individual concerns parents want to share with the teaching staff about their child, can be discussed.

Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs invite family members to become involved in the following ways:

1. Supporting their child's daily transition from home to school by sharing information about a child's interests and abilities.
2. Keeping the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect their child's behavior and change of temperament at school.
3. Attending Parent-Teacher-Student conferences in the fall and spring semesters.

4. Participating in Classroom Party Planning meetings.
5. Sharing family and cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
6. Coming to spend time in the classroom with their child.
7. Volunteering for the Parent Reader Program or the Motor Moms and Dads Program.
8. Serving on the Preschool Advisory Committee.

The COU ECP, in collaboration and partnership with Charter Oak-Ute Community School, does not discriminate in its policies or programs on the basis of age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, attributes, physical or mental disability, ancestry, political party affiliation, political belief, socioeconomic status, or family status. Inquiries concerning the application of Title IX, Section 504 or Title VI may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, Mr. Adam Eggeling (712) 678-3325 or to Section 504 Coordinator, Mr. Adam Eggeling (712) 678-3325 at 321 Main Street, Charter Oak, Iowa 51439. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of the region VII Office of Civil Rights, Us Department of Education, 310 W. Washington Ave., Ste 800, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203-2292, (414) 291-1111, or The Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, (515) 281-5294. Procedures and levels are outlined in district policy for resolving complaints and are available upon request from the Charter Oak-Ute Community School Superintendent, Mr. Adam Eggeling.

Home Visits

The teachers of the Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs make home visits in order to better meet the needs of the child and family. Home visits are made prior to the start of school. This is a great time for parents/guardians to share what makes their family unique, how they prefer to communicate with the teacher and share their knowledge about their child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. Parents/guardians can help the teacher understand what their goals are for their child and whether they have any concerns they would like addressed. Parents are encouraged to share these preferences, concerns, and questions at the time of the home visit and at any time, with either the classroom teacher or the administrator.

Volunteers

QPPS 10.15, 10.17

Parents, friends, grandparents, and other adults are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of their children. Please contact the preschool teacher, the elementary principal, or the office secretary if you would like to be a volunteer. We have a volunteer job description that defines the role and responsibilities of a volunteer.

Family Nights

QPPS 8.4

Family Nights are opportunities for families to come to school to participate in fun, as well as educational activities. With help from family volunteers, the nights will be planned and presented by the COU ECP Staff to meet the needs of the children and families. Some examples for Family Nights are Dad's Night, Mom's Night, Grandparents' Day, Art Night, Literacy Night, and Graduation Programs. These Family Nights vary from year to year, depending on the organizer of the events.

Transitions

QPPS 7.9, 7.10

The COU ECP teaching staff will help families prepare for and manage their children's transitions between home and the preschool program, including special education programs if they are needed. The Early Childhood Staff will provide information to families that can assist them in communication with other resources and programs that are available for any special needs that their child may have. To help families with their transitions to other programs or schools, the teaching staff will provide basic general information on enrollment procedures and practices, visiting opportunities and/or program options.

VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY

QPPS 10.5

COU ECP is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standard, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

Emergency Procedures

QPPS 10.10

Emergency procedure plans are available upon request from the program administrator. Emergency procedures are also posted in each classroom.

Health and Immunization Certificates

QPPS 5.1

Within six weeks after a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations, according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents/legal guardians will provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and also as a condition for remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunizations for which parents are using religious exemption and have received a signed waiver from a doctor.

Health and Safety Records

QPPS 10.10

Health and safety information collected from families shall be maintained in school files for each child. Files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential but is immediately available to school administrators or the early childhood teaching staff who have the need for access to the child's records. The child's parents/legal guardians and regulatory authorities shall have access as permitted by law.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

QPPS 5.1

1. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency.
2. Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results.
3. Current emergency contact information for each child, which is kept up-to-date by a specified method during the year.
4. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child.
5. Instructions for any of the child's special health needs, such as allergies or chronic illnesses.
6. Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition or the family's beliefs. The Early Childhood Staff will implement a plan to exclude a child if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the COU ECP.

General Health and Safety Guidelines

QPPS 5.2, 5.4, 10.14

- Accidents and Injuries: Basic First Aid will be administered to a child needing care for an injury. Depending on the severity, accidents may be recorded on a report for the parent/legal guardian to sign. The original report will then be kept in the child's file and the authorized individual who picks up the child will be given a copy to give to the parent/legal guardian. If, in the event of an injury or incident, a staff member or child is suspected to have been exposed to blood of another person through an opening in the skin, etc., the source child or staff member will be required to be tested (at the Preschool's expense by the Preschool's choice of a medical facility) for HIV, HCV, and/or HBV infectivity and a report will be given to the person who suffered exposure. A copy of the Preschool's Exposure Control Plan is available for review upon request.
- Fire and Tornado Drills: Drills will be conducted at least once each month, with evacuation plans posted on the wall next to the exits.
- Hand Washing: The children's hands will be washed when they first start the

school day, before and after lunch and snack, after restroom use, after nose blowing or wiping, after handling pets, after special art projects, before and after sand play, before and after water play, and after outside time. An early childhood staff person's hands will also be washed at these times and after assisting with toileting or helping a sick child.

- **Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse:** Iowa Law states that Child Care and Preschool staff are required to report immediately to the Department of Human Services any suspected child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The Early Childhood Staff members are not obligated to inform the parent/legal guardian of this report.
- **Toys and Equipment:** Toys and equipment will be cleaned and sanitized weekly or as needed after use.
- **Training:** The preschool staff shall maintain current training in CPR, First Aid, Universal Precautions for Infectious Disease Control, and as Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse.

Illness Policies and Exclusion of Sick Children

QPPS 5.3, 10.6

Daily Screening: Children shall be visually “screened” as they arrive for Preschool. If a child exhibits signs of illness, it will be determined if the symptoms indicate the need for exclusion until remedied. In the event a child becomes ill at Preschool and needs to be picked up, the child will be separated from the rest of the children as much as possible until the parent/legal guardian arrives.

Symptoms for Exclusion:

- Fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher within the previous 24 hours
- Diarrhea (three or more watery stools within 24 hours)
- Vomiting two or more times during the previous 24 hours
- A draining or weepy rash
- Eye discharge or conjunctivitis (“Pinkeye”)
- A cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge
- Too tired or ill to participate in normal activities.

Non-Admittance: A Preschool child shall not be allowed to attend Preschool unless they meet return policy requirements:

- Fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of medications, like Tylenol
- Chicken Pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- Strep Throat: 24 hours after initial medication
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after the last episode
- Conjunctivitis (“Pink Eye”): 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage in the eye

Reporting Communicable Diseases

QPPS 5.4

The COU Early Childhood Staff and Teachers shall provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, made contact with those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur.

Medical Emergencies

QPPS 10.13

In the event of a medical emergency, it is the policy of the COU ECP to have the early childhood staff administer first aid. Every possible effort will be made to contact the parent/legal guardian to determine their wishes for treating the medical emergency. In the event of a life-threatening emergency, transportation to the closest hospital will be arranged first, and then the parent/legal guardian will be contacted. The COU ECP assumes no financial obligation for transport or treatment of a child unless it is a procedure required under the Preschool's Exposure Control Plan. The Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Program has in place an Emergency Management Guide that describes the following situations and procedures to follow:

- ◆ Emergency Phone Numbers
- ◆ Fire Procedures
- ◆ Utility Failures
- ◆ Severe Weather
- ◆ Bomb Threats
- ◆ Physical Threats/Armed Intruder
- ◆ Evacuations
- ◆ Crisis Intervention Plan, Crisis Intervention Steps, and Media Procedures
- ◆ Accidental Injury or Illness Procedures for life-threatening and non-life threatening situations
- ◆ School Crisis Team Members and a checklist to use
- ◆ List of CPR/First Aid Experienced Persons in the program and building

The COU ECP have in place an "Emergency Management Guide." The guide is easily accessible to all early childhood staff members and is available to parents upon request.

Every reasonable effort will be made to utilize the parent's/legal guardian's designated medical and/or dental facilities. If the preschool staff cannot reach the designated medical treatment facility, the closest facility shall be used in the event of a

life-threatening emergency. The closest medical facility shall be the following by family choice on file in the office:

Burgess Health Center
1600 Diamond Avenue
Onawa, IA 51040
Telephone: 712-433-2311

Crawford County Memorial Hospital
100 Medical Parkway
Denison, Iowa 51442
Telephone: 712-265-2500

Medication Policies and Procedures

QPPS 5.10

Safeguards are used with all medications for children:

1. Staff administers both prescription and/or over-the-counter medications to a child only if the child's record documents that the parent or legal guardian has given the program written permission.
2. The child's record includes instructions from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended the medication for that child. Alternatively, the licensed health provider's office may give instructions by telephone to the program staff.
3. Any administrator or teaching staff who administers medication has (a) specific training and (b) a written performance evaluation, updated annually, by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration:
~Verifying that the (1) right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given.
~That the person giving the medication signs documentation of items (1) through (5) above. Teaching staff who are trained to administer special medication procedures have demonstrated to a health professional that they are competent in the procedures and are guided in writing about how to perform the procedure by the prescribing health care provider.
4. Medications are labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it.
5. All medications shall be kept in a locked container.

Cleaning and Sanitization

QPPS 5.22, 5.23, 5.24, 9.11, 10.6

The COU ECP facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately.

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers, such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials, and information required

by the U. S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents.

- Surfaces that may come in contact with potentially infectious body fluids must be disposable or made of a material that can be sanitized.
- Staff will use barriers and techniques that minimize contact of mucus membranes or of openings in the skin with potentially infectious body fluids and that reduce the spread of infectious diseases.
- When spills of body fluids occur, staff cleans them up immediately with detergent, followed by water rinsing.
- After cleaning, staff sanitizes nonporous surfaces by using the procedure for sanitizing the designated changing surfaces described in the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table in the QPPS manual.
- Staff will clean rugs and carpeting by blotting, spot cleaning with a detergent and a disinfectant, and shampooing or steam cleaning.
- Staff disposes of contaminated materials and diapers in a plastic bag with a secure tie that is placed in a closed container.
- A toy that a child has placed in his or her mouth or that is otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion shall be (a) washed by hand, using water and detergent; then rinsed, sanitized and air dried or (b) washed and dried in a mechanical dishwasher before it can be used by another child.

The routine frequency of cleaning and sanitization in the facility will be supervised by the preschool teacher and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table in the QPPS manual. A checklist shall be completed as indicated in the table.

Hand Washing Practices

QPPS 5.8

1. The COU ECP follow these practices regarding hand washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand washing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand washing will reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
- Staff assists children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.
- Children wash either independently or with staff assistance.

2. Children and adults wash their hands:

- On arrival for the day.
- After using the toilet.
- After handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit).
- Before and after meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry).
- Before and after playing in water that is shared by two or more people.

- Before and after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals.
3. Adults also wash their hands:
- Before and after feeding a child.
 - Before and after administering medication.
 - After assisting a child with toileting.
 - After handling garbage or cleaning.
4. Proper hand washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include:
- Using liquid soap and running water.
 - Rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails.
 - Rinsing well with warm running water.
 - Drying hands with a paper towel, a single-use towel, or a dryer.
 - Avoid touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water).
5. Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute, for hand washing in any required hand washing situation listed above.
- Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
 - Staff members do not use hand washing sinks for bathing children or for removing smeared fecal material.
 - In situations where sinks are used for food preparation and other purposes, staff shall clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

First Aid Kits

QPPS 9.13

A fully-equipped First Aid Kit shall be readily available and maintained for each group of children. A First Aid Kit is located on the top of the four drawer filing cabinet . Also, First Aid Kit bags are located in the preschool classrooms, hanging on the walls by the exit doors, and these First Aid Kit bags are used during all outside activities. Following each use of the First Aid Kits, the contents will be inspected. Missing or used items shall be replaced immediately. The First Aid Kits shall be inspected monthly. The First Aid Kits shall be taken to the outdoor play areas, as well as on field trips and outings away from the classroom.

Inclement Weather

In case of bad weather, unsafe road conditions, or other reasons requiring a cancellation, early dismissal, or a late start, the school will contact the emergency communication services provided by Blackboard the school will send out a phone call/text or both. Please make sure your phone numbers are up to date in the office. They will also be on the areaTV and radio stations. These cancellation broadcasts are to be aired between 6:00 and 8:00 a.m. on the morning of any cancellation or delay, and when possible at 10:00 p.m. the night before.

Use of EMERGENCY BUS ROUTES will be announced by TV, radio, internet, and text messaging. IF WE START THE DAY WITH EMERGENCY BUS ROUTES, WE WILL END THE DAY WITH EMERGENCY BUS ROUTES AND SCHEDULES. Snow emergency bus routes require that parents/guardians bring their children in the morning to pre-determined roads and bus stops for each bus route, or to the school. Parents are required to pick their children up from the same location at the end of the school day.

Protection from Hazards and Environmental Health
9.16, 9.18, 10.6, 10.7

QPPS 5.6, 9.12,

The COU Early Childhood Staff protects children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns and scalding, slipping, tripping, and falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping.

The preschool classroom has been tested for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, or any other hazards with documentation of file that could impact children's health. Custodial staff maintains the building's heating, cooling and ventilation systems in compliance with national standard for facility use by children.

Smoke-Free Facility

QPPS 9.19, 10.6

The Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs are in compliance with the Iowa Smoke Free Air Act of 2008. The building and grounds are smoke free. No smoking is permitted in the presence of children.

Child Protection Policies

QPPS 10.8, 10.9, 10.16, 10.19

The health and well-being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance, and the protection of children is our responsibility. Hiring procedures insure that all employees who come in contact with children in the program, or who have responsibility for children, have passed a criminal-record check, are free from any history of substantiated child abuse or neglect, and are at least 18 years old. In addition, no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

The program has a written school board policy for reporting child abuse and neglect, as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, or both, by families, staff, volunteers, or others to the appropriate local agencies. The Early Childhood Teaching Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, and other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. All teaching staff complete "Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse" at least every five years and within six months of employment.

Substance Abuse

Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of the Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs. At no time will children be released to a person under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

IX. STAFF

QPPS 10.15 - 10.20

General Information

COU ECP has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of the early childhood staff and volunteer positions. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluations. Policies detail job descriptions for each position, including reporting relationships; salary scales with increments based on professional qualification, length of employment, and performance evaluation; benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievance procedures. The policies are provided to each employee upon hiring.

Health Assessment

The COU ECP maintain current health information from documented health assessments for all paid preschool staff and for all volunteers who work more than 40 hours per month and have contact with children. A current health assessment (not more than one-year-old) is received by the program before an employee starts work or before a volunteer has contact with children. Documented health assessments include:

- Capacities and limitations that may affect job performance.
- Documentation by a licensed health professional of TB skin testing using the Mantoux method and showing the employee to be free from active TB disease. For those who have a positive TB skin test and who develop a persistent cough or unexpected fever, immediate assessment by a licensed physician is required. For those who have increased risks of TB according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), documentation is required annually by a licensed health professional showing that the employee is free from active TB disease.

Orientation

QPPS 6.2

The Early Childhood Staff needs to know their roles and duties. New staff members are given an initial orientation that introduces them to fundamental aspects of the preschool program including:

- Program philosophy, values, and goals
- Expectations for ethical conduct
- Individual needs of children they will be teaching or caring for
- Accepted guidance and classroom management techniques
- Daily activities and routines of the program
- Program curriculum
- Child abuse and neglect reporting procedures

- Program policies and procedures
- Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Criteria
- Regulatory requirements
- Follow-up training after the initial orientation

Staffing patterns and schedule

QPPS 1.18

The preschool program is in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our program follows requirements for staffing for Iowa’s Quality Preschool Program Standards of maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 at all times. The program administrator will maintain lists of current substitutes for both the preschool teacher and the preschool teaching assistant in case of absence.

Staff Development Trainings

QPPS 6.6, 10.15

All COU ECP staff members focus on strengthening their leadership skills and relationships with others and work to improve the conditions of children and families within their programs, the local community or region, and beyond. Teaching staff participate in informal or formal ways in local, state or regional public-awareness activities related to early care by joining groups, attending meetings, or sharing information with others both at and outside of the program.

COU ECP teaching staff will be informed of professional development activities provided by Child Care Resource and Referral, the local Empowerment areas, Northwest Area Education Agency, local colleges/universities and online classes. Staff members are expected to attend all staff trainings and meetings throughout the year. The trainings will focus on early childhood topics relevant to the program and community.

Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan

QPPS 6.5, 6.6

All COU ECP teaching staff members are evaluated for the purpose of improving their professional performance using ongoing reflection and feedback from supervisors, peers, and families. The teaching staff writes an annual individualized professional development plan with their supervisor and uses it to enhance their continuous professional development.

Confidential personnel files, including applications with records of experience, transcripts of education, health-assessment records, documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation, are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Superintendent’s business office.

X. COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Parents are important to us. Charter Oak-Ute Early Childhood Programs welcome the opportunity to discuss any concerns and/or comments and ask that parents talk to their child’s teacher immediately when a concern arises. The Parent Information Bulletin

Board outside of the Early Childhood Classrooms lists the names and phone numbers of the Preschool Administrator/On-site Director and the Early Childhood Teaching Staff. Parents can also mail their comments to the following address:

Charter Oak-Ute Elementary School
321 Main Street
Charter Oak, Iowa 51439

Availability of Family Handbooks

Family Handbooks are included in the registration packets given to families at the August registration and anytime upon request. They are also available in the Elementary School office and from the COU ECP staff.