



WINSTON PROUTY

Center for Child and Family Development

# Early Learning Center

# Family Handbook

Updated 2017

209 Austine Drive, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

☎ (802) 257-7852 Fax (802) 258-2413

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Values and Background, Contact information (pg. 2-4)
2. Licensing, Accreditation & Program Affiliations (pg. 5)
3. Educational Program (pg. 6-15)
  - Philosophy (pg. 6)
  - Curriculum (pg.6-11)
  - Staff (pg.11-12)
  - Daily Schedule (pg. 12)
  - Child Assessments (pg. 12-13)
  - Communication of Child Progress (pg. 13-14)
  - Referrals (pg. 14)
  - Program Assessment & Improvement (pg. 15)
4. Health & Safety (pg. 15-27)
  - Medical Conditions (pg. 15)
  - Medication (pg. 15-16)
  - Routine Health Services, Including Immunizations (pg. 16)
  - Severe Allergies (pg. 16)
  - Illness (pg. 16-17)
  - Accidents (pg. 17-18)
  - Incidents (pg. 18)
  - Hand washing (pg. 18)
  - Sanitation (pg. 18)
  - Feeding (pg. 19)
  - Tooth brushing (pg. 20)
  - Diapers & Toileting (pg. 20)
  - Napping & Resting (pg. 21)
  - Outdoor Play (pg. 21)
  - Supervision (pg. 22)
  - Animal Safety (pg. 22)
  - Protection from Environmental Hazards (pg. 22-23)
  - Child Safety Seats (pg. 23)
  - Pedestrian Safety (pg. 23)
  - Child Guidance and Restraint (pg. 23-25)
  - Suspected Child Abuse, Neglect or Molestation (pg. 25)
  - Background Checks (pg. 26)
  - Prohibited Items (pg. 26)
  - School Closings (pg. 26)
  - Emergency Procedures (pg. 26-27)
5. Enrollment (pg. 27-32)
  - Process (pg. 27-28)
  - Belongings (pg. 28)
  - Parent Hours (pg. 29)
  - Celebrations (pg. 29)
  - Field Trips (pg. 29)
  - Lateness & Absences (pg. 29-30)
  - Drop Off & Pick Up (pg. 30)
  - Payment (pg. 30)
  - Classroom Placement (pg. 31)
  - Withdrawal from the Program (pg. 31)
  - Re-enrollment (pg. 31)
  - Program Calendar (pg. 31-32)

# WE VALUE....

## Inclusion

We believe children, families and staff benefit from participating in an environment where everyone feels they belong, where every effort is made to accommodate differences and individual needs, and where everyone's uniqueness is celebrated.

## Learning

We believe in fostering a culture of learning. We support children learning how to be fully themselves. We support families learning how to provide the support, love and education their children need. We support our staff learning diverse methodologies, and experimenting in the classroom and in the community, in an effort to get the best possible result with each child. We never want to assume we have the answers. We want to be in the practice of learning in every moment.

## Collaboration

We believe in the power of groups to find solutions individuals cannot. We are committed to investing the time and resources necessary to work with our community partners and our kids' families to ensure that every child has access to the tools they need to thrive.

## Persistence

We believe that there is hope for every child and for every family. We are committed to continuously searching for solutions to the most stubborn challenges, to empower families.

## The Winston Prouty Early Learning Center Handbook

### Section 1: Background

The mission of the Winston Prouty Center for Child and Family Development is to provide inclusive education and family support to promote the success of children and families. The Center is a non-profit agency governed by a Board of Directors and operated by an Executive Director with multiple programs, Community Based Services (which includes Children's Integrated Services (CIS), the Early Education Initiative (EEI) and Family Supportive Housing (FSH)), and the Early Learning Center (ELC).

Children's Integrated Services offers resources, advocacy and education to families and other care providers of young children through five distinct, but integrated services:

- *Early Intervention*: Providing support to children from birth to age three who have a developmental delay or a diagnosed condition likely to result in a developmental delay
- *Early Childhood & Family Mental Health*: Providing support for care providers of children birth through age six who are experiencing social, emotional or behavioral difficulties
- *Family Support*: Providing support to women during pregnancy and families with children through age five with resources, such as housing, assistance finding health care providers, vocational goals, parenting, health and safety education, advocacy and assistance applying for state benefits
- *Nursing*: Providing support to pregnant women and families with children through age five with preparing for childbirth, nutritional support, feeding questions, lactation support, and connecting with resources to promote physical, emotional and mental health during and after pregnancy
- *Specialized Child Care*: Child care financial assistance for children with special needs, children in protective service, and families in need of family support child care subsidy

Early Education Initiative - Through this initiative the state of Vermont grants funds to communities to support children to be successful in preschool, particularly children at risk. These grant funds are used to support a consultation and coaching service in collaboration with the Winston Prouty Center and Windham Southeast Supervisory Union. These services are provided by an Inclusion Facilitator

Family Supportive Housing - In July 2013 the state of Vermont implemented a two-year pilot program in three areas – Brattleboro, Burlington, and Rutland – to help homeless families with young children ages 0 to 6 find and maintain housing. The Family Supportive Housing (FSH) program provides services and supports to families to help them identify what they need, make goals towards getting those needs met, and access resources towards achieving those goals with the outcome of stable housing as a primary objective

The Early Learning Center was established as a childcare program in 1986. It was a redesigned service model of the Children's Country Inn, a temporary residential program for children with special needs. The Early Learning Center was meant to provide an integrated setting for children with special needs by

opening enrollment to the whole community. Enrollment has increased over the years and the ELC now houses an infant classroom, two classrooms for toddlers and two classrooms for preschoolers with a total daily enrollment of 54 children, many of whom have identified special needs.

## **Early Learning Center Classroom Phone Numbers**

### **Acorn (802) 257-2101 Ext. 218**

[nancy@winstonprouty.org](mailto:nancy@winstonprouty.org)

Nancy McMahon and Michelle Goodwin  
and Mandi Martin

### **ELC Administration**

Kimberley Paquette *ELC Coordinator* Ext. 306

[kim@winstonprouty.org](mailto:kim@winstonprouty.org)

Angela Hoag *ELC Administrative Coordinator* Ext. 210

[angela@winstonprouty.org](mailto:angela@winstonprouty.org)

### **Elm (802) 257-2101 Ext. 207**

[susan@winstonproutycenter.org](mailto:susan@winstonproutycenter.org)

Susan Heimer and Allie Barrett

### **Maple (802) 257-2101 Ext. 205**

[amy@winstonprouty.org](mailto:amy@winstonprouty.org)

Amy Fulton and Mindy Brown

### **Floating Staff**

Kathy Wright

Sara Fradkin

Brianna Root

### **Oak (802) 257-2101 Ext. 217**

[sarah@winstonprouty.org](mailto:sarah@winstonprouty.org)

Sarah Bemis and Alyssa Kelly

### **Birch (802) 257-2101 Ext. 220**

[jamie@winstonprouty.org](mailto:jamie@winstonprouty.org)

Jamie Champney and Kim Jacques  
and Alfred Hughes, Jr.

Please note that if you need immediate assistance after the office is closed, especially about a pick-up, and the classroom isn't answering their phone; please call the Early Learning Center cell phone (802)246-7852. This rings to a cell phone that the ELC Staff bring with them onto the playground in the afternoon.

## Section 2: Licensing, Accreditation and Program Affiliations

The Early Learning Center is licensed by the Child Development Division of the Vermont Department of Children and Families. Families can access Vermont Licensing Regulations and information by visiting their website at <http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd>. These regulations can also be found posted on the parent bulletin board in the ELC hallway.

The center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), considered the highest mark of excellence for early childhood programs. Information about NAEYC accreditation standards, as well as an extensive website for parents can be found at [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).

The Vermont Step Ahead Recognition System for Child Care Education and School Age Programs has awarded the Early Learning Center its highest rating of 5 stars. For more information, please visit their website at [www.STARSstepahead.org](http://www.STARSstepahead.org).

The Early Learning Center is a contracted Act 62 Publicly Funded Pre-K Program provider with the Windham Southeast, Northeast and Central Supervisory Unions. Please contact your local school district or supervisory union for more information. In addition, children ages 3-5 that are found eligible for special education services are welcome to enroll in our program and may be able to receive special education services through their local supervisory union while in attendance at the Early Learning Center. Likewise, children who are enrolled in our program and receive services through either Early Intervention or Early Childhood Family Mental Health are typically able to receive some services while in attendance at the ELC with permission from the family.

The Early Learning Center offers a Visiting Child Program to children ages 1-3 who receive Early Intervention Services through the Children's Integrated Services Program at Prouty and to children ages 3-5 who receive Special Education Services through the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union. This program allows children who are not enrolled in an early childhood program, but whose learning goals are dependent on opportunities for socialization with peers, to participate in the life of the classroom while in the care of their service provider.

Finally, the Early Learning Center is available on a case-by-case basis to provide a play space and facilitated activities for families whose child is both enrolled at the Early Learning Center and involved with the Family Services Division of the Vermont Department of Children and Families. Inquiries should be made to the ELC Administrative Coordinator.

## Section 3: Educational Program

### Philosophy

The ELC recognizes that each child is a unique and special person. It is our belief, based in many years of combined professional experience that all young children benefit from participating in an inclusive environment that values the contributions of children of varying abilities and experiences. The program is designed to create an environment where all children learn active participation and interaction with both adults and peers as we work towards building a community where everyone has a deep sense of belonging. It is from this sense of belonging that children find meaning in the activities of their daily lives in the program and joyful learning follows. Through supported play experiences, children have extensive opportunities for imitating, integrating and creating activities that build cultural, social and emotional competence and develop specific cognitive and physical skills. Because children learn by doing, their frame of reference is continually broadened by participation in a physical and social environment that is rich with new materials, experiences and adult guidance. We place emphasis on developing activities that provide children with opportunities to explore their own emerging interests while also building specific skills and increasing their general knowledge of the world around them. It is our goal that each child will:

- Feel secure and important in our community
- Develop skills in relationships with both adults and children, and the abilities to initiate and sustain interaction with others in meaningful ways, form friendships; resolve conflict with increasing independence and confidence, demonstrate empathy for others, recognize and regulate emotions and take pride in their accomplishments
- Develop large and small motor skills, self-care skills and expressive and receptive language skills
- Develop cognitive skills including the abilities to make logical connections, make purposeful decisions, sustain and shift attention, make predictions and solve problems flexibly
- Explore and create freely in an environment that accepts and integrates individual and cultural differences in learning styles, interests and values

It is our goal that each family will:

- Feel confident that their child's developmental needs are being consistently met at school
- Be aware of how to best support their children's development at home
- Grow in their capacity to recognize and advocate for their child's best interests
- Participate fully in the life of the Prouty community

### Curriculum

Lead Teachers have primary responsibility for developing and implementing the curriculum in keeping with the program's educational philosophy and the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS). The program takes great care to ensure that the curriculum is developed and implemented in a manner that flexibly addresses the unique learning needs of each child by:

- incorporating information from child-specific assessments on an ongoing basis
- consulting with the array of specialists that work with individual children as needed

- providing specific accommodations and instructional methods in accordance with child-specific educational plans (IEPs, One Plans, Prouty Support Plans)
- responding to the individual experiences of children, including home values, beliefs and languages

Emphasizes activities that support children in developing the capacity to self-regulate their own thinking, emotions and behaviors by practicing three main underlying cognitive skills:

- inhibitory, effortful control (allows people to make deliberate choices)
- working memory (allows people to consider multiple pieces of information at one time)
- cognitive flexibility (allows people to recognize multiple solutions to a single problem)

At all age levels, the curriculum at the Winston Prouty Center provides opportunities for instruction and exploration in the areas of social studies and human diversity, science, math, literacy, communication, self-care, art, music, movement and social, emotional and behavioral guidance through a balance of whole group, small group and individual activities. Weekly curriculum plans are posted outside of each classroom and incorporate technology as in the example of children who make a video of their classroom caterpillar turning into a butterfly and then use the video to share the news of this event with others.

**Social Studies and Human Diversity:** The Prouty Center has always maintained a clear focus on maintaining its original mission of service to children with special needs and their families. We are proud to be a place where differently-abled individuals are welcomed and provided with the specific educational programming they require and deserve. In addition to the center’s focus on serving children with special needs, attention is given to avoiding stereotyping in its many forms. Biases and attitudes are formed at very young ages and children naturally attempt to make sense of the world by incorporating the many explicit and implicit messages about culture and human differences they encounter. Our program strives to provide children with the language, accurate information and guidance they need to be able to accept, respect and celebrate individual and cultural differences.

This is achieved by ensuring that both interactions with actual people and representations of people (through shared information, books, posters, etc.) promote the idea of human equality, particularly as it relates to gender, race, ethnicity, physical differences, ability and family structure. Through communication, artwork, music, dramatic play and theme-based inquiry related to understanding ourselves, others, and our home, school and local environments, the curriculum promotes children’s self-awareness, sensitivity towards others, and development of social interaction skills and knowledge of their immediate community.

**Science:** Children are, by nature, acute observers and eager to explore the world. Early science experiences help young children develop the ability to explore the world more keenly and purposefully. Science curriculum in the ELC is related to ongoing themes of study and is sparked by the individual interests and experiences of children and teachers. Children are encouraged to use language and explore all their senses as they experiment, observe, describe, categorize and make predictions about



the physical world. Emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for reinforcing newly learned skills and information by having children record their experiences through painting, drawing, sculpting and retelling. The primary goal is to promote children's interest in and recognition of the diversity of the natural world and to develop children's capacity to act on their own natural curiosity.

**Math:** In early childhood, we look at math to structure experiences to form concepts about the quantitative, logical and spatial relationships between things and the symbolic forms we use to represent these relationships such as numbers, diagrams, and graphs. Math activities are integrated into thematic study so that children have opportunities to sort, count, weigh and measure materials, create patterns and sequences using beads and blocks, explore spatial relationships using blocks and other materials and solve concrete math problems through everyday experiences like figuring out how many napkins they need to pass out at snack.

Infants/Toddlers are introduced to concepts of number including one to one correspondence, counting, and quantity; asked to recognize likeness and differences by sorting and classifying; and encouraged to explore the potentials, limits and relationships between materials both independently and with guidance.

Preschoolers are introduced to additional concepts including recognizing, describing, extending and creating sequences through patterning activities; arranging objects based on a difference in the degree of the physical characteristics of an object like size, color, or texture; organizing information visually to discover patterns through graphing activities; recognizing number symbols and matching them to quantity; determining measurements such as length, weight and size; and measurements and markers of time such as minutes, hours days, weeks, months, seasons, and holidays.

**Art:** In early childhood, art provides children with opportunities for self-expression, sensory exploration and fine motor development. Participation in these activities stimulates children to use and develop descriptive language and begin to develop aesthetic awareness. The ELC particularly emphasizes process oriented art activities that involve children's free exploration of materials rather than craft or other product oriented activities. This allows children to use their imaginations, experiment, express themselves and appreciate their own and other's contributions. Examples of art experiences include learning to identify properties of materials, identifying colors and textures, observing cause and effect, learning to cooperate through group projects like murals, coordinating eye and hand movements, and exploring the sense of touch using clay and paint.

**Music:** Music is one of the most enjoyable elements of an early childhood program and the Winston Prouty Center provides a great assortment of experiences. Children learn to hum, sing, create their own rhythms and chants and respond to music with their whole bodies. They use their own coordination to sway, clap, stamp their feet and create music with all sorts of objects. Listening skills and vocabulary are fostered and physical coordination is enhanced. Song lyrics contain features such as rhyme and repetition that help children find connections between oral and printed language. The center provides exposure to a range of music from around the world and from different genres. This exposure takes

place weekly during “All School Sing” and daily in every classroom during group activities and outdoor play. Particularly in the toddler classrooms, music is used to assist children in recognizing routine transitions from one activity to another.

**Movement:** Studies suggest that because a child’s earliest learning is based in motor development, so too is subsequent knowledge. The Prouty Center believes that, if we want children to be healthy and active learners, we must concentrate on the physical aspects of learning in addition to the mental ones, particularly because this allows children to engage both the right and left hemispheres of their brains, making them more receptive to learning. In addition to moving for the pure joy it provides, movement is an especially important component of a program that educates children with special needs, who may require specialized instruction to learn new physical skills. All children benefit from opportunities to build stamina, strength, balance, awareness of body in space, and control over speed and direction through the many activities our program offers: balance beams, hula hoops, dancing, throwing and catching balls, filling and pouring, parachute play, song movements, manipulating small objects, using writing instruments, learning sign language, yoga, swinging, biking, obstacle courses, jumping, and games like “Red Light, Green Light”.

**Communication:** The development of communicative competence- the ability to use as fully as possible the wide array of human language skills for expression and interpretation- is strongly influenced by children’s experiences and environments. Interactions with adults play a crucial role in supporting children’s growing ability to communicate. Providing opportunities for children to talk while an adult carefully listens and provides well-placed expansions of their sentences to enhance meaning is an important way teachers assist young language learners. Adults in our program are mindful of consistently using opportunities to model the uses of language for children by narrating their own actions and those of the children in the classroom. Teachers in the ELC intentionally repeat and elaborate on what children say, ask open-ended questions to encourage children to produce more complex language and thinking and introduce children to new, increasingly complex vocabulary.

Opportunities for language development are built into every part of a child’s day in the program for example a teacher always joins children at the table during snacks and lunch for facilitating conversation between children. Language development objectives are also embedded in every planned activity. The program emphasizes teaching children to use external speech to remind themselves what they are doing particularly when trying to complete a series of steps in a process. Families are provided with regular notes about the activities of the day or week so that they can support children in sharing information about their time at school.

Embedded opportunities for language development include listening to stories, taking turns in conversations, being introduced to new vocabulary, and learning nursery rhymes.

**Literacy:** While the development of oral language skills is crucially important to the development of pre-readers and pre-writers, so too is an extensive familiarity with the written word. Young children have two primary means of gaining this familiarity: continuous exposure to literature in a variety of genres

and continuous exposure to the uses of print in daily life such as making grocery lists, taking attendance and writing the morning message. While all classrooms emphasize oral language development, particularly through activities that build phonological awareness like rhyming, and incorporate print and literature throughout the daily life of the classroom, the preschool curriculum provides additional opportunities to develop early literacy skills.

Preschoolers begin actively participating in the functional use of print in the classroom during play by creating stories, making lists and signs and sending mail to one another. They also begin the daily practice of creating a play plan.

The process of play planning supports children in making an initial decision about what they will do during the pretend play block and then using drawing and both a verbal and written message to represent their plans. For example, a child choosing to be a customer at a pizzeria would draw a picture of herself as the customer, be asked to share her plan verbally with a teacher by completing the phrase “I am going to.. “and then write that message at whatever stage of writing development she is currently exploring. Children are first taught to use voice to line match by representing each word they hear with a single line. Eventually, children progress to representing each sound they hear with the appropriate phoneme using sound maps. While all children follow a similar learning trajectory, they also all learn in their own time and teacher support is entirely individualized.

In addition to play planning, children participate in activities that build fine motor memory specific to writing the alphabet. While children are not taught to name and write individual letters, they do practice making the basic strokes that letters are comprised of like a horizontal line, a vertical line and a half circle. Each stroke is paired with a story that supports children in remembering the basic shape of the stroke.

**Self-Care:** Children develop at different paces and the ability to complete self-care tasks independently requires children to have achieved competence in many different areas, such as small and large motor control, regulating attention and learning to follow directions. The program includes many opportunities for children to practice caring for themselves and the classroom, so that skills are built through daily opportunities for practice and instruction. The goal of the self-care curriculum is to model and provide learning experiences about safety-awareness through activities like fire drills; self-help skills through learning to dress, wash hands, etc.; care of personal belongings through setting out lunch boxes and rest mats; respect for group materials by learning proper ways to use and store them; and health habits through a focus on good nutrition and personal hygiene like daily tooth brushing.

**Social, Emotional and Behavioral Guidance:** Consistent routines, developmentally appropriate expectations, and secure relationships rooted in acceptance and mutual affection are the building blocks of social, emotional and behavioral competence in young children. In a predictable, joyful environment that minimizes individual and group transitions and provides continuously responsive caregiving by a primary teacher, children come to feel valued, capable and attached to others. They experience caring and cooperation, practice mastery of roles through pretend play, gain self-worth through completion of

activities, learn to balance their needs with those of others, express a broad range of emotions, can assert their independence, and are able to turn toward others for support.

As with most of the curriculum, opportunities to develop social, emotional and behavioral competence are embedded in the routines of the classroom and the moment-to-moment interactions of caregiving. They are also provided through planned activities that teach children how to label, identify and manage emotions, solve common social problems, and internalize ways of behaving in situations that are appropriate to the culture of the school. Mutual respect and trust between teachers and families, family participation in the life of the school, and efforts to bridge cultural and individual differences to achieve mutual understanding are especially important in establishing the security that children require to thrive emotionally and interpersonally. To ensure that families have opportunities to participate in the classroom and confidence in the quality of care their children are receiving, the program maintains an open-door policy- meaning that families always have access to the classrooms.

Most of the children in the program achieve developmentally appropriate mastery of these skills through participation in the curriculum. Some children require additional opportunities to practice and reinforce the building of social, emotional and behavioral skills, and our program provides this through small group activities aimed at further facilitating skill development. A much smaller number of children require individualized instructional support and accommodations to achieve progress in these areas, which our program provides in collaboration with families and specialists.

At no time does the program shame, demean, isolate, inflict physical punishment, deny basic needs (such as food, rest, toileting or comfort), bribe or negatively compare children. Adult responses to children's behavior include positive affirmation, developmentally appropriate instruction, modeling appropriate behavior and supporting other children in learning how to effectively negotiate interactions with a peer who is struggling in this area.

### **Staff**

The Prouty Center is proud to employ a staff of exceptionally well qualified and committed teachers and administrators. Winston Prouty has attracted some teachers that have been with the program for years.

The program is overseen by the ELC Coordinator who has a bachelor's of science degree in early childhood education and early childhood special needs and learning. She has experience as a teacher and program administrator. The primary role of the ELC Coordinator is to provide leadership, supervision, and coaching to the teaching staff and to ensure that the program continuously meets the developmental needs of children and families.

The ELC Administrative Coordinator has an associate's degree in nursing with previous teaching experience. The primary role of the ELC Administrative Coordinator is to ensure the smooth daily operation of the program by; managing program documents and scheduling, maintaining licensing and accreditation, and keeping families informed of upcoming events at the program and in the community by keeping the parent bulletin board up to date and providing written notices to families.

Each classroom has a Lead Teacher who has either a master's or bachelor's degree in education, or at least thirty-six credits beyond a bachelor's degree in education. The primary role of the Lead Teacher is to meet the developmental needs of the children in the classroom by designing and implementing curriculum, providing mentoring and supervision to assistant teaching staff and establishing meaningful, collaborative relationships with families.

Assistant Teachers and Floater Teachers in the program have diverse educational backgrounds ranging from college coursework in early childhood to undergraduate and graduate degrees. The primary role of the Assistant and Floater Teacher is to support the work of the Lead Teacher through active participation in curriculum implementation and building relationships with children and families.

All staff have individual performance previews at the beginning of the program year to set goals for advancing the program and the individual, address any problems in performance and plan the completion of at least fifteen annual hours of professional development activities. Progress is formally assessed through a written performance review at the end of the program year.

#### **Daily Schedule**

The daily schedule for each classroom is provided to families at the beginning of each program year, is posted in each classroom and is available in the ELC Office. The following activities occur daily in every classroom: morning and afternoon snack, lunch, morning and afternoon outdoor play, rest-time, whole group meeting, book reading; free play, supported dramatic play, and planned curricular activities.

#### **Child Assessments**

The ELC conducts formal assessments of each child's progress two times annually and informal assessments on an ongoing basis. The information obtained through these assessments aligns with curriculum objectives and is used for a wide variety of purposes related to individual children, including monitoring child progress, developing goals for individual children, communicating with families and current service providers, determining whether a referral for specialized services is appropriate and guiding curriculum planning during weekly teaching team meetings.

All children in the program are assessed at the time of enrollment of each year using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social Emotional (ASQSE). The ASQSE is a norm-referenced screening questionnaire designed to identify children in need of further assessment for social and/or emotional delays.

Children who do not receive either early intervention or special education services are assessed in the fall and again in the spring using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). The ASQ is a norm-referenced screening questionnaire designed to identify children in need of further assessment for developmental delays. It is also used to confirm that children whose development was typical on past

screenings are continuing to make appropriate developmental progress in the following areas: Communication, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Problem Solving and Personal-Social. Families are asked to participate in the assessment by completing a questionnaire. In the infant/toddler classrooms, teachers also complete this same questionnaire.

Children whose ASQ results indicate a need for further evaluation are referred to appropriate providers with the permission of their family. Children whose ASQ or ASQSE results indicate a possible delay that does not require an immediate referral are provided with targeted learning opportunities in the classroom and suggestions for activities for families to engage in at home. These children are rescreened at the next available screening interval.

Children who are ages three and four on September 1st of the program year are assessed in the fall and again in the spring using the secure online version of Teaching Strategies GOLD. Teaching Strategies GOLD is an observation-based assessment system that combines documentation of development in the Social-Emotional, Physical, Oral Language and Cognitive domains with performance tasks that assess selected predictors of school success in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy. The assessment program is able to generate a list of suggested activities for each child designed to support his or her individual development, which we are happy to make available to families.

The English Language Acquisition component of Teaching Strategies GOLD is completed for any child in the program who meets the following three criteria: acquiring English as a second or dual language, scored below age range in the relevant section of the ASQ/GOLD, does not already have a current, more comprehensive evaluation of language development by a qualified specialist. In addition, any child who enters the program more than three months in advance of the next upcoming assessment period is screened using the ASQ.

Both the ASQ and Teaching Strategies GOLD are completed by the Lead Teacher with consultation from the Assistant Teacher and the ELC Coordinator, all of whom have received any training relevant to the use of a specific assessment. Each assessment is primarily completed in the classroom during regular activities (for example recording that a child is able to recognize an AB pattern while stringing beads with a friend). There are rare occasions when children are assessed apart from the group in an area outside the classroom, if doing so supports the goal of obtaining the most accurate information. Children are used to teachers recording observations and engaging with them in sustained activities, so most assessments have a very informal feel for them. That said, we welcome input from families as to how we can best obtain information while meeting their child's needs. We are happy to offer blank assessment forms for any family who would like to look them over in the ELC Office or at home.

### **Communication of Child Progress**

Parents review each of their children completed ASQ-SE, ASQ's and are provided with a summary of their child's progress in each of the Teaching Strategy GOLD domains as part of a written narrative report completed by the Lead Teacher with consultation from the Assistant Teacher and the ELC Coordinator. In addition to including information obtained through these formal assessment measures,

reports also serve to keep parents informed about how their child is adjusting to the program in the fall, supports that are in place to facilitate their child's transition to a new classroom or to Kindergarten at the end of the year, any concerns about the child's progress, and general information concerning the child's strengths and interests and the classroom curriculum.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held twice each year. Families have the option of scheduling the first of these conferences as a home visit, which provides teachers and families with an opportunity to get to know one another better in the child's primary environment. Often, this allows teachers to learn about the child's home culture and experiences, which can be later integrated in classroom activities. Each of these conferences provides an opportunity to discuss in-person the child's progress, answer questions that parents might have about what they can expect in the next stage of their child's development and discuss any relevant concerns. A primary purpose of these conferences is to allow teachers and families to collaborate on setting individual goals for children that will guide teaching and assessment.

Families are always welcomed and encouraged to discuss questions and concerns as they arise with either the classroom teaching team or the ELC Coordinator. In turn, families can expect that the program will keep them informed of their child's progress, day-to-day needs and major concerns on an ongoing basis through daily or weekly classroom notes, in-person conversation at drop-off and pick-up and phone calls and e-mail as needed.

### **Referrals**

If either an assessment measure indicates that a child is at risk of delay in an area of development or the Lead Teacher has concerns regarding the overall trajectory of a child's developmental progress, the family's permission will be sought to refer the child to the appropriate outside agency for further evaluation and possible support services. In addition, families may be asked to consult with their child's primary care provider about an ongoing or acute problem that may be adversely affecting the child's development (for example chronic diarrhea). In many instances, it is possible for the child to receive support services (speech and language, occupational therapy, etc.) while in attendance at the ELC if the family so chooses. We welcome the consultation of the various professionals who provide young children with educational and mental health services and are committed to working collaboratively to support children's optimal development in our program.

If a family chooses not to access outside evaluations and support services or these services do not include consultation to the program, an internal Support Plan may be put into place by the ELC Coordinator in collaboration with Lead Teacher and the family. This plan will identify any accommodations or individualized instruction required to support the child in the classroom. Consultation from a relevant professional may be a condition of continued enrollment in the event that the program cannot meet the needs of a child without outside expertise.

### Program Assessment and Improvement

The quality of care and early learning opportunities provided at the program are self-assessed twice annually in an effort to ensure that children's needs are being continuously met by the program. An assessment tool called The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is completed in the fall and spring in each classroom using either the toddler or preschool version of the tool. These assessments are completed by Prouty staff or local professionals who have completed CLASS training and are currently certified to complete the assessment. Individual child assessments are then compiled for each classroom and reviewed. The information provided by these assessments is used to inform decisions made regarding the professional development needs of individual teachers and the staff as a whole. As an example, if a number of children in a classroom are showing relatively weak skills in one area, the teachers in that room may participate in curriculum coaching on that topic, attend a relevant training, or be asked to more clearly demonstrate how they will meet the learning needs of children in this area.

Families are asked to complete an annual survey, which is used to guide plans for program improvement. Families are strongly encouraged to share any thoughts they have as to how the program could better meet their needs. Staff are also asked for feedback in both formal and informal ways and encouraged to put forth any suggestions they might have. Finally, the ELC holds an annual meeting for all staff and families to discuss any major changes in program policy and direction and incorporate feedback for future planning.

## **Section 4: Health & Safety**

### Medical Conditions

The ELC asks that families disclose any medical condition a child has been diagnosed with as part of its enrollment process. If an enrolled child is newly diagnosed with a medical condition, we ask that you bring this information to the attention of the ELC Administrative Coordinator so that your child's file can be updated and any necessary information can be obtained from the child's primary care or specialty provider. Written information from the child's health care provider is required for any child diagnosed with asthma and/or allergies. In particular, the written information received from the child's health care provider must include a list of asthma triggers and/or allergens to be avoided and detailed instructions to follow if the child shows symptoms of an asthma attack or comes into contact with an allergen. In addition, any medications listed within these instructions (for example EpiPen Jr.) must be provided to the ELC Office and kept current for the child to be in attendance in the program.

### Medication

The ELC will administer over the counter and prescription medications to children if:

- the parent or legal guardian has completed the ELC Medication Administration Form
- the medication is provided to the ELC Office in the original packaging **AND**
- the child's physician has provided written instructions including child's name, name of the medication, appropriate dosage, time of administration, and method of administration



Medications are only administered by the ELC Coordinator, Lead Teachers or ELC Administrative Coordinator. We request that, whenever possible, families administer the first dose of a new medication while the child is at home to minimize the risk of an adverse reaction while in attendance in the program. All medication is stored in either a locked cabinet in the ELC Office or a lock-box in the refrigerator. Medication is not allowed in children's cubbies or mailboxes. If the person picking up your child needs to also pick up medication, please be sure to leave that medication in the ELC office for locked storage.

### **Routine Health Services, including Immunizations**

The ELC requires documentation of routine health services including either immunizations or immunization exemption within six weeks of a child's entry into the program and as age-appropriate thereafter according to the published schedules of the Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Academy of Family Practice. If a child is overdue for routine health services or immunizations, the parent or legal guardian must provide the ELC with documentation that an appointment has been scheduled to receive these services before the child will be allowed re-entry into the program.

### **Severe Allergies**

When a child with a severe allergy is enrolled at the ELC, precautions will be taken in accordance with the written instructions provided by the child's health care provider. The entire center will be notified that there is an enrolled child with a severe allergy. A sign will be posted outside the classroom, in the kitchen where food is stored and at both main entrances. Families and staff will be given explicit information as to how to comply with any necessary precautions (for example refraining from sending any nut products to school). The same procedures will apply to an adult with a severe allergy.

### **Illness**

When a child is diagnosed by a healthcare provider with a communicable disease, families should notify the ELC Administrative Coordinator who will provide relevant information to all other families in the program. Written information will include signs and symptoms, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the ELC or that are advised at home. Families will also be notified verbally that this written information is available at drop-off and pick-up times.

In the event of a confirmed case of a vaccine-preventable disease at the Early Learning Center, any child who has not received the relevant vaccine due to exemption will be excluded from the program until such time as the program's health care consultant authorizes re-entry.

A health check of each child is performed daily by the classroom teaching team who observe children for signs of obvious illness. Children with minor cold symptoms will be taught to cough and sneeze into their elbows and all adults members of the community are asked to do the same. Families will be asked to pick-up their child if the child exhibits any of the following:

- Fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or greater
- Flu like symptoms (cough, sore throat, runny/stuffy nose, aches, headache, fatigue)
- Symptoms of a possible severe illness (severe coughing, skin discoloration, labored breathing)
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Vomiting
- Two or more loose stools above normal for that child
- Diarrhea that cannot be contained in a diaper or that prevents child from being able to access toilet in time

Children who are ill will be made comfortable on a rest mat in the ELC Office or Main Office in the care of the ELC Administrative Coordinator until a caregiver arrives for pick-up. Families are encouraged to seek consultation from a healthcare professional early in the course of an illness and to develop an emergency care plan for their child in the event of illness. Children should remain home until they have been free of fever (without the aid of fever reducing medications), vomiting, diarrhea and loose stools for 24 hours and are able to resume normal activity levels or until such time as a healthcare professional confirms the child is free of communicable disease. A child may not attend the ELC with the following contagious diseases until the requirements listed with each disease are met. Proof of treatment is required.

- Tuberculosis: until health care provider states that the child can attend
- Impetigo: until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- Chicken Pox: until 6 days after onset of rash or until all sores have crusted and dried
- Pertussis: until completion of 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment
- Strep Throat: until 24 hours after treatment is initiated and fever free
- Mumps: until 9 days after onset of parotid gland swelling
- Measles: until 6 days after onset of rash
- Rubella: until 6 days after onset of rash

In the case of infestation, the ELC strongly recommends that families consult their child's healthcare provider and follow recommendations for treatment. The child can be re-admitted to the program as soon as the ELC office confirms that there is no evidence of live infestation upon examination of the child in a private area. All children in the program will be checked for evidence of live infestation in a private area on a day when any child is found to have a live infestation and all carpets in the classroom will be vacuumed, surfaces sanitized and all bedding and fabrics washed and dried.

### Accidents

If a child should accidentally suffer a minor or major injury while in attendance at the ELC, the teacher present will treat the injury using appropriate first aid if necessary and complete an accident report. This report is to be provided to the family, the Executive Director and the ELC Coordinator the same day and parents are asked to sign that they have received their copy. Families, the Executive Director and the ELC Coordinator will be immediately notified if a child requires emergency medical care. There is always a teacher with current CPR and First Aid training present with each group of children and staff are to

wear gloves whenever contamination with blood may occur. First Aid kits are located in the ELC Office, on the playground and the evacuation kit. Each classroom also has a First Aid kit which is taken on all walks and field trips.

### **Incidents**

Families and staff are asked to relay any unusual or concerning incidents to the ELC Administrative Coordinator at the time they occur (for example a broken window or unusual adult behavior).

### **Hand Washing**

Families are asked to assist their children in washing their hands upon entering the classroom. Family members who are planning on remaining in the classroom for more than several minutes to drop-off or pick-up a child are also asked to wash their hands when arriving. All staff members, volunteers and service providers must wash their hands upon entering any classroom. Children and adults must also wash their hands when it would reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases, after diapering or toileting, after handling bodily fluids, before eating, before handling, preparing or serving food, after playing in shared water, handling animals or material that may be contaminated by contact with animals, and before and after visiting with another group of children. In addition, adults must also wash their hands before and after feeding a child, before and after administering medication, before diapering, after handling trash or cleaning and after assisting a child with toileting.

Teachers assist children with hand washing as is developmentally appropriate and both children and adults must use liquid soap and running water while rubbing hands vigorously (including between fingers, back of hands, wrists and under jewelry and fingernails) for at least 10 seconds and dry hands with a single use paper towel, which should in turn be used to turn off the faucet before disposal.

Alcohol based hand rubs are only used in the event that running water is unavailable on a field trip. Hand washing sinks are never used to prepare food, bathe children or remove fecal material.

### **Sanitation**

Sprays, deodorizers and air freshening chemicals are not used to control odors in any area of the building. Instead areas are properly vented and sanitized according to the NAEYC Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table. In particular, trash bins are emptied daily; surfaces that could potentially come into contact with bodily fluids are disposable or sanitizable; water tables are emptied, sanitized and refilled in between each group of children who may not drink the water or participate if they have open sores on their hands; spills of bodily fluids are cleaned immediately with detergent and water rinsing using barriers to minimize the risk of contact by staff wearing latex or vinyl gloves; rugs are cleaned by blotting, spot cleaning with a detergent-disinfectant and scheduled shampoo and steam cleanings; objects placed in a child's mouth are washed either in the dishwasher or by hand using soapy water and sanitized and air dried before being used by another child; staff wear gloves when preparing and serving food; and diapers are enclosed in plastic and disposed of in a closed, hands-free designated trash bin. The center follows an Integrated Pest Management Plan to ensure that the program is free from little critters.

### **Feeding**

Families are expected to provide lunch, including a drink for their children each day. The center does not permit candy or soda and families are provided with guidelines for children's nutritional intake upon enrollment. In addition, families are asked to pre-cut food for children under the age of three into pieces no larger than ½ inch square and the following foods are not permitted for children under the age of four: hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels and peanut butter that has not been spread. Any item that is best microwaved and stirred before serving can be stored in the program refrigerator on the appropriate shelf and must be labeled with the child's name. For reasons of space, we ask that items to be kept cold be packed with a cold pack in the child's lunch box except for cups of milk which should be labeled and stored in the fridge. Milk will be served cold and breast milk will be gently mixed, not shaken, first. Any remaining food sent from home is refrigerated within an hour and returned home the same day.

All children in the toddler and preschool classrooms drink from either sippy cups or open cups. Children may drink and eat only when seated at the table where adults support them to eat and drink independently.

The ELC provides snack twice daily for toddlers and preschoolers around 9am and following rest-time. A written snack menu can be found posted on the program refrigerator and copies are available for families in the ELC office upon request. Other than on special occasions, the program does not serve juice to children and water is made available with every snack and at any time throughout the day. The program does not serve any of the items listed as not permitted above or unpasteurized cider or dairy products and foods that require cutting are no larger than ½ inch square when served to children under three. Snacks consist of at least two food groups and are prepared, served and stored in accordance with the US Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines.

Families with children enrolled in the infant program are asked to provide written feeding instructions specifying the child's primary source of nutrition (breast milk, infant formula, or both) and feeding schedule. The instructions should be updated as the child's diet changes. Infants will be fed according to their individual feeding schedule and needs. Introductions to all new foods shall be done by the family.

Families are asked to provide written information regarding any dietary restrictions a child may have to the ELC Administrative Coordinator, so that the program may ensure that the child is not offered an inappropriate food item. Likewise, written information must be provided from a health care professional if a child needs to be fed at different intervals than scheduled by the program due to a medical condition. Children with feeding tubes are only fed by appropriately trained staff. A daily feeding log is kept for any child with a specialized feeding plan.

Mothers are welcome to breast feed while at the ELC in the office, classroom, playroom or any other space that seems comfortable.

### **Tooth Brushing**

Children in toddler and preschool classrooms brush their teeth and gums daily. Families are asked to provide their child with a labeled toothbrush that is replaced as recommended and after a period of illness. Families are welcome to provide toothpaste for their children if they choose. Teachers will assist children in dispensing toothpaste in appropriate amounts (size of a grain of rice for toddlers and the size of a pea for preschool age children). Toothbrushes are stored so that they can air dry and do not touch any other toothbrush, soap, towels or drinking cups.

### **Diapering and Toileting**

Children's diapers are checked at least every two hours and upon waking up and are changed promptly when wet or soiled. Families are expected to provide disposable diapers and wipes. Families may also provide non-prescription diaper cream with written permission to apply it as requested and/or as the teaching team determines it is needed. Cloth diapers are prohibited unless prescribed by a healthcare professional and accompanied by a securely fastening waterproof cover to be changed with every liner. If used, cloth diapers will not be rinsed, but instead placed immediately in a plastic bag, tied and sent home with the child the same day.

Teachers always wash their hands with soap before and after changing diapers, wear gloves during diaper changes, disinfect the changing table following a diaper change and have a hand on the child at all times. Each classroom has a designated diaper changing station that is used exclusively by the children in that group, is located at least three feet from activity areas and is never used to prepare food, store objects or for any other purposes. There is a designated hands-free diaper trash can in each classroom, which is kept closed and inaccessible to children. Staff that have food preparation responsibilities do not change diapers until they have finished preparing food for the day.

Children's diapers are only ever changed by a trusted caregiver. Volunteers are never allowed to change diapers and substitute teachers are only allowed to change diapers once they have developed rapport with an individual child. Families may only change their own child.

Children are allowed to use the bathroom at any time and are encouraged to use the bathroom at predictable times each day, including before leaving on a field trip and before and after rest-time. The toddler and preschool classrooms all have bathrooms within the classroom. Potty chairs are not used in the program. The ELC does not require children to be using the toilet independently before transitioning to or enrolling in a preschool classroom.

Teachers support children in using the bathroom independently by providing verbal instruction whenever possible. If necessary, teachers will assist children with wiping or changing clothes, but only with the permission of the child and while wearing gloves. Teachers do not scold or reprimand children who have had accidents in any way and instead reassure the child that accidents are a part of learning to use the toilet and assist the child in changing into a fresh set of clothes. In addition, teachers will not either bribe children to use the toilet or provide rewards when children successfully use the toilet, though we are sure to congratulate them!

### **Napping & Resting**

There is a daily rest-time period in each classroom. During this time, children are asked to lie quietly on their mats while adults rotate among children offering any assistance (back rubbing, singing, etc.) they need to make themselves comfortable and either fall asleep or rest quietly. Children who do not fall asleep will be provided with alternate, quiet activities and will not be made to stay on their rest mat, though they are taught to be as quiet as is appropriate for their age group at this time. The center washes all bedding once weekly and as needed.

Children under twelve months of age shall use cribs or port-a-cribs and will be allowed to nap when tired. Infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep. No positioning devices will be used unless required by the child's health care provider. Instructions for the use of any such device will be kept in the child's file in writing from the child's health care provider.

### **Outdoor Play**

Families are expected to provide weather appropriate clothing, sunscreen and insect repellent for their child. In particular, children must have warm socks, boots, hat, gloves, snow pants and coat in the winter, raincoat and boots on drizzly days and a pair of sneakers (or other closed-toe shoes) in the summer. Children will be allowed to play in snow, rain and mud and changed promptly if they are becoming cold, wet or uncomfortable in any way. Children are expected to keep appropriate outerwear on while playing outdoors. Shade and drinking water are available to children when outdoors during warm weather months.

Children under the age of three will not be permitted to play outdoors when either the actual temperature or the wind chill temperature is 20 degrees or below. Children three and up will be permitted to play outdoors at these temperatures at the discretion of the program. Children of any age will not be permitted to play outdoors when public health officials advise against outdoor play due to poor air quality or other forms of potentially dangerous weather. While the program does not have indoor play equipment, children are provided with indoor opportunities for gross motor activity (ride-ons, jump-rope, movement activities, etc.) anytime outdoor play is suspended.

With written permission from the parent or legal guardian, the center will apply sunscreen and insect-repellant provided by families. Teachers will apply sunscreen (UVA/UVB protection of 15 or higher) before playing outdoors in the spring and summer months. Insect repellent, which must contain DEET, will be applied no more than once a day when public health authorities recommend use of insect repellent due to high risk of insect-borne disease. Teachers wear gloves and follow the directions on the bottle when applying sunscreen and insect repellent.

Staff are assigned to closely monitor and "spot" children when injury could occur from falls or potentially unsafe conditions such as walking on a stretch of road where the sidewalk is temporarily closed.

### **Supervision**

Children are supervised by sight at all times, with the exception of children ages three and up who may use the bathroom independently for up to several minutes. The program does not use video surveillance or sound monitors. Children are not permitted to leave the classrooms unless they have permission, a designated purpose (for example placing an item in cubby) and are in view of a teacher at all times. Children are never allowed to open outside doors while in the care of either the program or their families. All items in classrooms for children under the age of three have been checked for safety using a choke tube.

The supervision ratios and group sizes for each age group are as follows: one adult for every four children under the age of two and no more than eight children per group, one adult for every five children between the ages of two and three and no more than ten per group, one adult for every nine children between the ages of three and four and no more than seventeen per group, one adult for every ten children between ages four and five and no more than seventeen per group. These ratios are in effect for all indoor and outdoor activities at the ELC, though classrooms may be briefly out of ratio to attend to the needs of a child (for example bringing a child in from the playground to use the bathroom). The staff to child supervision ratio is reduced to 1:4 for children of any age when on a field trip where children will be swimming. Finally, there may be no more than four children for every one chaperone on a field trip.

Volunteers and observers are never responsible for supervision or cleaning blood or vomit and families are only ever responsible for the supervision of their own child while present at the ELC. In addition, new substitute teachers are at least 18 years old, not left alone with children and not allowed to transport children on field trips or allowed to change diapers or apply sunscreen or insect repellent until they have developed rapport with individual children. All subs and volunteers are made aware of known food allergies and sign a confidentiality statement.

### **Animal Safety**

The ELC makes every effort to ensure that animals at the center shall not present a danger or health hazard to the children. If an animal will be visiting the classroom, families are first asked to sign permission for their child to interact with the animal and an alternate activity is offered to children whose families are not comfortable granting permission to participate. The ELC must have evidence on file indicating appropriate rabies shots and immunizations have been given to a dog, cat or ferret scheduled to visit. Any incident where a child is bitten during the program is immediately reported to the Vermont state licensing division and the State Public Health Veterinarian by the ELC Administrative Coordinator

### **Protection from Environmental Hazards**

The physical building and grounds are kept as free as possible from tripping hazards including unsecured floor coverings; the hot water heater is set to less than 120 degrees to prevent burning or scalding; all classroom outlets are grounded and all outlets in non-classroom spaces are either grounded or have outlet covers to prevent electrical shock, the building has passed an EMP inspection ensuring that it is

lead safe, pull cords are kept secured, all art materials are non-toxic, pressure treated wood containing creosote or pentachlorophenol is not present, all plumbing complies with plumbing codes and the drinking water has been tested according to licensing regulations and found to be lead safe, the building is kept in good repair, the grounds are routinely inspected by a contracted maintenance worker who ensures that the ground are free of harmful animals, pests and poisonous plants, pesticides and herbicides are applied in a manner that conforms with manufacturer instructions and prevents risk of exposure to children including inhalation and skin contact by a commercial applicator certified by the Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food & Markets and families are notified in advance, children are not permitted near the kitchen stove, and all areas renovated with new materials such as tile, carpet, varnish and paint are properly ventilated before exposure to children.

### **Child Safety Seats**

Families are advised that Vermont State Law requires children under the age of sixteen be properly restrained when riding in a vehicle. Children shall not be placed in a seat that has a functioning airbag. All other passengers must use a seatbelt. Families must provide the ELC with an appropriate car seat or booster seat if a child is to be transported as part of a field trip.

### **Pedestrian Safety**

All children in the program learn pedestrian safety skills through participation in walking field trips around the neighborhood. In particular, staff both model and require children to walk on the sidewalk, stop at all street corners and stop signs, look both ways and back again before crossing the street, remain with a designated partner, and remain next to/ behind the first teacher and next to/ in front of the second teacher. Accommodations are made to ensure that all children in the classroom can participate during walks around the neighborhood.

### **Child Guidance**

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Children are provided with consistent routines and behavioral guidance, including clear expectations and intentional opportunities to learn and practice social and emotional-regulation skills. Communicating consistent clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions. Each student at the Winston Prouty Center has a right to learn in a safe and friendly place, be treated with respect, and receive the help and support of caring adults. When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to problem solve using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. If, in spite of these proactive measures, a preschool age child is behaving in a way that poses an immediate threat to anyone's personal safety, a trained staff member will step in. Uninvolved children will be brought out of harm's



way and the trained staff member will follow appropriate procedures to verbally de-escalate the child as quickly as possible. Some children are provided with more ongoing supports to be successful and it may take a longer time frame. The Prouty Center adheres to both Vermont state regulations pertaining to the use of restraint in schools and the U.S. Department of Education Restraint and Seclusion: Resource Document. In accordance to Vermont Rule 4500, the superintendent of the appropriate supervisory union will be notified in writing on the same day as the event if a child enrolled in the Public Pre-K program were to be restrained.

All staff are trained to handle challenging behaviors without physical intervention whenever possible. A written safety plan will be developed if a child needs extra supports and strategies so all the staff who work with this child are aware of his/her needs.

Positive Guidance is looking at each situation through the lens of child development and guiding children's behavior. Considering the child's developmental needs and responding in a way to teach children how to modify and control their own behavior as they grow and mature. Instead of expecting an immediate change in a child's behavior, we think about behavior as a developmental process that takes time to master. Below are some examples of how the program approaches this:

#### Positive Guidance Description for Age Groups:

##### *Young Infant*

- \*Review or observe the physical surrounding in which infants play and interact to ensure safety of the environment.
- \*Engage in one-on-one play or conversation-take the infant's lead and follow her or his interests.
- \*Introduce turn-taking games like rolling a ball back and forth or peekaboo.
- \*Use simple words and signs to help express young infants' needs.
- \*Maintain a consistent, predictable schedule involving responsive routines.

##### *Older Infant*

- \*Model empathy for infants to imitate.
- \*Use a calm tone and make statements when talking with infants about the ways you are keeping them safe.
- \*Use simple words and signs to help them express their needs.
- \*Maintain a consistent, predictable schedule involving responsive routines.
- \*Offer two choices to infants, such as choosing between two activities or walking or being carried to the diaper changing-changing table.

##### *Toddler*

- \*Provide acceptable alternatives to behaviors.
- \*Teach feeling words to help toddlers express strong emotions.
- \*Use redirection, distraction and active listening with toddlers who say, "No" or are having trouble cooperating.
- \*Use simple words and demonstrate to explain limits.

\*Use positive wording and language with toddlers, for example, “Please walk,” as opposed to “Don’t run.”

\*Begin to offer supports for negotiating materials and ideas, e.g., “I would like to use the truck in 5 minutes” or “Can I be next?”

#### *Preschooler*

\*Offer choices, e.g., hold up two pieces of clothing and ask her to select one. It may take some practice, but by offering choices she will learn to select one and follow through.

\*Respond with logical consequences: within reason let the child feel the natural consequences of his or her actions. This technique allows children the freedom they need and also allows children to learn from the unintentional consequences of their choices.

\*Think of other choices to might offer, e.g., encouraging them to select the vegetable to prepare for dinner, or which chore to complete before playing.

### **Suspected Child Abuse, Neglect or Molestation**

All forms of physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse are strictly prohibited by Prouty employees. Touch is allowed only when it is respectful and appropriate as in the case of a child who needs comfort or assistance. If any member of the Prouty community has any concerns about the treatment of a child by program staff, please bring these concerns to the immediate attention of the ELC Coordinator.

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child’s needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. Child care programs are mandated reporters under Vermont state law and are not responsible for determining whether an incident constitutes abuse or neglect. Staff are immune from disciplinary action and protected from retaliation solely for making a report of suspected child abuse and neglect unless an internal investigation proves the report was malicious.

The ELC reserves the right to remove an individual with a history of mistreatment of either children or adults in the program from a child’s authorized pick-up list after notifying the family.

### **Background Checks**

All prospective employees must be at least eighteen years old and have at least a high school degree or the equivalent. Criminal background checks are performed for all prospective staff and volunteers before they commence work with children. The ELC will not employ an individual with a history of substantiated child abuse or neglect or criminal activity including persons convicted of fraud, a felony or an offense involving violence or unlawful sexual activity or other bodily injury to another person, including but not limited to abuse, neglect or mistreatment of a child, elderly person, disabled person or animal. Criminal background checks are repeated annually for all Prouty employees. Parents with a known history of any of the above offenses are to be visually supervised at all times by program staff when present to drop-off or pick-up a child and may be restricted from areas of the building and grounds.

### **Prohibited Items**

Smoking, illegal drugs and weapons of any kind are prohibited on Prouty property at all times.

### **School Closings**

The center makes every effort to remain open on days of inclement weather, however, there may be days when the center is closed, opening is delayed or closing is early. Families are asked to check radio stations WKVT and WTSA after 6am on mornings when hazardous driving situations may exist. Families will be notified by phone if a decision is made to close the program early. Staff will receive a phone tree call after 6am and must notify their assigned co-worker(s).

### **Emergency Procedures**

Emergency procedures have been established for each type of possible anticipated emergency. Families are required to keep all emergency contact and insurance information up to date with the ELC Office and are asked to keep directions to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and off-site evacuation locations immediately accessible. Classrooms and the ELC Office keep emergency contact information for each child securely stored by the classroom phone which displays contact information for all emergency responders. Children's health insurance information and consent forms are accessible in the ELC office.

#### **Medical Emergency**

If a child needs emergency medical attention, Rescue, Inc. (911) and then the child's parent or legal guardian are to be notified, in that order. A severely injured child will be moved only at the instruction of medical personnel unless immediate movement is necessitated by an emergency. Depending on timing, families may want to go directly to the emergency room at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital to meet their child. If a child needs to be transported by ambulance and a parent or legal guardian is not present at the time of transport, the child will be accompanied by the ELC Coordinator or the ELC Administrative Coordinator who will remain with the child until the family is present. The same protocol is to be followed for any adult needing emergency medical services. A CPR and First Aid trained staff member is always present with each group of children.

### Shelter in Place

The ELC will conduct a Shelter in Place emergency response in the event that an emergency event requires people to stay in their current location as in the examples of a tornado or armed assailant. All individuals present will remain in the building and each group of children and adults has been assigned a secure location. Every reasonable attempt has been made to ensure the safety of our community. Shelter in Place drills are held twice annually.

### Evacuation

If an emergency event causes it to be unsafe to remain at the Prouty Center, the building will be immediately evacuated. In all instances other than a nuclear disaster, the ELC will evacuate the building to stand in front of the maintenance garage. If necessary, all children and adults present will relocate to the gym in Croker Hall. We will remain there until emergency responders have cleared the building for occupancy. If the building is unfit to return to, parents will be promptly notified and asked to immediately pick their children up.

In the event of a nuclear disaster, people will be immediately evacuated and driven in staff-owned vehicles to Bellows Falls High School. Families will be notified upon arrival that their child has arrived safely and can be picked up from BFHS. Please bear in mind that cell phones will likely be the only form of contact available in this situation.

An evacuation kit containing all necessary supplies and contact information is stored in the ELC and taken in the event of an evacuation. Evacuation drills to the front of the maintenance garage occur monthly. Directions to Bellows Falls High School are as follows:

From the Winston Prouty Center to Bellows Falls High School:

Turn right onto Maple Street, stay right on Fairview Street at the fork, turn right at the stop sign onto Canal Street and turn right onto I-91 North and follow to Exit 5. At the bottom of the exit ramp, turn right onto I-91 access road. At the bottom of the access road, turn left onto Route 5 North.

Approximately 1 mile up the road, on the left, turn into the road marked Bellows Falls Union High School and continue on the road to the back of the school.

## **Section 5: Enrollment**

### Process

The Winston Prouty Early Learning Center is committed to enrolling groups of children who represent the full range of diversity in our community. The program does not discriminate in its practices on the basis of race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, language, disability status, family composition or child or family history. It does prioritize the enrollment of children of past or current Prouty families and employees. In addition, the program strives to maintain an equal number of girls and boys in each classroom and to achieve a balanced group of children who are both typically developing and who have special needs. The program maintains a wait list and openings are offered to families in accordance with

that list. Families are welcome to contact the ELC Administrative Coordinator to place a child on the wait list or with any questions.

If a spot opens up for a child, the family will be contacted immediately and asked to make a decision within an agreed upon time frame. The program requires a non-refundable deposit of one month's tuition, which is applied to the first month's attendance and is due when the family accepts the slot. All enrollment paperwork must be complete in order for the child to begin attending the program and, unless alternate arrangements have been made with the ELC Administrative Coordinator, the child must have completed a minimum of three visits to the classroom. These visits provide the child with a chance to adjust to the classroom in the presence of a familiar caregiver and give the family and teachers time to get to know one another through informal conversation and an orientation for new families. Additional visits may be required beyond the child's scheduled start date if the child has not made enough progress adjusting to the classroom to attend independently. Tuition is due as of the originally agreed upon start date.

### **Belongings**

Families are expected to provide the following items for their children while at school, though we are happy to provide assistance to families for whom this is a hardship:

- A toothbrush
- Full set of spare clothing appropriate for the weather
- crib sheet and blanket
- Lunch with drink daily
- Outerwear appropriate for the weather (boots, snow pants, coat, gloves, hat, raincoat, rain boots, closed-toe shoes in the summer)
- Diapers and wipes
- photos of family members so that children can visit and share their families throughout the day
- Families may also provide a beloved stuffed animal, sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper cream and toothpaste if they choose

Teachers will show children and families where children's belongings can be stored when they enter the program. Families will also be provided with a family mailbox and asked to check it daily for notices, artwork and other items. Paperwork and tuition can be given to the ELC Administrative Coordinator or left in her mailbox at the Main Office. If the office is closed, items can be left in the locked ELC Office Box found in the ELC hallway.

If an item does not return home, families are asked to first check the Lost and Found in the ELC hallway and then check with the classroom teachers. Personal items should be clearly labeled with the child's name whenever possible. Families are asked to please send children to school in play clothes that are comfortable and that can get messy with a lot of fun materials; glue, paint, mud, markers, sand, etc.

### **Parent Hours**

As a condition of enrollment, families are asked to donate ten volunteer hours for each child enrolled in the program in the period from September through June of each year. There are many opportunities to earn parent hours including work parties, sharing a talent or tradition with a classroom, helping to plan curriculum projects, organizing family events, donating requested items and either planning or attending special programs that offer support and education for families. Each classroom has a Parent Participation Log where parents are asked to log their volunteer hours as they complete them.

### **Celebrations**

If your family is throwing a party and inviting other children and families from the ELC, we ask that you only use the ELC mailboxes to distribute invitations if all children in the class are being invited.

Children, families and staff at the ELC celebrate many different occasions throughout the year. In addition, the ELC welcomes families to come teach children about the holidays and traditions they celebrate at home. The program recognizes the birthdays of those children whose families celebrate them and we are happy to have families provide a special treat for the occasion.

### **Field trips**

Families are asked to sign a permission form allowing the program to take children on walking field trips in the neighborhood during the enrollment process. The classroom teaching team is responsible for completing a Walking Field Trip Form each time they leave the property and putting it on their classroom doors, so that the program is aware of where all children and staff members are throughout the program day.

There are times when teachers want to take children off-site for activities related to the curriculum (for example to observe tadpoles when learning about the life cycle of frogs) that are not accessible by walking. Teachers must complete a Field Trip Form and submit it to the ELC Office and provide permission slips for each family to sign. Families and regular staff may use their personal vehicles to transport children to and from the field trip as long as the child has a signed permission slip, the child is appropriately secured in a child safety seat or booster seat and the ELC office has documentation that the vehicle is properly insured. Staff are prohibited from transporting children at all other times.

### **Lateness and Absences**

Children enrolled in the preschool classrooms are ideally able to arrive and settle into the classroom by 8:30am and we encourage families in the toddler classrooms to do the same. Children entering late are often not ready to participate with the group as they are often hoping for a chance to do the activities they have missed. We do understand that there are any number of things that make families late on occasion (appointments, traffic, visiting grandparents, etc.)!

Families are asked to notify the ELC Administrative Coordinator when they know their child will be absent either in advance (vacations) or by 9am on the day of the absence (illness). Families receiving

child care subsidy should be aware that they are required to provide a doctor's note if their child has been absent for five or more days. Tuition is due, and refunds will not be provided, regardless of whether a child is present at the program.

### **Drop-Off & Pick-Up**

Families are asked to provide a list of individuals who have permission to pick-up their child from the program as part of the enrollment process. Each person on this list who will be regularly picking up the child is issued a separate pin number that can be used to enter the building and is required to keep this information confidential. Individuals who will be picking up a child only rarely or in case of emergency are asked to ring the side door bell upon arrival and will be required to present a valid driver's license before picking up the child. Families may add individuals to their child's authorized pick-up list by filling out the Authorized Pick Up form and returning it to the ELC Office. In an emergency, families may add an individual to the pick-up list by speaking to the ELC Office or a teacher if the office is closed.

Every child has a set drop-off and pick-up time chosen at the time of enrollment. Families are always welcome to pick-up in advance of this time, but will be charged a late fee of \$20 if they are up to 15 minutes late picking up and \$20 thereafter for every 15-minute period. Families interested in adjusting their drop-off and/or pick-up times must speak to the ELC Administrative Coordinator who will make every effort to meet their needs, however we cannot guarantee changes after the program year has begun. Families are responsible for signing their child in and out of the classroom each day using the classroom sign-in sheet.

### **Payment**

Families sign a financial contract as part of the enrollment process, which occurs when the child first joins the program and each fall thereafter. Families should reference this document with any questions they may have and are welcome to contact the ELC Administrative Coordinator for clarification.

The Prouty Center does awards scholarship funds to families for the purpose of reducing the amount of tuition a family is required to pay to send their child to the ELC and families are invited to apply for these funds as part of the enrollment process. Families whose financial situations change part way through the program year are always welcome to inquire as to whether there are remaining funds with the ELC Administrative Coordinator

The ELC accepts Vermont Child Care Subsidy. Families are encouraged to inquire about this program available through Windham Child Care Association. Please visit [www.windhamchildcare.org](http://www.windhamchildcare.org).

Winston Prouty Center is a prequalified Pre-K Program and accepts tuition payments from participating towns.

### **Classroom Placement**

Children are enrolled classrooms according to age with all children in the infant room being 6 weeks old, Elm being a year old on September 1st of the program year, all children in Maple being two years old on September 1st and so on. Exceptions are made on occasion considering many factors including individual needs, the date the child will enter Kindergarten and availability.

Children may transition from one classroom to the next in either the summer or fall depending on the needs of the child and program. Families are notified in advance of their child's transition so that they have time to get acquainted with a new teaching team and collaborate with program staff as to how to best transition their child. The ELC Education Supervisor and the child's current Lead Teacher will meet with the upcoming Lead Teacher in advance of the child's transition to share any important information and formally plan any supports needed to ensure a smooth transition. Families can generally expect that their child will transition from one classroom to the next with a group of current classmates.

Children arriving in the first hour of the program day or departing during the last hour of the program day may be dropped off or picked up from one of the other classrooms. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that children do not transition more than once during the day from one classroom to another and most children in the program participate in only one regular classroom. Efforts are made to minimize the number of teacher transitions throughout the day and program by employing floater teachers who cover in the classroom when teachers are on regularly scheduled breaks, at meeting, or absent for any reason.

### **Withdrawal from the Program**

Families are required to provide the ELC Office with two weeks written notice to withdraw a child from the program. The family may choose whether to have the child attend during this period, though tuition is due regardless of attendance. The ELC reserves the right to withdraw a child at any time and will refund any tuition funds paid in advance for days the child has not already attended.

### **Re-enrollment**

In the spring of each year, existing families who intend to have their children remain in the program for the next September through August program year are asked to complete a re-enrollment packet. Once the re-enrollment period is complete, remaining program slots are offered to children on the waiting list.

### **Program Calendar**

Families receive a program calendar at the time of initial enrollment and during annual re-enrollment thereafter. Additional copies are available at any time from the ELC Office. The program reserves the right to schedule up to three in-service days in addition to those listed on the calendar with one month's notice to families. Families are reminded that the center closes at 3:30 on the first Wednesday of the following months: October, November, December, February, March, April, May and June for Prouty staff meetings.



Child specific information including ASQ assessments, evaluations received from professionals outside our program, background information and health information are kept locked in the child's file in the ELC office. Access to this file is limited to the Executive Director, the ELC Coordinator, ELC Administrative Coordinator and the classroom teaching team.

These same staff members are also able to access Teaching Strategies GOLD assessments, which are stored electronically on the program's secure online database. As this assessment is a required component of a child's participation in the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union's Public Pre-K Partnership program, the assessment information for children enrolled in this program can also be accessed by the Vermont Department of Education and the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union.

Unless required by licensing regulations, Vermont state law or federal law, we will only make child specific information available to outside agencies or individuals with a written release from the family or guardian. Files are maintained for thirty-six months after a child is withdrawn from the program at which time it is destroyed. Files are available to families upon request.