



Family Handbook

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Welcome to Ages & Stages Child Development Center! We are pleased to have you join our center family. We are dedicated to providing the highest quality of learning programs for young children. We look forward to learning and growing with you and your family!

Our Mission:

At Ages & Stages we recognize that every child is unique and develops at his/her own pace. We embrace this principle and strive to provide an education for the “whole” child. We understand that effective teaching includes attention to the social, emotional and cognitive needs of children and their families. Our center strives to create a positive environment where staff, children and families grow and learn together. At Ages & Stages our highly qualified staff will provide an environment that is both safe and conducive to learning. Our staff is dedicated to the families we serve, providing support and encouragement as they watch their children blossom.

Our Philosophy:

Ages & Stages Child Development Center believes in the education and development of the “whole” child. We understand that effective teaching includes attention to the social, emotional and cognitive needs of children and their families. Our staff fosters equal opportunity in learning and education for all children regardless of race, creed, gender, religion, national origin, or physical condition. Our teachers strive to create a classroom environment where all students feel comfortable and welcome, a safe place where they can succeed both academically and personally. At Ages & Stages we are always continuing our own education; our staff is required to attend professional development workshops and training conferences to ensure that we are keeping up with today’s educational and developmental standards.

Our environment supports the curiosity and space for the exploration that children need to develop and grow. We believe that children learn through their experiences of touching, moving, listening, and observing. At Ages & Stages our students are given room to explore and engage their imaginations. Our staff provides students with guided structured activities as well as unstructured play time to balance the learning atmosphere. Throughout the day a child can expect to be exposed to many different activities that challenge and support a healthy development.

Here at Ages & Stages we see ourselves as partners in the development of each of our family’s children. We encourage parents to be involved in their child’s development and education. We look to parental involvement as we work together to develop and nurture a positive attitude toward school and learning. Our center aims to provide opportunities for our staff and families to join together on daily issues and concerns.

A little About Us:

Ages & Stages aims to provide an exciting, nurturing, learning environment that will challenge every individual child according to his/her developmental level. Our staff's goal is to develop the total child, socially, cognitively, and physically through guided hands on exploration as well as individual imagination driven play. Each day provides a new chance for us to engage and excite your child's imagination and help develop a love of learning.

Our hope is to continue the tradition of early learning which began over 25 years ago here in Hampstead. While physical changes have occurred over the past 25 years, developing young minds at their own pace has remained a constant. The Loffredo family is committed to providing the greater Hampstead community with a safe, professional, and affordable early learning experience.

About the Owners and Director:

Ages & Stages was established in 1984 by Mary Loffredo. In 2007 her son David and daughter-in-law Lynly took over for her and purchased the school. Lynly took on the Director's role in 2013 after previously serving in an administrative and substitute role. Lynly holds a degree in Psychology as well as a Master's in Social Work. Brainstorming with parents on behavioral issues and concerns is one of her favorite perks of the job! Lynly and David fill their off time with their four children and their various activities and sports.

Ratios and Our Class Sizes:

Our center abides by NH's Child Care Licensing regulations which are as followed:

Infant 1:4

Max class size- 9

Toddler one 1:5

Max class size- 10

Advanced Toddler 1:6

Max class size- 12

Preschool 1:8

Max class size- 18

Pre-K 1:12

Max class size- 20

Curriculum:

All of our curriculums are planned according to optimizing a child's development within any given age group. We feel that the challenges inherent in our programs prepare each child well for whatever presents in his/her future. Our daily activities provide a mix of social, physical, and cognitive challenges that encourage the children to push themselves but not to overwhelm them. There is time built into every day for free play and exploration; a time important for practicing social skills and independent thinking. A child is happiest when well-rounded and loved.

Infants:

Infants are welcomed into a warm, safe, loving environment. Our infant room is a shoe-free zone to create a clean and safe area for infants to express themselves as they learn to roll and crawl. Every day will be spent eating, sleeping and growing! Tummy time, mirror play, sign language, stories, sensory play and jolly jumper exercise time are all part of daily activities. We take nap time very seriously; during resting times the lights are dimmed and soft music played in the background to help create a soothing environment. Toys are sanitized as they are used to help stop the spread of germs. We will provide all the necessary bedding for your infant which will then be washed on a weekly basis. Parents are responsible for food, bottles, and formula/breast milk but we will provide all necessary bibs, cloths, and utensils. We work with every parent to protect individual schedules. Caring for your infant is our privilege; we expect and invite your input and expertise. Our infant room is equipped with a refrigerator to store daily meals and breast milk. We will only use a crock pot to heat bottles. You will be asked to take home any bottles used during the day and return them to us clean. All formula and baby food must be brought in to us unopened. Every day a daily sheet will be sent home with you detailing your infant's day. Eating, diapering, and sleeping will be clearly defined for you.

Toddler Ones/Advanced Toddlers:

In order for your infant to move up to our toddler programs, he/she must be actively mobile, ready to assume more of a scheduled day (naps and eating), enjoy outside play and require less 1:1 assistance with regard to eating and sleeping. The move up to our toddler room will be gradual to insure a smooth transition.

Our toddlers experience a great deal more freedom with regard to exploration. They are able to amble about and begin to experience how independent they are becoming. The play areas are set up and changed frequently to insure a challenging and exciting environment. Our youngest toddlers are learning to wait their turns, use utensils, and to sit and focus for a small period of time to engage in a teacher directed activity. Songs

and constant verbal attention are important in this stage as speech development is rapidly taking place. Daily sheets are also sent home in these age groups to answer any questions that may arise about eating, sleeping and diapering. Once potty training has begun at home, we will work with you to keep a consistent pattern and schedule. Movement from the toddler room to the advanced toddler room is based on the child's developmental gains as they relate to our toddler population. Typically, the advanced toddler is expected to have mastered independent feeding, able to sit for a short period of time and able to express his/her needs verbally. Our toddler crafts and activities are reflective of the monthly themes outlined in the curriculum. Independence is stressed as well as sharing, cooperation and respect.

Preschool:

Our preschool children are typically three years of age prior to Sept 30th. Each day has large blocks of time for free-play as well as structured activities. Social interaction and learning through play is strongly encouraged. Each day begins with circle time followed by snack and teacher directed activities. Our outdoor play yard is the perfect place to explore outside and engage in physical activity to really wake up the senses. Dramatic play and art areas, as well as books and learning games are always available for independent learning. Song and dance is a great alternative to "desk learning" and is used on a daily basis. Kids Zumba and Shawn the Storyteller are also a component of our pre-school curriculum. Monthly calendars are sent home to alert parents to special days like bike and pajama day. The curriculum is based around monthly themes. The students in the pre-school are working toward independence in putting their coats and boots on and off, putting their dishes away and cleaning up after play or activity. Through self-directed as well as teacher directed activities strong emphasis is placed on fine and gross motor development. It is truly amazing to watch the progress from September to June in this classroom!

*Progress reports will be sent home in January and Report cards in June. A portfolio will also be given at the end of the school year.

Pre-K

Our pre-kindergarten children are typically 4 prior to September 30th. These children are ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work! Our priority in this classroom is to properly prepare these students for kindergarten but not forgetting to instill a love of learning along the way. Each child is pushed to his/her potential in a friendly, nurturing way that asks the child to challenge him/herself but not to overwhelm. Through language arts, math, science, music and technology we are able to provide an excellent blend of the necessary tools for kindergarten. From group time all the way to class dismissal children are learning at their own pace. The size of our play yard provides ample opportunity to release some energy in a safe environment. Hands on learning can also be found outside of the classroom in our beautiful pre-k garden. Children learn how to grow their own plants from seed and what it takes to cultivate a garden. They also learn about composting and recycling. In Pre-k we follow the Get Set for School Curriculum which was created by Learning without Tears and have found great success in this program. We believe in play-based, hands on, multisensory learning and this program provides that.

"Get Set for School is a flexible, play-based curriculum that offers a full pre-writing program and materials that build critical skills like early math and literacy. It includes three programs designed to prepare children for school: Readiness & Writing, Language & Literacy, and Numbers & Math." -LWT



*Progress reports will be sent home in January and Report cards in June. A portfolio will also be given at the end of the school year.

Kindergarten Enrichment:

We welcome students before or after their public school kindergarten day. We are conveniently located and able to accept children off of the Hampstead Central school bus. These children will join with the pre-k class in the afternoon for outdoor play and a structured afternoon activity. Emphasis is on appropriate social interactions as well as independent learning through dramatic play, reading and math games.

Enrollment/Tuition:

1. Tuition fees are due and payable by Friday of each week for the following week of childcare. If paying monthly your fee is due and payable on the first of each month.
2. Monthly payments must be received by the 15th to avoid late fees. A 10% late fee will be added to your child's tuition for each day it is late. Please indicate in the memo field of your tuition check the dates/weeks you are paying for.
3. Parents will be notified of any change in tuition within four (4) weeks of the change.
4. Upon enrolling a child, a registration fee is due in full. This payment will guarantee your child's enrollment in the center.
5. Parents must give a four (4) week notice in writing about any reduction in their child's schedule. In addition, Ages & Stages cannot guarantee that once a child's schedule changes from full-time to part-time, a full-time schedule will be available in the future. Tuition will be reduced to the new tuition rate four (4) weeks after notice.
6. Ages & Stages' programs run for 50 weeks. Tuition must continue to be paid regardless of absence for any reason, including absences due to illness, vacation, holiday, or summer break, in order to reserve your child's enrollment in the center.
7. A Re-registration Fee of \$50.00 per family is due ANNUALLY, and subject to change. If a child has been withdrawn from the program and re-enrolls, a new registration fee of \$50.00 is due at that time. All registration fees are nonrefundable.
8. A \$10.00 fee will be charged for all returned checks. If this occurs, Ages & Stages will then have the option to refuse any future checks.
9. If a family has multiple children enrolled full time in the center, a 20% tuition discount will be granted on the oldest child. Full time to mean 5 full days a week.

Tuition: Delinquent Payments

When a payment is delinquent for two (2) weeks, the child's enrollment space can no longer be reserved for your child, and your child cannot attend Ages & Stages.

Tuitions: Withdrawals

In the event of withdrawal of the child from Ages & Stages, Ages & Stages must be given a four (4) week prior notice to withdrawal. If proper notice is not given, the parent agrees to pay any fees or tuition that may be due during the four (4) week period.

Parental Involvement:

We encourage parents to be involved in their child's early childhood education. Parents are welcome to visit and volunteer at any time. Parents may be asked to share a special talent or interest with the children. However, if the visit interferes with the classroom goals, a parent may be asked to leave.

We look forward to maintaining open and honest communication between director, staff, parents, and students. Please address any concerns of your child's progress to your child's teacher. In the interest of the supervision of all the children, please do not use class time to meet with teachers, but schedule an appointment during free time to discuss your concerns. Any financial concerns or complaints must be addressed to the director.

Parental attitudes on or off Ages & Stages' premises, which interfere with the implementation or the philosophical goals or objectives of Ages & Stages may lead to dismissal of your child from the center.

Classroom Schedules:

Every classroom has a parent bulletin board where you will find classroom happenings as well as what to expect during a typical day in that classroom. Newsletters and monthly calendars are also sent home to keep you updated on what is going on.

Holidays/Birthdays:

Holidays and Birthdays are recognized by the Center. Teachers will consult with parents to see how they wish to have their child's birthday handled in the classroom. Holidays are recognized by their cultural themes as opposed to religious background.

Hours of Operation/ Holiday Closures:

Ages & Stages is open from 6:30am – 6:00pm, Monday-Friday. Ages & Stages is closed for certain holidays. Those holidays will be posted on the parent boards and can also be found on our website. Hours and Holidays are updated annually, but may be changed anytime with 30 days' notice. A full school calendar is posted online at www.agesandstageslc.com.

Inclement Weather:

Ages & Stages will be open whenever possible on a regularly scheduled day, during normal hours. In the event of severe weather conditions, Ages & Stages will post their hours of operation for the day on channel 9 WMUR TV, or online at www.WMUR.com. In the event of severe weather condition or if NH has been declared a State of Emergency, Ages & Stages will close for the day. Should it become necessary to close early due to severe weather or any other unsafe condition, it will be the parent's

responsibility to arrange for the child to be picked up early. *If the center is forced to close early or unable to open due to conditions beyond our control, full tuition payment is still expected.*

Arrival/Departure:

1. To ensure that each child is safe and under supervision at all times and to foster communication between parents and teachers on a daily basis, parents must accompany their children into their classroom and ensure that the children are under supervision before leaving the premises.
2. Parents must re-enter the building when picking up their children. All children, including not enrolled siblings, are the responsibility of the parents while the parent is in the center.
3. Be sure to say good-bye to your child's teachers so they know you are leaving. Once you have reunited with your child and are departing, Ages & Stages is no longer responsible for your child. For safety reasons, please do not let your child run ahead of you inside or outside of the building.
4. Because our teachers work a long day, and it is not fair to make them stay after hours, please allow enough time to gracefully leave the center before closing time. A Late Pickup Fee of \$1.00 per child per minute is payable for each minute the child is in the center after 6:00pm. This fee is subject to change. It can be distressing for children to be left in the center after hours. Late Pickup is not a normal program option and should be considered an exceptional occurrence
5. Children will be released only to a parent or parent authorized persons whose names are listed on the Child Emergency Form. Therefore, in order to provide for emergency situations that prevent you from picking up your child, be certain to include those individuals who you would authorize in such events. Parents should advise the director in writing, in advance, if a person not listed on the original form is to pick up the child. Identification will be requested of these authorized persons picking up the child.

*Most children go through periods of difficulty with separating from their parent(s). This is common and developmentally appropriate. Try these tips for a successful drop-off:

-Establish a regular, predictable routine. Whether you have a kiss and a hug and go, or help your child put his things in his cubby first, do it the same way every day. What often makes separating stressful for children is the uncertainty. If your child can predict what will happen, the separation won't be as difficult.

-Separate once. If you come back into the classroom again and again, it will increase your child's stress. Remember the moment of separation is the worst part for your child, so doing it more than once makes it more stressful for your child.

-Be reliable. Return when promised. Children who are picked up later than expected may have more difficulties separating. Phrase time in terms your child will understand. For example, you will be back after snack time or before nap time.

Attendance:

1. Regular attendance is expected if we are to provide your child with a quality educational and social experience. If your child is ill, or you elect not to send your child to school, please call the center to inform us.
2. In order to achieve maximum benefit of our curriculum we ask that children be dropped off at the center by 9am. Partial day children should be picked up by 12pm. Each classroom has a posting on their parent board of the day's routine.

Medical Policies

1. For children's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion, parents must pick up their sick child immediately after notification (within at least 45 minutes.) Children absent due to a reportable disease may return only with a physician's note indicating that the child is no longer contagious. (See Ages & Stages Health Policy Form). We ask that children be without a fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to the center.
2. Children must have current medical and immunization records prior to enrollment, and these records must be updated annually. Children without current medical records cannot attend the center
3. In the event of an emergency Ages & Stages seeks parental permission to administer First Aid or to obtain emergency medical treatment in the child's best interest. (See Child Registration & Emergency Information Form).
4. Prescription medications can only be administered when accompanied by written authorization from the parent and the written order of a licensed health practitioner. Medication must be in its original container with full instructions on the label.
5. Non-prescriptive medications can only be administered to a child when the medication is accompanied by written authorization from the parents. Non-prescriptive medication shall be administered in accordance with the instructions printed by the manufacturer or in accordance with the written order of a licensed health practitioner.
6. Medications shall not be administered beyond the expiration date.
7. Parents must fill out a Medication Form in order for any medications to be administered at the center.

8. An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child with special health care needs (seizures, etc). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the classroom emergency binder. All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's specific health care needs.

Head Lice:

We ask that you please inform the school if your child has head lice. Children must be treated for head lice before returning to school. We ask that you please keep your child home for at least 24/hours after treatment has begun.

These are some common symptoms of head lice infestation:

- Feeling movement and tickling in the hair.
- Trouble sleeping and irritability.
- Itching that can result from an allergic reaction to lice bites.
- Sores on the head, which can be caused by excessive scratching.

Facts: https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/gen_info/faqs.html

Treatment Guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/treatment.html>

"Do not use a combination shampoo/conditioner or conditioner before using lice medicine. Do not re-wash the hair for 1–2 days after the lice medicine is removed. "

Handwashing:

Frequent hand washing with soap and warm, running water is the most effective way to reduce and prevent the spread of illnesses commonly found in childcares such as the flu, diarrhea, and pink eye. Parents are encouraged to assist their child in the hand washing process upon arrival. Other times your child (and staff members) will be expected to wash their hands:

- After each diaper change or using the toilet
- Before and after meal times
- Before and after administering medication
- After handling bodily fluids (mucus, blood vomit)
- Before and after using the sensory table
- After coming indoors from the playground
- After handling pets and other animals
- After cleaning or handling garbage
- After outdoor play time

Warm, running water (no colder than 60 degrees F) and soap must be used. Hands must be rubbed vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including the backs of hands, between fingers, under nails, and under any jewelry. A disposable paper towel should be used to dry hands and turn off faucet. Help reinforce the importance of hand washing by encouraging frequent hand washing at home as well.

Food/Nutrition:

All children, including Infants once they start eating solid foods, bring their lunch and at least two snacks each day (unless in half day program.) Each classroom is equipped with a refrigerator and microwave for foods that need to be refrigerated or warmed.

As we wish to encourage sound nutrition, we ask that parents send lunches and snacks that are well balanced. This includes grains/breads, protein and/or dairy, and fruits and/or vegetables. *For more information on food and nutrition:*

<https://www.nutrition.gov/subject/life-stages/children/food-nutrition>

Nap/Rest Time:

Full day children will have an afternoon rest time of at least 30 minutes, as required by State Law. We provide a mat, blanket, and pillow for each student. These items are washed at the end of each week. If you wish to provide your child with their own blanket and pillow you may do so. The rest time materials you provide must be taken home at the end of each school week and washed.

Outdoor Play:

Children will play outdoors on the playground daily, as part of our regular program, except during inclement weather. Please dress children appropriately. We love to play and explore outside!

Clothing:

All children must have a change of clothing left in the center to be used as needed. All clothing must be labeled with the child's name. Ages & Stages is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing. Since all children play outside and engage in messy activities, children should wear comfortable and easily washable clothes.

Toys/Electronics from Home:

Please do not send your child to Ages & Stages with any toys or videos. Our programs encourage positive play with children, toy weapons or guns are not allowed. Ages & Stages is not responsible for lost or damaged items brought from home.

Videos/Photography/Social Media

Photographs and videos of the children participating in our programs may be taken from time-to-time and may appear on the bulletin boards, in newspapers, magazines, brochures or other publicity materials. We often post pictures of the children engaged in activities on social media such as our Facebook page. Children are never identified by name. If this is objectionable to you please let us know.

Inclusion:

Applications for enrollment are acted upon without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, political beliefs, marital status, disability, or special needs.

Privacy:

Confidentiality is a top priority for Ages & Stages. Personal information of families and staff will not be shared for any reason without prior written consent of the individual. When discussing a child's activities and friends in the classroom, only first names will be used. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Accident Reports, names of children involved will never be given to families.

Our Behavior Guidance Approach

If Ages & Stages has concerns that a child's developmental needs are not being appropriately met in the daily program, every effort will be made to involve the parents in the process of identifying the problem and working toward possible solutions. A list of outside agencies and behavioral consultants are available if necessary. Once modifications and possible solutions are put into place, staff will regularly communicate with parents/caregivers as to progress or lack thereof.

When safety concerns are present and another staff member needs to be added to the room as a 1:1 assistant for the identified child, the parent/caregiver will bear the cost of this service.

If after reasonable and appropriate interventions have been tried, and it is determined by Ages & Stages that the program is not in the best interest of the child, Ages & Stages reserves the right to request that the child be withdrawn. In such cases, parents will be given notice of withdrawal, which will document action taken prior to termination, as well as reasons for termination. Ages & Stages will offer to assist the family in locating appropriate care. Implementation of withdrawal procedures will be affected in the time frame Ages & Stages believes appropriate.

Aggressive Behavior:

Ages and Stages recognizes that aggressive behavior can be a normal part of children's development. All children are helped to channel their aggressive urges and develop appropriate ways of getting their needs met. When a child is presenting a threat to other children in the classroom due to behavior including but not limited to, biting, scratching or pinching, staff will develop a behavior plan with parents' input in hopes of stopping the behavior. If after reasonable and appropriate interventions have been tried, and it is determined by Ages & Stages that the program is not in the best interest of the child, Ages & Stages reserves the right to request that the child be withdrawn. In such cases, parents will be given notice of withdrawal, which will document action taken prior to termination, as well as reasons for termination. Ages & Stages will offer to assist the

family in locating appropriate care. Implementation of withdrawal procedures will be affected in the time frame Ages & Stages believes appropriate.

Accidents/Injuries:

1. Teachers will document all accidents and injuries. Parents must sign the report upon pick up time. Parents will always be notified for any serious injury. Ages & Stages does not offer medical or liability insurance to the children and families in attendance. Our liability coverage extends to staff, the business and the building.
2. Ages & Stages carries an accident and liability policy covering the Center and employees. We do not offer accident and/or medical insurance to our students.

Reporting Abuse/Neglect Policy:

The State of NH requires that all members of our institution be on the lookout for, and report to the State any and all cases of abuse or neglect to a child. If a child discloses information to a staff member of inappropriate behavior toward him/her the information WILL be reported to DCYF. Parent(s) will be notified of any such report.

Fire/Emergency Drills

Ages & Stages conducts monthly fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe-zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the director or designate will inform each classroom teacher that the school will be closing. At this time any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation. As with the sick child pick up policy, children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call.

Parents wishing to sign their child out of the program during a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation are expected to have patience with the staff as they are trying to maintain order during an often hectic and dangerous situation. If the center is in the midst of a fire/emergency drill, parents will be required to wait until the drill is completed and the staff and children are returned to the building to sign their child out of the program. If the center is having a real fire/emergency situation, parents will be asked to wait until the director or designee has accounted for all staff and children and gives the staff permission to release children. Once again, it is important for parents and staff to work together, remain calm, and cooperate with the fire/emergency personnel and center administration during these important and critical situations.

Sign and Return Parental Agreement:

This Parent Agreement is subject to change in whole or part by Ages & Stages with a three (3) week notice. Please sign and return the following page of the handbook. By signing below and returning this page to the office of Ages & Stages you are agreeing to all the policies stated in the Parent Contract and Handbook. These policies and more can also be found on our website at www.agesandstageslc.com

Director's Signature Date

Parent's Signature Date

Date of Admission:

We thank you for choosing our center
and look forward to learning and growing with you!

Sincerely,
Ages & Stages Child Development Center