

## Concerns/Questions

Please contact us at 301-834-9007 or email [educare@educatewithcare.com](mailto:educare@educatewithcare.com) if you have any questions relating to your child, our programs, or any other issue you feel need review. If it is a concern to you, it is a concern to us.

Director: Mary Janson  
Program Administrator: Janice Czeh  
Office Manager: Kim Rokos  
Owner: Sue Mogard

Thank you for the opportunity to be co-partners with you in regard to your child's growth and development.

### PARENT/GUARDIAN POLICY HANDBOOK

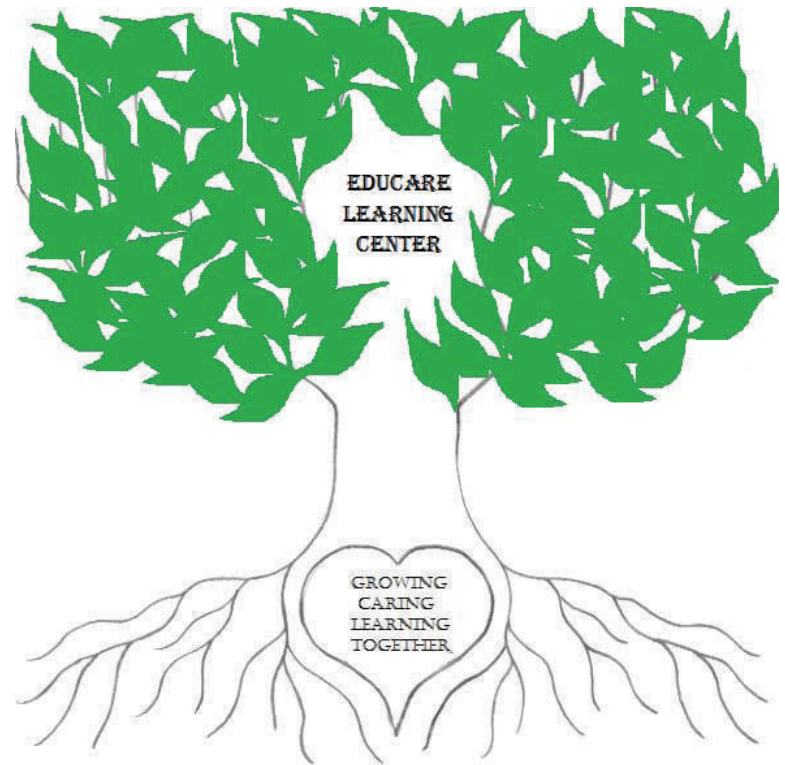
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# PARENT/GUARDIAN POLICY HANDBOOK



## Educare Learning Center

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### General Enrollment Policies

#### Enrollment Fees

All children must submit the following fees with completed forms (see page 12) before the first day of attendance:

- School Year: \$75.00 registration fee for school year (non-refundable)
- Summer Program: Activity fee of \$25.00 for ages 18 mo.-preschool and \$50.00 for school-age (non-refundable)
- \$150.00 tuition deposit (to be applied to last tuition payment if one-months withdrawal notice is provided.)
- Tuition Pre-payment (To be assessed if enrolling more than 1 month prior to attending the program, amount and date of payment to be determined by time period and spaces available. Tuition pre-payment is forfeited if child does not attend the program.)

NOTE: Children are registered from August through the following summer program and must re-register in January of each year for the upcoming Fall. Spaces will be assigned based on the order in which registrations are received. Packets will be provided to current families in January with information specific to the present year’s re-registration procedures and schedule.

#### Withdrawal and Schedule Changes

- Families must give a one-month notice to withdraw a child. Tuition deposits will be forfeited if less than a month’s notice is provided.
- A two-week notice is required to change a child’s schedule.

#### Waiting List

If no spaces are available, a child may be placed on a waiting list. When a space becomes available, parents/guardians will be notified. If the family chooses not to enroll, the space will be forfeited as will the registration fee and deposit unless the family chooses to stay on the waiting list. Preference is given to currently-enrolled families and new families enrolling children on a full-time basis.

#### Enrollment Requirements

- Infants (8 weeks) through pre-school-aged children must enroll for a minimum of two days. In addition, children under 2 years of age must enroll for core or full days.
- School-age children must enroll for five consecutive days (M-F) either before and/or after school. Maximum age for the school-age program is 6th grade by the Fall of the current school year.
- Families may choose not to attend during the summer by paying a reservation fee of \$250.00 (\$25.00 per week), payable by February for the following summer. The fee is non-refundable.

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## Introduction

Educare has been an established program serving children and their families for over 28 years in the greater Frederick area. The 7,000 square foot facility is nestled on 22 wooded acres just off 340 at the Petersville exit. The modern building has six classrooms that support positive growth and development in children ages 8 weeks through school-age.

Educare does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin in the admission of students, the employment of staff, or in the administration of its programs.

## Educare Community Mission Statement

We are dedicated to promoting positive development in children by:

- Providing dedicated staff who engage children in the joy and excitement of learning;
- Offering a quality curriculum using innovative and research-based teaching strategies;
- Building caring relationships through positive discipline offered in a safe and enriching environment;
- Establishing strong partnerships with parents/guardians; and
- Nourishing spiritual growth through modeling love and respect for each other and the world around us.

forms, on the back of the emergency cards, and staff are to be informed directly. A late afternoon (5:00 p.m.) mini-snack of cereal is offered to children who are staying later in the day.

Lunch is provided by parent/guardians. If items need refrigeration, children's names need to be written in permanent ink on the item and given to the teacher upon arrival in the morning. Microwaves are available for reheating, not cooking, food. Educare provides milk with all lunches. If a lunch is forgotten, Educare provides a sandwich and fruit.

## Medications

Prescription medication must be administered to a child from its original container with the child's name and dosage indicated. Additionally, parents/guardians must supply written permission by completing a "Medication Order Form" in order for teachers to administer the medicine. The first dose of any medication must be administered at home.

Over-the-counter medications may be given one time only per illness after completing a "Medication Order Form" (unless orders have been written by the doctor). The instructions and amounts must be consistent with the directions on the manufacturer's label. Such medication must be labeled with the child's name. All medications are stored in a locked box out of the reach of children. Tylenol/Motrin can be given more than one time. Topical ointments can be applied as needed but also require written parental instructions.

## Parking Lot Safety Guidelines

In order to promote safety for children and families, the following procedures apply when families are in the parking lot:

- Adults must hold children by the hand.
- Children must stay with adults at all times.
- It is against the law to leave a car running or unattended in the parking lot.
- All vehicles are to be driven slowly through the parking lot.

## Rest Time

Quiet time is important for a child's health and well-being. Such time also allows a child to "re-energize" and develop self-control. To address this need, rest times are provided for children in the afternoon. Children in all early childhood rooms have rest time. If a child does not require a nap during the day, the child will be asked to do a quiet activity during rest time. Children may bring a special rest time item such as a stuffed animal and/or a blanket to aid in settling into a rest period.

## Emergency Procedures

Educare conducts monthly fire drills as recommended by the State Fire Marshall. Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. The meeting area during fire drills is inside the fenced play area located by the employee parking lot. If an emergency arises during inclement weather, children will meet inside the large shed. The emergency evacuation site is Faith Baptist Church on Jefferson Pike, one half mile west of Educare.

## Illness

If a child has a temperature of 99.0 axillary/100.0 oral or higher and exhibits vomiting, diarrhea, or drainage from the eye, he/she may not return until symptom-free for a full 24 hours. Attendance when ill can result in exacerbation of illness symptoms and can adversely affect the health of other children. If parents/guardians have any doubts about children's health, it is important to consult a physician.

If a child becomes ill while at Educare, parents/guardians are promptly notified. Parents/guardians are expected to pick up the child from the center as quickly as possible. All parents/guardians need to have alternate emergency arrangements to have another approved adult pick up a child who is ill when a parent/guardian is unable to do so in a timely manner.

## Head Lice **STRICT POLICY; PLEASE READ FULLY**

If a child has head lice, the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the child. Once treatment (specified shampoo that kills head lice) has been administered at home, the child may return as long as **NO** live lice and no more than 5 dead nits (dark in color) are present on hair shafts. Parents/guardians must check children's hair for live lice or nits after administering the medicated shampoo. Nits must be picked out individually to ensure that no lice may hatch.

If lice is suspected in a classroom, all children will be checked upon arrival to the center and a note will be sent home to parents/guardians notifying them of the incidence of head lice. Head lice are highly contagious although not generally serious to children. Controlling head lice requires full attention and diligence on the part of families and the center.

## Meals/Snacks

The morning snack is served at 9:00-9:15 a.m. The afternoon snack is served at 3:00-3:15 p.m. Educare provides juice or milk with both morning and afternoon snacks. Snacks provided are based on USDA nutrition guidelines which require two food groups to be served at each snack. All food allergies need to be noted on children's registration

## Overview of Programs by Age Level

NOTE: Children aged 8 weeks through 3 years progress to the next classroom according to developmental readiness and available openings.

### Infants-Toddlers Program (8 wks.—18 mo.)

The infants-toddlers program focuses on meeting the youngest children's individual needs through responsive care and positive interactions. Infants-toddlers have individual schedules in regard to eating, sleeping, and active play needs. Materials are carefully chosen and readily available to encourage manipulation and exploration of the young child's world. Daily communication logs provide parents/guardians insight into each child's individual activities.

### Toddlers-Twos Program (18 mo. — 2 yr.)

The toddlers-twos program works to bridge the gap between the dependence of the infant and the growing independence of the toddler/two. Environments are carefully designed with safety and learning in mind. Focusing on enriching language and promoting self-sufficiency help to prepare children for continued success in learning. Daily communication logs of children's activities are provided to families.

### Twos-Threes Program (2 yr. — 3 yr.)

The program for twos-threes children focuses on transitioning from twos to the world of a preschooler. Experienced staff carefully guide and support the changes that occur when two's announce their need for independence. Knowledgeable staff are readily available to create a scaffolding of early learning experiences, constantly creating a balance between security and challenge. The self-sufficiency of a three-year old is celebrated and supported.

NOTE: Children are enrolled in preschool classrooms based on their ages by Sept. 1 as per Maryland State Department requirements.

### Threes Program & Preschool (3 yr.)

The threes program & preschool promote school readiness as the primary goal for children's development and learning. The schedule is planned to help facilitate cognitive growth through a balance of child-initiated play and teacher-directed experiences. Creativity is supported through open-ended exploration of project materials. The social-emotional development of children is supported by building confidence, trust, and independence through a multitude of daily experiences. Note: Families may select from a full-day preschool experience (6:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m.) or a preschool-hours-only program experience (9:00 a.m.-11:45 a.m., T/Th only). The preschool-hours-only program follows the FCPS calendar.

### **Fours Program & Preschool (4 yr. –5 yr.)**

The fours program & preschool also promote school readiness as the primary goal for children’s development and learning. Social-emotional development is encouraged through cooperative learning activities and conflict resolution experiences. Fours focus on literacy and math skills through hands-on experiences at increasingly complex levels. Children are encouraged to recognize sounds and letters, apply comprehension skills, and use phonics to begin early word recognition. The skills of analyzing, predicting, and classifying aid in scientific discovery.

Note: Families may select from a full-day preschool experience (6:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m.) or a preschool-hours-only program experience (9:00 a.m.-11:45 a.m., M/W/F) The preschool-hours-only program follows the FCPS calendar.

### **School-age Program (Before and After School Care)**

The school-age program includes before and after care and is based on a recreational philosophy tempered by homework needs. Knowing that school-age children spend most of their day in a structured classroom environment, Educare’s program provides the opportunity to relax and unwind. The program emphasizes a wide variety of activities including board games, puzzles, arts and crafts, sports, music, cooking, computers, and creative dramatics. These activities combine to create a total program that gives school-age children a sense of belonging in a safe, friendly, and nurturing environment.

### **Summer Program (Nature-Enriched Learning)**

Summer sessions complement the school year program by encouraging in-depth exploration of the natural world and opportunities for creative endeavors. Programs are held in large outdoor play areas and well-equipped air-conditioned classrooms. School-age children go on special field trips. Younger children enjoy outside “water play” at water tables and in-house special presentations. A curriculum based on summer activities and children’s interests supports learning that is an exciting diversion from the school year focus.

### **Confidentiality**

Information relating to families or children is confidential and will not be released unless a parent or guardian provides written authorization. An exception is made in the event of suspected child abuse. All staff are mandatory reporters of any suspected abuse.

### **Drop-off/Pick-up**

When dropping off your child, regardless of age, children must be escorted by parents/guardians (or a designated adult) into the building and parents/guardians must sign in at the front desk. Parents/guardians are to accompany their children to the classroom. Parents/guardians are to acknowledge a staff member upon the arrival of their child and share any pertinent information about the child with the teacher (medications given, state of health, etc.).

As parents/guardians enter the building at pick up time, each is to sign in at the front desk and inquire about the room location of children. Rooms combine during the early morning and late afternoon and children may be in a different rooms than during their regular daytime schedule. Parents/guardians are asked to speak to the teacher in charge to inform them of the child’s departure.

**No person other than those who appear on the emergency card will be allowed to pick up a child. If someone other than those listed on the emergency card pick up a child, the parent/guardian must call Educare or notify in writing. The person picking up a child must show proper identification. In the case of a separation/divorce, the parent maintaining custody will be asked to submit in writing when the visiting parent may pick up the child. Copies of court documents regarding custody are kept on file.**

Children who are picked up after closing time (6:30 p.m.) are assessed a late pick-up fee of \$5.00 per child for the first fifteen minutes and \$10.00 per child for the next 15-30 minutes. This fee is to be paid to the staff member at the front desk at the time of the late pick up. The late fee is assessed as a deterrent to late pick-ups; late pick-up is not an option provided for parents/guardians. Repeated late pick-ups may result in the termination of a child’s enrollment at the center.

If a school-age child misses the school bus at the end of the day, a Educare staff/administrator (if available) will pick up the child at the school, if available. A \$10.00 fee per child will be assessed for providing individual transportation.

## General Information

### Birthdays

Birthdays are acknowledged within each class. Parents/guardians are invited to bring treats for the classroom on their child's birthday. Suggestions for treats include items that allow for independence in eating such as cookies, donut holes, fruit snacks, or other finger foods. Parents/guardians need to inquire about food allergies prior to providing a treat for children. Please note that some foods are considered choking hazards for younger children such as hard candy, popcorn, carrots, or grapes.

### Clothing/Supplies

Children are to be dressed in play clothes suitable for the weather each day. Children need rubber-soled shoes or sneakers for safety year round. Jellies, clogs, flip flops, or sandals are not safe for children engaging in active play. In the winter months, children's attire needs to include gloves or mittens, a warm jacket with a hood or hat, and appropriate footwear.

Children will need a bag or backpack for transporting items to and from home and a lunch box. Educare is not responsible for lost items brought from home. Coats, hats, and backpacks are kept in individually labeled spaces with hooks. All items are to be labeled with children's names.

All parents/guardians provide a bag of seasonably appropriate clothes to be kept in the child's classroom, including underwear and socks, for use if clothing becomes soiled. All belongings must be labeled with the child's name. Extra clothing will be stored in the classroom for use as needed. Periodically, parents/guardians will be asked to update clothing to accommodate the season and children's growth.

Parent/guardians are strongly discouraged from bringing expensive or treasured toys from home. To avoid hurt feelings, breakage, or loss of children's treasures, parents/guardians are requested to enforce this rule with children.

Children may bring in stuffed animals, books, or other comfort objects for use at naptime. The older children also may bring in a "special" toy from home on "Show-and-Tell" Day. These objects will be stored in your child's backpack until it is time to use them. At no time are children permitted to bring toys associated with violence such as toy guns, knives, swords, etc.

## Early Childhood Program

### Curriculum Focus

The curriculum is based on The Creative Curriculum published by Teaching Strategies. Each classroom is divided into centers called interest areas. As stated in the Creative Curriculum (p. 62):

*A physical space divided into interest areas is an ideal setting for children who want to explore, make things, experiment, and pursue their own interests. Separate interest areas with varied materials offer children a range of clear choices. Sometimes children want to work quietly, either alone or with other children. Areas devoted to books, art activities, or toys and games provide several choices for quieter activities. Areas set aside for dramatic play, block building, or large muscle activities provide choices for active engagement.*

Content areas of literacy, math, science, social studies and the arts are addressed through teacher-directed and child-selected activities. Content areas are supported throughout the daily schedule and materials selected for each interest area. Interest areas include: library, blocks, art, toys and games, discovery/science, sand & water table, dramatic play, and computers.

Units of Study (see page 8 of Parent/Guardian Handbook) focus learning for the center's educational program. Planning for each topic targets a particular developmental stage and specific interests of children in each classroom. Subtopics within each monthly theme will vary from room to room.

Lesson planning forms for core-day and late afternoon programs provide the week-at-a-glance for parents/guardians and are posted outside each room. Daily schedules are also posted describing activities in a predictable order of events.

Maryland's Healthy Development Guidelines are used to monitor and promote positive development in infants and toddlers. Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum and Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) are tools that are used to help guide Educare's curriculum. The Work Sampling System (WSS) as recommended by MMSR is used to assess children's growth and development. WSS includes gathering children's work samples in student portfolios, enacting on-going observations and documentation of children's activities, and completing the developmental checklists.

## Content/Units of Study

Subtopics provided are examples of content that may be covered in each unit of study. Teachers may select other subtopics based on interest and age levels of children.

September:	<u>All About Me</u> : feelings, interests, the five senses, self-awareness, school happenings, apples (special event: Grandparent's Day)
October:	<u>Fall Fun</u> : leaves, pumpkins, weather changes, community helpers, fire safety, dress-up fun (special event: Fall Festival)
November:	<u>Families Together</u> : harvest, special foods, nutrition (special event: Thanksgiving)
December:	<u>Celebrate!</u> : holidays at home, holidays around the world (special events: Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa)
January:	<u>Winter Wonders</u> : winter science activities, cold weather animals, winter sports and activities (special events: New Year's Day, MLK Jr. Birthday)
February:	<u>Friends Forever</u> : character counts, sharing and caring (special events: Valentine's Day, President's Day)
March:	<u>Going Places</u> : transportation, travel, geography (mountains, rivers)
April:	<u>Plant Power</u> : flowers, gardens, trees (special events: Easter, Arbor Day )
May:	<u>Amazing Animals</u> : farm, animals from Africa, animals from Australia, birds, ocean animals (special events: Mother's Day, Memorial Day )

Summer Curriculum — Nature-al Learning

A brochure is distributed during summer registration in January.

Multicultural Focus Throughout the Year: Kenya

Throughout the year children correspond with children in Kenya in order to learn about Kenya's culture including food, dress, work, and animal life. Items from Kenya are displayed throughout the building.

## Schedule of Operation

### General Hours

Educare is open Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m.—6:30 p.m. year-round except for holidays, in-service days and emergency closings.

### Holidays

Educare will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

If the holiday falls on Saturday, Educare will be closed on the prior Friday.

If the holiday falls on Sunday, Educare will be closed on the following Monday. Educare will close one-hour early (5:30 p.m.) on Thanksgiving Eve, Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve.

### In-service Days

In order to ensure quality programs for children, staff are required to attend in-service days to complete required training and make changes to the classroom. On the following days, Educare will be closed to children:

- Program Preparation: The Friday before Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) begin
- Fall In-service: Fall FCPS Training Day (after public schools conferences)
- Winter In-service: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Spring In-service: Good Friday
- Summer Preparation: The day after FCPS are closed for summer

(Specific dates are subject to changes made to the FCPS schedule.)

### Emergency Closings

Educare makes every effort to stay open for scheduled program hours.

When it is necessary to close during the day of operation due to weather, emergencies, or world events, parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up children. In the event of inclement weather conditions existing prior to the center's daily opening, parents/guardians may contact the center or check the website for information regarding closure or delays.

## Required Enrollment Information

The following completed forms must be submitted before a child attends the program:

- Enrollment Agreement
- Registration Form
- Parent Photo Release Form
- Immunization Records
- Emergency Card
- “All About My Child” form
- Signature Page of the Parent’s Guide to Regulated Child Care
- Registration Fee (non-refundable) and Deposit (only refundable with a one-month withdrawal notice)
- \$500.00 Pre-paid Tuition (Required for all children enrolling more than one month prior to attending.)

NOTE: A Parent/Guardian Orientation with Educare administration is provided within the first two weeks of enrollment.

## Tuition Policy (A fee schedule is available upon request.)

Tuition is paid on a year-round basis on a bi-weekly or monthly schedule depending on the parent/guardians’ preferences and is indicated on the registration form. Bi-weekly tuition is due on the first Monday of the two-week schedule. Monthly tuition is due the first day of the month. A two-week written notice is required to change a child’s schedule. A one-month written notice is required to withdraw a child. Families receive a \$50.00 credit for referring a child who enrolls in Educare (to be paid after one month of attendance).

Payments are deposited in the tuition box located by the front desk. Payment is due on time regardless of vacation, illness, or holidays. A \$10.00 late fee is assessed for any bi-weekly tuition payments not received by Wednesday of the week payment is due. For parents paying monthly, payments must be received by the fifth of the month to avoid a late fee. The returned check fee is \$25.00. Termination of child care may result when an account is over 4 weeks past due. Exceptions to the tuition policy will be made only if payment arrangements are secured with the office manager regarding past due accounts.

Families receiving P.O.C. are required to make payments as designated at the time of registration. When vouchers expire, parents/guardians have 5 days to turn in the new vouchers or they are responsible for paying the full tuition. When necessary, Educare will credit the account once vouchers have been received.

## Specials

Music and art classes are integral parts of the core day curriculum throughout the school year for infants-preschool. A special summer program extends the art class through school-age.

Second Step, a pro-social skills program, is enacted in toddlers through preschool-age classrooms. Twenty mini-lessons focusing on empathy, anger management, and problem-solving are provided throughout the school year.

Food Groupies, a nutrition awareness program, provide toddlers through preschool with information and experience with the food pyramid and healthy choices for snacks and meals. A series of videos and mini-discussions support healthy development.

## Extended Day Focus

As an enhancement of our core-day program, curriculum for late afternoons for toddlers through pre-school focus on literature. Activities include book readings, dramatic re-enactments, art projects, storytelling, book-making, and games related to topics in selected books.

## Assessment/Conferences

On-going observations and documentation of children’s activities enacted by staff help to show evidence of growth and development over time. As part of the curriculum, examples of children’s work are stored in student portfolios and shared with parents/guardians during one-on-one conferences held in the Fall and Spring.

## School-age Program Curriculum

The school-age curriculum follows the Center-wide Units of Study (see page 8). The schedule provides daily quiet time to complete homework assignments and outdoor time to re-energize after a long day in the classroom. Weekly lesson plans are posted describing daily projects and special events school-age children experience at Educare. Summer programs provide full-day care and learning at a pace that gives school-age children the feel of “summer break” while participating in planned, exciting summer activities.

## Guidance Practices

### Appropriate Behavior

The goal of all guidance at Educare is teaching and supporting appropriate behavior. This is accomplished through setting clearly defined limits in a non-threatening manner. Rules/guidelines for children's behavior are posted in each classroom and supported each day by teachers through reminders to children. Working with parents/guardians as partners, difficult behaviors are addressed through establishing similar behavior guidelines. Such a partnership helps children feel more secure in home and school environments.

Another goal reached through positive guidance practices is helping children develop a positive self-image. We encourage children to be self-directed and exhibit self-control appropriate for each age. A sense of order is established throughout the day through close supervision focusing on redirection and logical consequences.

### Aggressive Acts Policy

Children who exhibit continuous aggressive behavior toward staff or children that is not developmentally appropriate will be addressed in the following manner:

1. Parents/guardians will be contacted regarding aggressive behavior and a plan for changing the behavior will be developed which may include intervention services by a specialist with the permission/support of parent/guardians.
2. Staff, specialists, and parents/guardians will enact the plan for a period of one month ending in a progress report. If progress is made, behavior will be monitored and periodic staff-parent/guardian conferences may be held.
3. If the aggressive behavior continues, weekly conferences will be held to continually assess the situation. If progress is unacceptable or injury of a serious nature occurs, termination may result.

Parent/guardians who exhibit aggressive behavior toward program personnel, children, or family members will no longer be allowed on the property. Other family members will be allowed to continue to participate in all program activities.

## Parent/Guardian Participation

Educare is committed to working with families. Parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in every aspect of their child's program. Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the center at any time. Parents/guardians are invited to share personal interests including hobbies, talents, and cultural backgrounds.

Parent/guardian-teacher communications are promoted through daily conversations, phone calls, Educare e-mail, or written information. Parents/guardians are asked to share any information regarding children's development or experiences from home that may affect a child's experience at Educare.

A Parent/Guardian Bulletin Board, located by the front desk, contains information of interest to families. Brochures regarding community agencies and programs are available at the front desk area.

The program provides special activities throughout the year. Parent/guardian workshops are provided throughout the year for families on topics relating to promoting positive development in children. (Childcare is provided for a fee of \$5.00 per child and pre-registration is required.)

The Educare Family Association (EFA) provides an additional opportunity for families to network informally with each other. The EFA meets monthly to plan special events for children and families. All parents/guardians are invited to participate. Special events planned throughout the year include family festivals, fund-raising activities, Parent's Nights Out, and picnics.

Educare's website, [www.educatewithcare.com](http://www.educatewithcare.com), provides families with continual updates and information about the program. Families may sign up to receive updates and announcements via email by contacting [educare@educatewithcare.com](mailto:educare@educatewithcare.com).