



Parent Handbook on Center Policies & Procedures

Parents are responsible for maintaining a current copy of the center policies, found on our website, www.expectmorechildcare.com.

Printed copies are available at the center, upon request.

Welcome to Great Expectations Child Care Center, Inc! We are happy that you have chosen us to care for your child. We hope that this handbook will help introduce you to Great Expectations and answer many of the questions that you are sure to have.

At Great Expectations, our mission is to provide child care that meets the needs of both the child and family in a safe, educational environment. We pride our center's focus on the developmental needs of each individual child, while providing quality, reliable and affordable child care, and building meaningful, healthy relationships.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Great Expectations Child Care Center, Inc. offers the opportunity for each child to develop physically, socially, and cognitively according to his or her individual learning style. Each child is considered unique in temperament and rate of development. Curriculum is planned to enhance and challenge particular, distinct individual needs, interests, and abilities. Activities and relationships occur in a healthy, positive and relaxed environment, in which well-qualified staff provide personal attention, guidance and nurturing to each child.

Great Expectations strives to maintain continuity and consistency throughout its program by conducting cooperative staff planning, training, and a variety of joint activities involving the various groups of children. In this context, all caregivers at the center are encouraged to express their individual educational strengths as they work with children and in their cooperative efforts with other staff members.

The goals of Great Expectations are:

- To provide affordable, convenient, dependable child care services
- To create a child care setting for social, cognitive, and physical development
- To provide a nurturing environment, fostering the development of healthy relationships
- To provide learning experiences for our children
- To provide a preschool program, readying children for lifelong learning

OUR CORE VALUES ARE GREAT!

Growth
Respect
Excellence
Adventure
Teamwork

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

Great Expectations Child Care Center, Inc. is open year round, Monday through Friday, from 7:00am to 5:30pm.

HOLIDAYS, SCHEDULED CLOSINGS & ADJUSTED HOURS

Please note that Great Expectations will be closed or have adjusted hours on the following days:

2026

08/27: Last day of care for children attending alternative preschools, UPKs, entering Kindergarten

08/28: Staff Professional Development Day, Center Closed

09/07: Labor Day, Center Closed

11/26 & 11/27: Thanksgiving Recess, Center Closed

12/24: Christmas Eve, Adjusted Hours of Operation, 7:00am-3:30pm

12/25: Christmas Day, Center Closed

12/31: New Year's Eve, Adjusted Hours of Operation, 7:00am-3:30pm

2027

01/01: New Year's Day, Center Closed

02/15: Staff Professional Development Day, Center Closed

03/26: Good Friday, Adjusted Hours of Operation, 7:00am-3:30pm

03/29: Easter Monday, Center Closed

05/31: Memorial Day, Center Closed

07/05: Independence Day Celebrated, Center Closed

08/TBD: Last day of care for children attending alternative preschools, UPKs, entering Kindergarten

08/TBD: Staff Professional Development Day, Center Closed

Regular tuition charges will still apply for these days, as the center has ongoing expenses.

Great Expectations reserves the right to adjust regularly scheduled hours of operation, or close, due to low enrollment. Prior notification will be given if such instances occur, and regular tuition charges will still apply.

ENROLLMENT & TUITION PAYMENTS

At the time of enrollment, a non-refundable enrollment fee of \$50, along with a tuition deposit of two weeks tuition (which is non-interest bearing) is due. This tuition deposit is refundable upon withdrawing your child if proper notice is given. Prior to your child starting, the first week's tuition is also due.

Additionally, the following forms must be completed to enroll your child at Great Expectations:

- Application for Enrollment
- Medical Statement of Child in Child Care/ Immunization Card
- Signed Tuition Agreement
- Simple First-Aid/ Sunscreen Authorization
- **Child and Adult Food Care Program Income sheet**
- Infant Feeding Schedule (if applicable)
- Tuition Express ACH Application

If you decide not to begin enrollment, your registration fee and tuition deposit will not be refunded.

Tuition accounts will be billed on a monthly or biweekly cycle regardless of your child's attendance within the program and will continue each week until you give notice of withdrawal. (see WITHDRAWAL)

Great Expectations requires enrollment into ACH auto withdrawal which will allow the center to automatically debit funds from your checking or savings account.

Tuition payments can be made bi-weekly or monthly. Tuition must be prepaid for the following weeks of care. Any payments made for future care are non-refundable. If you have prepaid any portion of future tuition and decide to withdraw your child from care, any prepayment in excess of 2 weeks will be forfeited.

A \$30.00 fee will be charged for any returned check or non-sufficient funds transaction. After 3 occurrences of a check being returned or non-sufficient ACH funds, payments must be made by money order, cash or cashier's check.

After Hours Fee: The center closes at 5:30pm sharp, unless otherwise indicated due to adjusted holiday hours. As a courtesy to our staff, parents should arrive at least 10 minutes prior to closing so that staff can gather your child's belongings and discuss your child's day prior to closing the center. Whenever possible, in cases of emergencies causing late pick-up, the center must be notified by phone as soon as possible. If your child is not picked up by 5:30 pm a fee of \$25 will be assessed per child. You will additionally be charged \$1 per minute, per child, according to the Center's clock.

Extended Hours Fee: Great Expectations can care for your child for no more than 10 hours each day. Once your child has been at the center for 10 hours, you will be assessed a \$10.00 fee. For every 5 minutes thereafter, you will be assessed a \$2.00 fee. These fees will be added on to your next Tuition Statement.

Special Provisions Fee: When circumstances require special diets, equipment or staffing, there will be additional charges. This will be discussed with parents before implementation.

In order to conserve paper, all statements and primary correspondences will be emailed so please make sure you have a current email address on file.

Please note that all rate changes due to a child's birthday will take effect on the Monday of the next billing cycle following the child's birth date.

End of year tax statements will be available for accounts that are up to date.

Low-income child care assistance is available to employed families who earn 300 percent or less of the Federal Poverty Level. Parents contribute toward the cost of care based on a sliding income scale. Please visit <https://www3.erie.gov/socialservices/day-care> for additional assistance.

ERIE COUNTY DAYCARE ASSISTANCE/ SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Our Center accepts child care subsidy payments through Erie County Department of Social Services (DSS) for families who qualify for assistance. Families receiving DSS child care assistance are responsible for understanding and following all DSS requirements regarding their approved child care arrangement, including the authorized number of days and hours of care.

In addition, you will be responsible for any tuition and fees that are not covered by Erie County DSS. This may include, but is not limited to:

- The difference between the DSS reimbursement rate and the tuition rate charged to private-pay families.
- Charges resulting from excessive absences.
- Center closures that are not indicated as Federal holidays.
- Staff development days.
- Use of care in excess of the number of days or hours approved by DSS.
- Any other tuition, fees, or charges for which a private-pay family would be billed.

These costs will be billed to your account once the DSS reimbursement has been received and your account has been reconciled. This typically occurs within **three weeks after the end of the month** in which care was provided.

Parents and guardians are responsible for promptly reviewing their account and paying any balance that is not covered by DSS. Failure to pay outstanding balances may result in restrictions or termination of child care services in accordance with the Center's payment policies.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND SCHEDULES

All parents are required to make verbal contact with a staff person upon arrival and departure to assure that the transfer of responsibility for the child has taken place. Attendance will be monitored as part of compliance to NYS regulations, as well as to determine compliance with enrollment contracts.

Full-time enrollment is defined as 5 full days per week. Part-time contracts will be for specific days and times and may be for 2 or 3 days. Part-time contracts will only be offered in such circumstances that it does not create an enrollment vacancy to do so.

Staff schedules are based directly upon the indicated pick-up and drop-off times of each child. Therefore, it is imperative that you notify the Director if your child will be arriving before, or leaving well after the times you have indicated for your child at the time of enrollment. Advance notice of early drop-off or late pick-up will help Great Expectations ensure appropriate staffing. Please make sure that you are arriving no later than 5:20pm to pick your child up from the center. This will allow you to gather their things, touch base with the teachers about their day, avoid any late fees, and will allow our staff to be able to close the building on time at 5:30pm. If you are running late, please give us a call.

The switching of days for a part-time child will not be permitted. For any desired schedule change, three weeks notice must be given to the Director.

The adding of days will be permitted if prior requests to do so are approved by the administration to ensure availability of space and staff. Once space and availability have been confirmed, and tuition charged, you will be responsible for the added day's fee regardless of attendance.

Due to the increased number of children who start in our programs at the beginning of the school year, we will not be able to care for those children who will be leaving GE for Kindergarten or to attend alternative preschool programs past **August TBD, 2027**.

SIBLING DISCOUNT

As of July 1, 2026, our center does not offer a sibling discount.

For those children which have enrolled prior to July 1, 2026, our center will offer a 10% sibling discount which is applied to the oldest child's tuition. Children who are not regularly scheduled and wish to add days on a temporary basis will not receive a sibling discount. The sibling discount will only be offered on the days on which the younger child/ren is enrolled. Please note that we do not discount Infant Tuition under any circumstances.

ABSENCES

Please call or mark your child absent or late via the Tadpoles app by 8:30am. Curriculum activities, as well as staff schedules and food preparation, are based upon the amount of children scheduled each day. If we do not receive a telephone call from you by 9:00am, your child will be marked absent for the day and will not be able to attend.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM REGISTRATION

Children who wish to attend our Preschool programs will need to register for the program each year.

Pre-registration for our currently enrolled families begins early Spring. By enrolling your child for the upcoming school year you are confirming with the center that your child will be in attendance after Labor Day. Open registration for the community will begin late spring for the spaces that have not been filled during preregistration.

In order to enroll your child for either our Preschool Program, please complete the registration form and submit it to the office along with a \$75 non-refundable registration fee by the due date indicated.

Once Great Expectations receives your child's enrollment form and registration fee, we will confirm with you via email that your child's desired schedule has been secured. Please note that schedule changes for currently enrolled children prior to July 1st may influence your child's enrollment for September, as Great Expectations can only hold enrollment spaces for the Fall during the months of July and August. Please see the Leave of Absence policy for more information.

Due to the increased number of children who start in our programs at the beginning of the school year, we will not be able to care for those children who will be leaving GE for Kindergarten or to attend alternative preschool programs past **TBD**. If the need for care arises during this time, please meet with the Director to discuss availability of space after this date.

VACATION DAYS

Vacation days are given to families to use to waive tuition for pre-planned absences. Please submit a vacation day request form at least two weeks before your vacation to receive a tuition credit. Once your tuition account has been billed, a vacation day credit will not be approved.

Vacation days will be disbursed according to the following schedule.

For children who have been enrolled in the program for 6 weeks prior to October 30th the first set of vacation days will be available on November 2nd.

For children who have been enrolled in the program for 6 weeks prior to February 26th an additional set of vacation days will be available on March 1st.

Vacation Day Disbursement Schedule 2026-2027

# of Days enrolled	Vacation Disbursement Date and Quantity	
	11/2/26	3/1/27
5	3	2
3	2	1
2	1	1

Once a vacation day has been submitted, it cannot be withdrawn unless approved by the center director to ensure availability. All vacation days will expire on October 31st.

Vacation days will not be valid during a family's last two weeks of care, even if submitted prior to giving notice of withdrawal.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

Children are able to take up to eight weeks of leave from the center during the months of July and August.

Those children who have registered for our UPK, Preschool and Kinder-Ready Programs who choose to leave the program for July and August do not have to use the LOA policy, as their enrollment space is secured for the Fall with a registration fee and their deposit on file. Tuition will stop beginning July and resume no later than the first day of business in September. All other children will follow the Leave of Absence policy detailed below.

In order to take advantage of a child's leave of absence and guarantee that child's enrollment space, each family will be responsible for partial payment of the vacant portion of their child's spot during a leave of absence. Families will be allowed up to eight weeks of leave from the center spanning over the months of July and August. After the eight weeks have passed, regular tuition charges will apply and families will be required to resume regular tuition payments, regardless of their child's physical return date.

Each family will be required to pay 50% of the tuition for the days to be guaranteed. For example, if your child is full time and you are dropping him/her down to just three days a week, but want to guarantee full time care in the future, you would be required to pay 50% of tuition for two days, over the 8 week leave of absence. Please note that your child's vacation days will be prorated prior to a planned leave of absence and adjusted accordingly after returning to care. Additionally, your child's enrollment spot may be filled with a temporary child until your child's indicated return date.

Your family's tuition deposit charge will also remain on file. If your family was not required to pay a two week tuition deposit when you first enrolled, a two week tuition deposit charge will be required.

If you decide over your child's leave of absence not to return to our program, all deposits, enrollment and registration fees, and tuition charges will not be refunded.

TERMINATION

Great Expectations reserves the right to terminate any child's enrollment at any time. Vacation days will become invalid once the center notifies a family that a child will be terminated from the center. Refund of your child's deposit is at the sole discretion of the owner.

WITHDRAWAL

If you desire to cancel your child's enrollment, you must give **3 weeks written notice** to the Director. Once given notice, your child's tuition deposit charge will be applied to the last weeks of care and any balance due will be processed via ACH. Any remaining balance owed will be given in the form of a check on the child's last day of care.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, every effort will be made to keep the center open. If we must close, we will make every effort to inform you in a timely fashion. The center's voicemail message will be changed and an alert will be scrolled across the news on Channel 2.

In the event of a utility outage or heavy snow removal prior to 6:00am, the opening of the center will be delayed. If the center is still without utility service at 10:00am, the center will remain closed for the day.

In the event of a utility outage during normal hours of business, the center will consider several factors, including weather conditions, when making its decision to close. In such an event, parents will be notified and will be required to pick up their child in a timely fashion.

If the center closes due to the weather or utility outage, regular tuition charges will still apply.

PANDEMIC & NATURAL DISASTER

All tuition policies regarding payment of tuition and fees will remain constant at all times while the center is in operation. This includes times of pandemic and natural disaster. Should the center or an individual classroom be required to temporarily close due to a government agency order and/or directive, tuition will be billed for the first 5 days of closure. After this time frame, tuition will be suspended until the center's ability to provide care can resume. All enrollment spaces will be guaranteed during this time frame. Please follow our withdrawal policies should you decide to disenroll your child during this time. Tuition billing will commence once the center is able to again provide

care. Please note that this policy will be enacted each time the center or an individual classroom must close.

DAILY PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Keeping our families involved with our daily activities has always been a priority of ours. To do this, our center uses an electronic daily classroom communication tool that is called Tadpoles.

The Tadpoles program will allow our teachers to capture special moments, take photos, and videos of the children in action, as well as send you classroom information. You'll get daily reports and notes right in your email or through the Tadpoles application on your smart phone.

Each classroom will be equipped with an iPad mini which will be specifically used for the Tadpoles program. The devices are also locked down so the teachers do not have access to the internet.

We consider all information captured using Tadpoles to be a private communication between our center and our families. No personal information is shared with any external parties, and as a parent, you will only receive information specifically about your child.

We will be using the email address we have on file to communicate via the Tadpoles program, so it is important to keep this current.

EMERGENCY RELOCATION

In the event that we need to evacuate our building and move to a different location, our first relocation site will be the office building located at the most northern edge of the property.

If we are unable to evacuate to this location, all children and staff will be moved via Carrier Coach to our second evacuation site at Liberty Park Senior Living Facility, 10 Manko Lane, Cheektowaga, NY 14227. At this location, please report to the recreation hall for specific pick-up location and information.

If the center closes due to an emergency situation, regular tuition charges will still apply.

FIRE DRILLS AND SHELTER IN PLACE DRILLS

Our center, in accordance with the regulations set forth by the Office of Children and Family Services, practices the proper evacuation of our facility through the use of fire drills on a monthly basis. All children, including infants, will be participating in fire drills year-round, as it is important for all staff and children to be aware of what to do in an emergency situation, regardless of the season.

Our center will additionally be practicing two shelter in place drills annually, during which time our safety procedures and supplies will be reviewed. You will be made aware of these drills prior to each taking place. During this brief drill, the center will be locked down. No individuals will be allowed to enter or exit the building until the drill has concluded.

APPLICATION OF PESTICIDES

The center's ongoing exterior building maintenance involves the application of pesticides. You will be alerted of a pending pesticide application at least 48 hours prior to the application. All questions and comments concerning the products used should be directed to the front office.

ALLERGENS

Please be aware that Great Expectations is a peanut-free environment. With this being said, our center cannot guarantee an environment that is free of any allergen. We do proactively try to minimize the risk of possible allergen exposures once we are aware that an allergy does exist. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to disclose all allergens at the time of enrollment or as soon as possible after awareness. It is also the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide all paperwork and life-saving medications needed for all known allergic reactions on-site in the event of an emergency.

If your child has an allergic reaction to an allergen and has medications on site, they will be given medication as stated on their allergy action plan for any allergic reaction symptom, 911 will be called after any life-saving medications are given, followed by parent/guardian or emergency contact.

If a child has no known life-threatening allergies but begins to show signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction, 911 will be called, followed by parent/guardian or emergency contact. This program does not stock life-saving anaphylactic medications.

In order for classroom staff to properly accommodate all children with allergies, all classroom snacks and treats brought into the center must be store bought and contain an ingredients label. Labels indicating that products may have come into contact with, or were processed among, the allergen will not be served.

ARRIVING AND LEAVING THE CENTER

Entrance into the building through the main door requires the use of a preprogrammed fingerprint. Parents and guardians who are regularly scheduled to pick-up/drop-off a child will have their fingerprint registered in our biometric access system upon initial enrollment.

It is required that all children be escorted inside the center, and that your child be signed in by his/her classroom teacher. When picking-up your child, please be sure to notify a staff person so that your child can be signed out for the day.

In order to maintain a safe and secure facility for all children, staff and parents, please make sure not to hold the entrance door for any other person entering the center. For those individuals who do not have a fingerprint programmed on file, the doorbell must be rung so that proper visitor procedures can take place. Thanks for being courteous, but we must remember *safety first!!*

AUTHORIZING INDIVIDUALS TO PICK-UP YOUR CHILD

On the enrollment form you will find space asking for the names of the individuals who are authorized to pick-up your child. You may authorize as many individuals as you wish in writing on your form. The individuals that you authorized to pick up your child may do so at any time, with or without prior notice to the Director. As a courtesy, please let the Director know, either in writing or verbally, if such a situation arises where an individual from your authorized list will be picking-up your child. We will not allow your child to leave with an unauthorized person. We will check the ID of the person listed to pick-up your child. A copy of the ID will also be taken and added to your child's file. Please remember to keep this form updated with current phone number and address changes. In shared custody or divorce situations, parents should provide a mutually agreeable list of persons authorized to pick-up. If a mutually agreeable list is not provided, Great Expectations will allow parents, step-parents and grandparents to pick-up, unless otherwise prescribed by the court of jurisdiction.

PARENT/GUARDIAN UNAVAILABLE FOR CHILD PICK-UP

Great Expectations Child Care Center, Inc. is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of every child in our care. In accordance with applicable New York State child care requirements, the following procedures will be followed when a parent or guardian is unavailable to pick up a child at the conclusion of program hours or when a child is not picked up as scheduled and an alternate pickup plan is needed for any reason.

Procedure

If a child has not been picked up at the scheduled time, or the program becomes aware that a parent or guardian is unavailable to retrieve the child, the following steps will be taken:

1. **Attempt to Contact the Parent/Guardian**
Staff will make reasonable efforts to contact the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) using all available telephone numbers and contact information on file.
2. **Contact Authorized Individuals**
If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the program will make reasonable efforts to contact all individuals authorized by the parent or guardian to pick up the child.
3. **Child Remains Supervised at the Program**
The child will remain safely supervised on the premises until picked up by an individual authorized by the parent or guardian or as otherwise required or authorized by law.

4. **Further Action if No Authorized Individual Can Be Reached**

If reasonable efforts have been made to contact the parent, guardian, and all known authorized pickup individuals and no appropriate arrangements can be made, the program will follow applicable legal and regulatory requirements and contact the appropriate authorities or agencies for assistance in ensuring the child's safety.

5. **Statewide Central Register and Maltreatment Reporting**

The program shall not contact the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) solely because a parent or guardian is unavailable to pick up a child. SCR will only be contacted when there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment or when otherwise required by law.

6. **Special Circumstances**

These procedures apply regardless of the reason a parent or guardian is unavailable, including situations in which a parent or guardian is detained by federal immigration authorities or is otherwise unexpectedly unable to retrieve the child.

Documentation

The program will document reasonable efforts made to contact the parent, guardian, and authorized pickup individuals. Documentation may include:

- The date and time the child was scheduled to be picked up
- Names of individuals contacted or attempts made to contact them
- Telephone numbers or other contact methods used
- Times of each contact attempt
- The outcome of each attempt
- Any alternate pickup arrangements made
- Any additional actions taken by the program

Parent/Guardian Responsibility

Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that the program always has current and accurate emergency contact information and a current list of individuals authorized to pick up their child. Parents and guardians should notify the program as soon as possible if they anticipate being delayed or are unable to pick up their child as scheduled.

BABYSITTING

Great Expectations does not allow employees to make babysitting arrangements with current enrolled families.

CHILD ACCIDENT FORM

Our staff will take every effort to ensure the safety of your child. Unfortunately, accidents do occur. In any event where a child is injured, proper treatment, such as simple first-aid, will be administered and your child will be made to feel comfortable. An accident form will be filled out by Great Expectations Child Care Center's staff for every detected injury that occurs. A copy with your signature will be retained for your child's file. Great Expectations will contact a child's parent if the decision has been made that the child's injury warrants a phone call. A child coming into Great Expectations with injuries may also require an accident form to be completed, so that both the parent and center staff are aware that the injury occurred at home.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Great Expectations uses positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirection, and setting clear limits. "Time Out" is used when necessary, with one minute per year of age used as the maximum time away from regular activities.

Intentional property damage is a serious matter. Any cost for repair or replacement for damage done to the building, furniture, or toys will be billed to the child and his/her parents. If it is not possible to determine who is responsible, the cost of replacement or repair will be assessed equally to all children and their parents.

Incidents of aggressive behavior towards other children or staff will be reported to families in writing. After two incidents, the Director will call the family. After the third incident, a conference will be held with the family, child care staff, and Director. If incidents continue, or when the child's behavior requires a 1:1 staff ratio for that child, to ensure safety of other children, the parent may pay the wages of the extra staff person, or child care services will be terminated.

BITING

Biting, although unpleasant, is a common behavior among young children that occasionally occurs while children are in child care. Biting can occur for numerous reasons, some of which include teething, cause and effect, attention, imitation, stress, frustration, and independence. We know that this can be a very uncomfortable experience for both parties that are involved, thus a high level of confidentiality surrounding the parties involved will be maintained.

When a child gets bit we will do our best to properly address the situation. An incident form will be filled out for the biter and an accident form will be filled out for the injured. The biter may also help comfort the injured by holding the ice pack on the bite mark. This often teaches the biter that biting hurts and is an unacceptable behavior.

If biting occurs frequently and seems to get out of control, the biting child may be placed in an area away from the situation. If the biting occurs at times when the caregiver is busy, the child will be shadowed. This means that the child will be closely monitored by

all caregivers. This preventative measure will be adapted according to the child's age group and will help cut down on unexpected happenings.

Meetings with parents and caregivers will also occur so that discussion on how to best deal with a child who frequently bites can take place. Further steps, such as requiring a child to have a 1:1 personal aide to closely monitor behaviors, may also need to be discussed and implemented so that the occurrences of these incidents can decrease. If biting behaviors do not improve within a reasonable amount of time, termination of enrollment may have to take place.

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT, ASSESSMENT AND TRANSITION

At the time of enrollment, your child will be placed within a classroom based upon his or her chronological age. Developmental capabilities and readiness will also be taken into account when a child is placed into a classroom.

Daily observation of your child's developmental growth is additionally documented by classroom staff every few months as a means of assessing progress. By having your child enrolled within our Center, you give our teachers, staff and Director permission to use developmental checklists to assess your child's progress and growth. The findings of the checklists will be shared with you and will also be used to assist the Director when preparing children for transition. If concerns are raised surrounding your child not reaching age appropriate milestones, a meeting will be set up to address these concerns. Great Expectations can refer families to many outside resources that can assist children with early childhood education and development.

Transitions are an exciting time and occur when a child becomes ready to move up into an older classroom. Transitions are always a process, taking place in the weeks ahead of the transition date. This special time allows the child to get to know his or her new teacher, as well as new friends and the classroom's routine. Parents will receive a letter from the Director notifying them of when the transition is scheduled to start.

Please note that Great Expectations makes every effort to transition your child based upon developmental readiness and age, however, transitions into an older room may be delayed due to classroom availability and/or staffing.

GROUPING AND STAFF/CHILD RATIOS:

Infant Room (6 weeks-18 months) 1:4

Toddler Room (18 months-36 months) 1:5

Preschool Room (3 years to 4 years) 1:7

Kinder-Ready Room (3 years-5 years) 1:7 or 1:8 based upon the age of majority

School Age Room (5 years-12 years) 1:10

Please note that due to staffing arrangements and scheduled child drop-off and pick-up times, your child may be combined with other age groups for short periods of time particularly at the start and the end of the day. We may also find it necessary to

combine our two infant rooms at the start and end of the day, as well as on low enrollment days. We also reserve the right to move a child to another classroom for a day, with or without notice to the family, in order for our center to meet regulated staff to child ratios at all times.

GRADUATION CEREMONY

Our UPK and Kinder-Ready graduation ceremony is a time to celebrate all of the accomplishments of our children. A child will not be able to attend our graduation ceremony and festivities should his/her enrollment end prior to the date of graduation.

MANDATORY CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

All employees of a licensed child care center are mandatory reporters of child abuse, neglect and maltreatment. Every employee is required to immediately report any suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment by telephone to the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment at 1-800-342-3720.

ILLNESS

Great Expectations can only care for mildly ill children. Please use the following guidelines when deciding if your child should attend child care. We strive to prevent the spread of illness; therefore, your cooperation with our policies will be of great help. Please keep your child home if your child has:

- A fever of 100.4 or greater before child care, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness, until medical evaluation indicates inclusion in the center
- Symptoms or signs of possible severe illness, such as, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, unusual lethargy, wheezing, or other unusual signs
- Strep throat until 24 hours after an antibiotic is started
- Diarrhea; runny, watery, or bloody stools within the last 12 hours
- Vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Rash with fever or behavior change
- Scabies or other infestations
- Impetigo or other skin infection until 24 hours after treatment has begun
- Chicken pox until 5-7 days after blisters appear
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough) mumps, rubella, shingles
- Hepatitis A- until 1 week after onset
- Sore throat with fever
- Eye discharge (white or yellow) or pink eye; until 24 hours after starting treatment; if treatment is not sought then when the discharge clears
- Head lice, bed bugs or fleas at any stage
- Respiratory illness, or probable flu-like symptoms

Your child may return when:

1. The above suggestions are met
2. The child is fever or symptom free for at least 24 hours before returning to the center.

3. The child has been treated by a doctor or a doctor permits the child to return to the center.

Your child can return with a Doctor's note.

****Please note that this illness policy may change during public health emergencies, at which time the center will follow all policies and guidelines issued by the Department of Health.****

If your child becomes ill while at the center, you will be called to pick-up your child. It is expected that you will pick-up your child as soon as possible. If you are unable to be reached, the center will then call the first person on your child's emergency contact list.

Exposure to communicable diseases and any infectious illness should be reported promptly to the center so that staff can look for any early symptoms among all children. The center will notify parents when a child has been exposed to an infectious disease.

Parents will also be required to update immunization records when a new vaccine is given to their child. Failure to update immunization records within one month of required immunizations may result in temporary suspension of child care services at our center.

MEDICATION AND TOPICAL OINTMENT ADMINISTRATION

Great Expectations is licensed to administer over-the-counter medications, prescription medications, as well as topical ointments.

Over-the-counter topical ointments such as diaper rash or first aid creams, sunscreen or insect repellent may be applied to your child with written parent permission.

All other medications will be administered to your child only when the following procedures have been fulfilled.

- Completed Written Medication Consent form is filled out in its entirety by both the parent and child's physician, and submitted to the center for review. Please note that a separate form is needed for each individual medication.
- All medication, both prescribed and over-the-counter, must be supplied in the original packaging and must be accompanied by the original package insert or printed pharmacy instructions. These instructions must indicate the correct method of administering the medication, dosage limitations, possible side effects, and any other significant warnings.

Issued Written Medication Consent Forms must be updated at least every six months. It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to update your child's Written Medication Consent Forms. You may not receive a reminder notice from the Director that your child's form will be expiring.

If your child becomes ill while in care, our office will contact you and you will be required to verbally authorize your consent for your child to receive medication. A note given to office staff in the morning at drop-off will also be considered informed consent for that day only.

Parents may authorize a relative to administer medication to their child while in care by submitting a written note to the Director.

MEALS

Meals and an afternoon snack are served daily. Monthly menus will be posted on the bulletin board in the front entrance, as well as online. Children arriving at the center between 7:00am and 8:30am will be served breakfast which is served around 8:00am. A hot nutritious meal prepared by CaterTots catering company will be served for lunch at 11:45am. Afternoon snack will be served at 3:00pm. Parents are always encouraged to pack a child's lunch if the child will not be eating the day's scheduled lunch.

Please be aware that we do not believe in requiring children to eat particular foods should they decline, nor do we believe in withholding food as a punishment. Birthday, holiday treats, or special treats are permitted. Please check with your child's teacher so you know how much to bring, and what is considered an acceptable treat. Remember that we strive to be a peanut-free center.

Full day UPK children are required to supply their own bagged lunch each school day.

OUR WEBSITE

Please visit our website, www.expectmorechildcare.com for complete access to our Monthly Food Menus, School Calendar, as well as important forms.

CLOTHING, OUTDOOR PLAY AND WALKS

Please dress your child in appropriate clothing daily so that he/she feels free to participate in all activities. Remember, children learn from their environments. They get messy! Also, outdoor play is an integral part of your child's daily agenda, so please make sure that he or she is ready to have some fun! Children will be going outside to the playground and/or on walks around the center's grounds daily.

During winter months, please be sure to dress your child according to the weather with appropriate hats, mittens, and coats. On warmer winter days, children will take short walks around the center and play in the snow. Be sure your child has indoor shoes to wear when it is wet outside.

During the summer months, your child will additionally be required to wear closed-toe shoes or sneakers at all times. Crocs, flip-flops and open-toed sandals are not allowed.

Please mark all items with your child's first and last name. Great Expectations is not responsible for lost, misplaced or damaged clothing.

TRANSPORTATION

We do not provide transportation for children.

DONATIONS

Great Expectations opens its doors to donations of toys, books, clothing, etc. All donations will be noted and appreciated. Please note that all contributions will be donated to the classroom, rather than directly to the teacher.

TOYS

Please do not send toys from home as they may get lost or broken. Books and CDs/tapes that a child wishes to share with the class should be marked with the child's name and given to the teacher. If your child's class has a "sharing day" you will be notified. Toy guns and weapons are never allowed at Great Expectations at any time.

FUNDRAISERS

From time to time Great Expectations may participate in fundraisers to raise money for needed toys, supplies, and educational materials. Great Expectations hopes for your support during these times. Fundraisers are a positive way to show community and family support for early childhood education.

WAITING LIST

In an event that a classroom age group should be full at any time, your child's name will be placed on a waiting list. As vacancies occur, pre-registered children would have first priority. In an event that an expectant mother is pre-registered and there is an opening prior to her child starting, the opening may be filled by a temporary child.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Although the center makes every attempt to offer the highest quality of care to all children and families, there may be occasions when parents have concerns about particular events, situations, or staff. In this event, parents are encouraged to talk to their child's direct caregiver as a first point of contact. If they have tried this without satisfactory results, or if the concern is serious enough to warrant immediate administrative review, parents are encouraged to contact the center's Director. The Director will then schedule meetings as necessary with appropriate parties to gather relevant information before deciding on a course of action. Parents will be informed, as appropriate within confidentiality requirements, as to the result of the Director's inquiry and action taken.

INFORMATION CHANGES

Parents are required to notify the center immediately of any pertinent information changes regarding the enrolled child. This includes the addition or deletion of individuals authorized to pick-up your child.

OPEN DOOR POLICY FOR ENROLLED FAMILIES

We are committed to you as your child's most important resource, and we value your daily input. We welcome and encourage your visits at any time; as good communication

between parents and teachers is important for a superior parent/caregiver relationship. Parents and guardians are welcomed, and encouraged, to visit with their child throughout the course of the day and to join in on classroom activities. We additionally welcome phone calls throughout the day. We do ask that you be courteous to our teachers in remembering that certain times of the day, such as breakfast, lunch and before and after nap, are likely very busy times. Your child's teacher will be able to give you her undivided attention during nap time (1:00pm-2:45pm), so if it is not an emergency situation, please call at this time to talk. If you need to discuss additional matters, please ask your child's teacher for a list of available times when a conference meeting with you and your child's teacher can be scheduled.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Children will be admitted to the center regardless of race, gender, religion, or national origin and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

To best ensure that their needs are met, when children with special needs are enrolled, there will be consultations with the parents and, as needed, the center's medical advisor, the staff who will be involved, and any other appropriate individuals. Additionally, an assessment to determine the full scope of needs and appropriate services may be required. Assessments may be made on a periodic basis after a child with special needs is enrolled to ensure that the child is continuing to have his/her needs adequately met.

SECURITY VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

The Center is equipped with security video surveillance cameras both inside the classrooms and around the outside of the building. The purpose of the cameras is so that administration can monitor center security and daily center activities. The video images are digitally recorded for approximately three days. We have implemented a security policy which stipulates that only the Owners can access these recordings. By enrolling your child at the center, you are acknowledging the presence of such video devices and are authorizing Great Expectations to record and use the recordings in any lawful manner deemed necessary.

INFANT ROOM (6 weeks-18 months)

The following is important information regarding the Infant rooms:

The center will keep an electronic record of each child's activities during the day in each of the following areas:

- the amount of time the infant has slept
- diaper changing and any irregularities in the child's bowel movement
- bottle feeding times and amounts
- achievement towards any developmental milestones.

Infants must accept formula or breast milk from a bottle prior to enrollment in order to ensure that proper feeding can be provided by our staff.

Infants must be in a dry diaper when they are left in the care of our staff. If a child soils his/her diaper on the way to the center, parents are welcome to use our diapering facilities so long as proper sanitization occurs.

Infants must also be brought in the clothing that they will be wearing for the day. We cannot change your child from their night time clothing to their day time clothing.

Families are to furnish the following items for their infant: infant formula or breast milk, bottles, baby food and cereal, disposable diapers, wipes, ointments, blanket, pacifier (if needed), several changes of clothing.

Please be sure to label your child's belongings with his/her first and last name.

SIDS Policy:

No toys, heavy blankets, pillows or boppies are allowed in cribs. Your infant will always be put to sleep on his/her back and supervised while sleeping. No infant will be placed in a car seat, boppy, swing or bouncy seat to sleep.

If a child medically needs to be placed on their abdomen to sleep, a written note from the doctor needs to be brought to the center. Included in the doctor's note needs to be the reason why this is necessary and the ending date for this process.

New research on infant development states that infants need tummy time for brain development and muscle development. Babies will be placed on their bellies for small amounts of time daily.

We would like to keep the infant rooms sterile, so please cooperate with us by taking your shoes off before entering the room. No other siblings are allowed to enter this room for the safety of the other infants.

TODDLER ROOM (18-36 months)

The children in the Toddler room are beginning to develop social skills, enlarge their vocabulary and focus on developing more independence. Children will be engaged in a more age appropriate circle time. Children work more in depth on necessary topics like calendar, weather, colors, numbers and shapes. Children also work on picture identification. Stories and art crafts always relate to the center's theme of the week.

Children are also placed into learning centers which are small groups with two or three children. Learning centers provide your child with many different activities to promote growth with their large and fine motor skills. There are opportunities for your child to learn to count, identify colors, identify shapes, work with puzzles, play with blocks, string beads, and play with play-doh, paint and color. Children at this age are also starting to play pretend in the dramatic play area.

Other activities that occur in this room are music and musical instruments, finger plays, dancing, flannel board stories, and other games. Children have time to stretch their muscles either inside or outside with large motor activities.

Children will be able to rest or nap within their classrooms on a Center provided mat. A fitted crib sheet is required to cover the mat. Children can also bring in a light weight blanket to sleep with. No oversized pillows or stuffed animals will be allowed. Your child will also be supervised by a staff member while they sleep. Your child is not required to take a nap while at the Center. If they choose to not nap your child will be able to play quietly while the other children sleep.

An electronic copy of your child's daily activities, including diapers/potty, food and naps will be sent home via email or the Tadpoles App each day.

TOILET TRAINING:

Toilet training for an individual occurs over a period of time that can range from a few weeks to several months, and includes several stages of development. Regressions are not unusual during the process, particularly if the child is affected by such things as illness, a move to a new home or child care center, or a new baby in the family. Accidents are to be expected and are never met with disapproval. Daytime control may occur earlier than nighttime control. Girls tend to develop complete control of the elimination process earlier than boys. Children rarely have the physical control, understanding of the process and the emotional maturity to successfully and consistently use the toilet prior to reaching 18 months of age, and on average, not until the child is 2½ to 3½ years old. Because of the complexity of a child's learning to successfully and consistently use the toilet, and the intense emotional relationship between the parents and the child about the process, the center will not initiate toilet learning. Staff will, however, keep parents informed of any signs of readiness observed at the center. Parents should keep center staff aware of a child's movement through the developmental stages at home (see below) and may request a formal conference at such time the switch from diapers to pants is to be attempted. This will help ensure that staff is supportive and consistent with parental efforts in potty training.

The stages of toilet training are:

1. Becoming aware of the process, i.e., developing a vocabulary for the process, seeing others use the toilet, talking about being wet or having had a bowel movement, imitating others by sitting on the toilet or potty chair, role playing with dolls about the process.
2. Communication, i.e. says, "I'm wet," "Change my diaper," or "I need to use the potty."
3. Develops sphincter muscle control as evidenced by 2-3 hours of dryness.
4. The child wants to use the toilet.

Center staff will be supportive of parental efforts to assist the child with toilet training and will never show disapproval when accidents occur. Success will be met with encouragement. After the switch from diapers is agreed upon between staff and parents, parents are responsible for always maintaining at least 3 pairs of underpants and changes of clothes in the child's cubby. Clothing should be easily removable, such

as elastic waist pants, to help eliminate frustration when the child attempts to use the toilet without help. Since accidents will occur and regression is possible, patience is necessary as the child learns to use the toilet.

Things needed for the Toddler room: Several changes of clothing (especially if potty training), blanket, diaper, wipes, ointments. Pacifiers are not allowed in the Toddler room. Please be sure to label all of your child's belongings with first and last name.

Children will be able to rest or nap within their classrooms on a Center provided mat. A fitted crib sheet is required to cover the mat. Children can also bring in a light weight blanket to sleep with. No oversized pillows or stuffed animals will be allowed. Your child will be supervised by a staff member while they sleep. Your child is not required to take a nap while at the Center. If they choose to not nap your child will be able to play quietly while the other children sleep.

PRESCHOOL ROOMS (3-5 YEARS)

At Great Expectations Child Care Center, Inc. we strive to provide your child with the best possible learning environment. Preschoolers want to establish themselves as separate from their parents. They are more independent than toddlers. They can express their needs through the use of communication. These children also thrive for routine in their classroom setting. Each day will consist of music, small and large motor activities, calendar time and also learning centers. At this age, these children learn by doing. New skills are being developed every day. They like to spend a lot of their time pretending. Dress-up clothes, pretend "props" and puppets are a few of their favorites.

Lots of children at this age are very energetic and active. That's why large motor activities inside or outside are an important part of their day.

Our preschool programs will ensure that your child is ready to go off to Kindergarten.

Things needed for the Preschool room: a blanket and extra changes of clothing. Please be sure to label all of your children's belongings with first and last name.

Children will be able to rest or nap within their classrooms on a Center provided mat. A fitted crib sheet is required to cover the mat. Children can also bring in a light weight blanket to sleep with. No over sized pillows or stuffed animals will be allowed. Your child will be supervised while they sleep in accordance with the NYS OCFS Daycare Regulations.

Your child is not required to take a nap while at the Center. If they choose to not nap, your child will be able to play quietly while the other children sleep.

An electronic copy of your child's daily activities, including diapers/potty, food and naps will be sent home via email or the Tadpoles App each day.

WEST SENECA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT UNIVERSAL PRE-K (UPK) & WRAP-AROUND CARE

The primary purpose of the West Seneca Central School District Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program is to provide four-year-old children with the opportunity to access high-quality prekindergarten programs that prepare them for future school success by developing strong foundational skills in early literacy and mathematics. The goal of our program is to encourage and support child-initiated, child-directed, and teacher-supported activities based on a curriculum to ensure strong instructional content aligned with the NYS Learning Standards.

The Universal Pre-kindergarten Program is a grant-funded program for children residing in the West Seneca School District which is renewed annually by the NYS Governor. The program operates for either 2 ½ hours a day, or 6 hours a day, 5 days a week for the length of the school year. Each day will consist of music, small and large motor activities, calendar time and also learning centers.

Children must register for this program directly through the West Seneca Central School District. Children who are accepted into the UPK at Great Expectations must be fully potty trained. A school supply list will also be provided to children who are accepted into this program.

If needed, our center can additionally provide care to UPK children both before and after program hours. Enrollment into the wrap-around care program will need to be confirmed prior to starting and additional paperwork will be required.

During wrap-around care, children will be able to rest or nap within their classroom on a Center provided mat. A fitted crib sheet is required to cover the mat. Children can also bring in a light weight blanket to sleep with. No oversized pillows or stuffed animals will be allowed. Your child will be supervised while they sleep in accordance with the NYS OCFS Daycare Regulations.

Your child is not required to take a nap while at the Center. If they choose to not nap, your child will be able to play quietly while the other children sleep.

An electronic copy of your child's daily activities, including potty use, food and naps will be sent home via email or the Tadpoles App each day.