



A Special Place Preschool **Parent Handbook**

Contact Information

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Welcome

Welcome to the YWCA of Sonoma County - A Special Place Therapeutic Preschool. This Parent Handbook will introduce you to YWCA's Children's Services. It is your responsibility to read the handbook and discuss any questions with the Center Director. We have an *Open Door Policy*, this means we encourage you to speak with the Center Director at any time if you have questions or concerns about the Center's programs or guidelines.

A Special Place (The Center) is dedicated to serving children and their families. Our goal is to create a warm, nurturing environment for children and the people who care for them. We recognize that you have entrusted us with the well-being of your child, and we intend to live up to that trust with high standards of quality and responsibility. We welcome and encourage parent's ideas, talents, and participation in the program.

Purpose

A Special Place is a full-day preschool and therapy program. The Center is licensed by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, LICENSE # 490110022, and is funded by several sources including the California Department of Education, the California Child Care Food Program, the County of Sonoma, and donations from local funders and grants.

The Center serves children who are referred to us by community resources Child Family and Youth Services, Kidsmatter and The Early Learning Institute, as well as low-income, partially subsidized, and fully subsidized families.

Wellness Therapy: Our focus is to provide a safe and caring environment where children can grow and learn and families can build and maintain a support system. Children's services at A Special Place include the opportunity to participate in small therapeutic groups led by interns, and individual play therapy sessions upon request or referral. They can also provide individual and family counseling for immediate family members. Parenting information and assistance in an emergency situation is also available for families. The YWCA's Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services program also offers weekly support groups and has a residential Safe House for adult victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault, and their children. HOTLINE 546-1234. We partner with the FJC, Family Justice Center to help victims of violent crimes.

All families participating in the program will be asked to complete a family needs assessment. This is part of our wellness policy. Please be as open and honest as possible when answering these questions; the information provided is used to help the Center's staff understand your child's development and how to best support them at school. This will also help determine the types of resources or assessments that may benefit your child or family.

We offer families the opportunity participate in Triple P parent education, or other support services either through the YWCA or CFYS. Children and families enrolled at A Special Place have a very unique opportunity to receive therapeutic services at little to no cost. We have a number of resources and can provide information about parenting activities, jobs, recovery, food and housing, legal aide, support groups, and other family-related services at the center and in the community.

Enrollment Guidelines

Admission: A waiting list for subsidized childcare is maintained through Sonoma County Child Care Council's Centralized Eligibility (CEL) list. We are required by State guidelines to give first consideration to children who are Child Family and Youth Service referrals and Foster children. If you know of a family that may qualify, please have them contact the center director at (707) 523-2337.

Enrollment: The enrollment procedure takes approximately 2 hours. There is a brief interview that includes a tour of the Center and Therapy Cottage, as well as a discussion about your family and any special situations you may have. Please arrange for a tour and make sure your child can come with you. We will interview your family and determine if you are eligible and have a need, working, attending school, seeking employment or incapacitated. At this time we will ask what other resources you may need to help strengthen your family.

Eligibility Documentation Requirements:

Total countable income

Proof of all gross monthly income for the past 30 days, including most recent pay check stubs, child support, and any other sources of income received. If your income fluctuates you will be asked to provide three to twelve months history of income.

Homelessness

A referral letter from an emergency shelter, other social service agency or a written declaration that the family is homeless.

Residency

Address verification (i.e. utility bill, rental agreement, etc)

Family Size

The inclusion of any child under the age of 18, living in the household, is verified with documentation such as: birth certificates, court orders regarding child custody, adoption documents, records of foster care placements, school or medical records, county welfare records, or other reliable documentation.

Children certified as at risk of abuse or neglect

A referral letter from Family Youth and Children's Services or a licensed legal, medical or social service agency professional (i.e. licensed therapist, counselor, social worker, etc).

Need documentation requirements:

Parents and guardians are required to demonstrate a need for child care in order for their children to be enrolled at A Special Place. For families with ongoing needs, child care can be authorized for no less than 24 months. If such a family requests a change to better meet their needs before the end of their 24-month eligibility, the center director will request any information needed, such as documentation of a change in work hours, make an update to the family file and provide a NOA. Upon enrollment, documentation of one of the allowable need categories for child care must be submitted as detailed below.

Employment

Employment verification form completed by employer or a self-employment declaration with supporting documentation must be submitted. Employment will be verified by Center Director.

Employment in the family home

If employment is in the family home or on property that includes the family's home, the parent must provide additional information about the type of work being done and its requirements, the age of the child for whom services are sought, and the specific child care needs.

Sleep Time

Child care can be authorized in order for a parent to sleep if they work between the hours of 10:00p.m. and 6:00a.m, and require sleep during hours that children would normally be awake. Sleep time may not exceed the number of worked hours or eight hours a day.

Travel Time

Child care can be authorized for travel time to get to and from the center and the place of employment or education. The maximum daily travel time is 4 hours. Travel time cannot be more than half exceed the actual time that it takes to get from the center to the location where need for child care occurs.

Training or Education toward Vocational Goal

- Parents in school or in training must consistently complete courses in which they are enrolled and for which child care is provided. Parents must also complete the "Training Verification" form for each semester of attendance or training. If there is any change in class schedule, parents are required to notify the center director within 5 days.
- Grades must be submitted to the office within 10 days of being released. If adequate progress (GPA of 2.0 or better or "Pass" in a non-graded program) is not being made, parents will be placed on "probationary" status and if improved progress is not made training as a need for child care may not be a need option.
- Children of students are not eligible for care when the parent's school is not in session. If the parent takes the summer off, the child's placement in child care may be lost.
- Limitations: Training or Education may not exceed six years from the initiation of child care services or 24 semester units after the attainment of a Bachelor's Degree

Families Referred by Family Youth and Children's Services (FYCS)

Child care schedule will be based on the referral letter from FYCS

Seeking Employment

A signed job search agreement must be on file in order to qualify for Seeking Employment as a need for child care. Eligibility is limited to no less than 12 months within a 24 month period, not to exceed 12 consecutive months within the 24-month period. Service hours may be authorized for 6.5 hours per day for five days a week with no more than 32.5 hours per week if their only need is seeking employment.

Homeless Families/Families Seeking Housing

A referral letter from an emergency shelter or other social service agency or a written declaration that the family is homeless; or a written declaration that the family is seeking permanent housing. Families seeking permanent housing are eligible to receive services for no less than 24 months. Service hours may be authorized for 6.5 hours per day for 5 days a week with no more than 32.5 hours per week if their only need is seeking permanent housing.

Parental Incapacity

Statement of Incapacity, signed by a legally qualified professional including a description of the nature of the incapacity which prevents them from caring for the child for some part of the day.

All forms must be completed and supporting documents provided prior to enrollment. You have 30 days to have the physician report faxed or delivered.

Contract Hours: The staff schedule is planned according to the children's schedules. In order to maintain safe staffing levels, it is important for your child to maintain regularly scheduled hours. All children must be brought to the Center and picked up at the times you have qualified for and agreed to on your Schedule of Hours. Children may not be brought to the Center before their scheduled time or on alternate days unless advanced accommodations have been made with the Center Director. If you need to change your scheduled days and/or times, please see the Center Director. No changes can occur until he/she has approved them. We encourage you to bring your child to school at 8:00 a.m. This way you can ensure your child is involved in all activities happening at the Center. Breakfast is served at 8:30, if your child arrives later, make sure they have had breakfast.

Code lock Doors: All doors at A Special Place are armed with a code lock. Upon the completion of enrollment, the Center Director will provide you with a Parent Code that can be used to access the center during center hours. These doors are put on "lockdown" after the Center closes and no codes will allow entry. Please do not provide your code to children, **only adults can use the code lock.** If you send someone to pick up your child, please ask them to ring the doorbell and a teacher will allow them entry after checking their photo ID. Do not give this code to anyone else.

Contact Information: We are required by law to maintain current Emergency Contact Information for all children enrolled at A Special Place. This information is pertinent to the health and safety of your child while at the Center. You will complete one of these forms upon enrollment, but if ANY of your information changes for any reason, you are required to notify the Center Director **within 5 days** and complete a new Emergency Contact Information Form. People you designate for us to contact in a medical or other emergency should be people we can contact during daytime hours, and who will be able to pick up and care for your child. We require at least two contacts in addition to the parent/guardian. Inform the people you listed that they are designated as your child's emergency contact person and remind them they should bring a photo ID for pick-up. Your signature at the bottom of the Emergency Information Form authorizes staff to send your child to a hospital for treatment if you cannot be reached. If you do not keep your contact information current, including the names and phone numbers of people authorized to pick your child up, your childcare could be suspended and/or terminated.

Authorizing Individuals: A child will only be released to adults (over 18 years) whom you have designated on the Emergency Contact Information form. A written note with the following information is required for any exception made for pick-up: Date(s) this person is authorized to pick up your child, name of the person picking up, name of your child, and your signature and date. We will accept faxed authorizations on an emergency basis with a confirming telephone call. All people picking your child up should be prepared to show a valid photo ID. **No ID = No Pickup, No Exceptions! They must have a Car Seat if they are transporting the child.**

Pick-Up: Any adult, including a parent/guardian, who is observed to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, will not be allowed to take the child from the Center. When authorizing people to pick your child up, their vehicle should be equipped with appropriate car seats and restraint systems. (Car Seats are required for all children under 8 years old, and for children under 60 pounds, regardless of age.)

Family Fees: Income eligible families are charged for the state-funded program based on the Family Fee Schedule established by the State Of California. The fee is based on family size and income, and is charged per family (not per individual child). There is a monthly rate or full time rate for each day that the center is open. These fees will be determined with you during the enrollment and recertification processes and may change based on the hours of care your family qualifies for. Fees are due on the first of every month for the month of service. Fees are to be paid by check or money order if possible, and given to the Director or Site Supervisor. You will receive a receipt. Invoices will be in your child's file folder. There is no grace period for payments. Parents who have not paid fees on time will not be allowed to leave their child at the Center, and the child may not attend until fees are paid in full. Continuing problems with late payments or bringing children when fees have not been paid will be grounds for termination of service.

Refunds: Refunds are given only if childcare fees have been paid in advance and the family leaves the Center before the end of the period for which they have paid. If you have any changes in your income or family size, meet with the center director to have your fees reassessed. Increases will take place the following month, and decreases immediately.

Personal Care: The Center provides breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack for each child. We also provide a nap cot or mat, sheet, and blanket. You may provide a blanket from home if you wish, but it is not necessary. Finally, in an effort to teach personal care and hygiene, we provide a toothbrush and toothpaste to each child. Parents are expected to provide a spare set of weather-appropriate clothing to keep at school. Please label everything that comes to school. If you are unable to provide these for your child, please notify the Center Director for other arrangements. If we send your child home in our clothing, please wash and return as soon as possible so we can provide it to other children in need. If you have clothing your child has outgrown, please consider donating it to the school.

Recertification: All families will be qualified for an amount of care based upon their families need for care upon enrollment. When that time expires, you are required to meet with the Center Director for Recertification. This process allows us to re-qualify your family and ensure we are meeting all state requirements. The Center Director will notify families one month in advance of your due date and it is the parent's responsibility to schedule a time to complete the process with the Center Director by the deadline. Failure to complete all recertification paperwork by the deadline will result in termination of services.

Termination of Services: These policies and procedures seek to provide clear standards for all families in the program. We encourage you to talk to the Center Director if you have any questions or need assistance in any situation that may affect your child's participation in the program.

As indicated throughout this Parent Handbook, there are several situations that can result in the termination of services:

- Not providing current contact information within five days of changes
- Not providing current information about people authorized to pick up your child
- Irregular attendance or more than 10 unexcused absences.
- Not calling the center if your child is absent for three or more days and providing a doctor's note.
- Not picking your child up within 30 minutes of illness, injury, or behavior problem
- Continued late pick-up of child, or more than 3 in a month. There is a \$5 late fee after the first time.
- Excessive absences.
- Not completing recertification by the completion of your qualified amount of time
- Continuing aggressive, violent, or dangerous behavior of child
- Continuing aggressive, confrontational, violent, or dangerous behavior of parent/guardian or visitors while at the Center
- Non-payment or continuing late payment of fees
- Not attending monthly meetings or volunteering the required 4 hours per month.

Our staff wants to work with you and your child to foster positive relationships, and help your child to reach his/her potential. We are willing to work with you to resolve issues, and expect all families to meet program requirements.

Fair Hearing: The YWCA of Sonoma County encourages parents to bring any issues of concern first to the Center Staff and/or Center Director. We believe that most issues can be resolved satisfactorily at this level. If the issue is not resolved, the parent should contact the YWCA Senior Director of Program Impact. The parent also has the right to contact the State of California Department of Community Care Licensing.

Families enrolled in the Center have the right to a fair hearing with the YWCA executive staff if they are dissatisfied with any decision regarding care for their child. The fair hearing process is outlined on the back of the Notice of Action form, which you will receive any time a decision is made that affects your child care.

Public Contact: The Center regularly gives tours to a variety of people (parents interested in A Special Place, volunteers, donors, members of other organizations, etc.). All visitors are asked to maintain confidentiality about the identity and presence of any and all persons at the Center. We may also wish to use photographs of your children in Center brochures, YWCA or Center displays, and/or other publicity, which often helps document our missions and goals of the center and increase interest from potential donors or funders. Your approval is required before we take any pictures of your child. If you prefer not to have your child's picture taken, you may choose not to sign the Photo Release form.

Rights of Licensing Authority: In accordance with State law, Community Care Licensing staff has the authority to inspect the childcare center, to review children's records, and to interview children and staff without prior consent. In addition, Community Care Licensing staff has the authority to observe a child, including observation of conditions which would indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement, and to have a licensed medical professional examine the child.

CPS Reports & Rights of Child Protective Services: The staff of the Center are Mandated Reporters and are therefore required by law to report to Family Youth and Children's Services any possible abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children. We are not required to notify the parent/guardian that a report has been made. However, we will make every attempt to discuss such issues with parents as they arise. Therapists that work with the children are also **Mandated Reporters**. If a child reports or shows signs of any form of abuse, physical, sexual or neglect, we will make a report to FYCS.

Family Youth and Children's Services staff has the right to review children's records, to interview staff and children, to observe a child, and to have a licensed physician examine a child without prior consent. In cases of alleged abuse and/or neglect, Family Youth and Children's Services may remove a child from the Center, pending notification of the primary parent or caregiver.

Nondiscrimination Policy: A Special Place is available to all eligible participants. The YWCA does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, mental or physical disability, or age, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. *Further, A Special Place refrains from any religious instruction or worship.*

We foster a non-violent environment. Everyone who enters our preschool is expected to observe and respect this non-violent commitment toward all children, staff, and other parents while on site.

Program

Program Philosophy: We believe in providing a program that is developmentally appropriate for each child. We emphasize positive conflict resolution among children and encourage appropriate expression of feelings and a positive socialization experience for children. We provide opportunities for children to creatively explore their world. We strive to help all children and their families feel safe and valued.

Staff: Quality childcare begins with a caring and qualified staff. The YWCA of Sonoma County hires staff that meets or exceeds the requirements of the State of California for State funded child development programs. The Center Director and Teachers all have a combination of Early Childhood Education college courses, child development permits and/or degrees, as well as related work experience in childcare settings. All staff have completed First Aid & CPR training and are required to complete 105 hours of continuing education over the course of five years. All staff have been fingerprinted and cleared through the Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal background check.

Daily Schedule: The Center's daily schedule, menu and curriculum for the month is posted on the Parent Board. If this schedule changes, you will be provided a copy of the new schedule. This will be reviewed during enrollment. We also send out a monthly newsletter and a calendar at the start of the school year for holidays and days the school is closed.

Arrival / Departure: Upon arrival parents/guardians must accompany the child into the Center and inform the teacher of the child's arrival. Parents must also sign their child in on the appropriate attendance sheet with their FULL signature and drop-off time. Please take a few minutes to help your child transition into the center and get them settled. If there are any special accommodations, changes in your child, "rough morning," etc that the staff should know to help provide the best possible care for them that day, let them know upon drop-off. Staff will do a health check and we ask that your child wash their hands when arriving.

On departure, the parent/guardian must sign the appropriate attendance sheet again and ensure the teacher is aware of the child's departure. The teacher needs to see and acknowledge that you are picking up your child before it is safe to leave the Center. This is a good time for you to "check-in" with the teacher about your child's day. Please check your child's Art File daily for any artwork, soiled clothing, or communications from the classroom. Also, take a moment to review the Parent Board for upcoming community events, classroom updates/announcements, or other opportunities that may benefit your family.

If you bring other children to the center to pick-up or drop-off your child, you are solely responsible for their supervision. Children who are not enrolled at A Special Place cannot play on the Center's equipment, participate in Center activities, or join in Center meals. Also, it is unsafe for children to be left unattended in a car. **Please do not leave young children unattended in a vehicle while you pick up your child. We are mandated reporters and it is against the law to leave a child unattended in a vehicle.**

Sign In & Out: Children MUST be signed in and out on the appropriate sign-in/out sheet each day by the parent/guardian, or other adult (18 years or older) designated by the parent/guardian. Parents must use their FULL signature to ensure accurate records.

Any person coming to pick up children should bring a valid photo ID and be prepared to provide it to staff, no matter how many times or how often they come to the Center. If anyone has any hesitation about their identity and/or if they are authorized for pick up, the person will be identified and matched to the child's authorized pick up list that you provide. If that person does not have a photo ID, they will be turned away and you are responsible to make other arrangements for timely pick-up.

Items From Home: We ask that families not allow their children to bring toys from home. We also request no outside food. If your child would like to bring something for sharing, please check with their teacher.

Meals: As noted above, we provide breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack every day. All meals are planned and prepared in accordance with the State's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Menus are posted each month on the Parent Board inside the Center for your review. If your child has any allergies, the Center will make any reasonable accommodations once a written diagnosis and recommendation are received by your child's physician. This should be discussed with the Center Director upon enrollment.

We ask that parents do not send children to school with food from home. If you would like to provide a special treat for all of the children, please discuss this option with the Center staff. Once a month we celebrate all birthdays for the month and the child can bring a treat to share, we have some healthy alternatives to cupcakes that we suggest.

Naps: Children brush their teeth after lunch, then go to the bathroom, and settle down on their nap cot/mat for a rest period. Children may remove their shoes if they wish. Teachers read a naptime story, play soft, calming music then encourage rest by rubbing backs. All children have their own blanket and sheet that are stored individually. Children who do not fall asleep after 35 min. are allowed to play outside or do table top activities in the kitchen. If a child needs to be picked up early, please pick them up before nap (12:00pm) or after nap (2:00pm). It can be quite disruptive to other resting children for parents to enter the center during naptime.

Toileting: Children are admitted to the program in all stages of toilet learning/readiness. The subject will be discussed as part of enrollment. Parents and the Center Director will work out a plan for the child before the child enters the center. Teachers implement that plan and report regularly to parents and the Center Director about the progress or difficulties in its application. The Center Director will work with the parents, teachers, and child to find a workable plan. The goal is to have the child use the bathroom without adult help. This may not be possible with some physically or emotionally challenged children. The Center Director will assess if the school is able to meet the needs of the child. In all cases, the school will provide disposable gloves, lidded container for disposal, soap, water, and paper towels for diaper changing. Parents will supply diapers.

During the implementation of the plan the child will work towards being independent of adult help. An adult wearing disposable gloves will oversee the toileting process in the children's bathroom. Children who are physically challenged would be given any necessary accommodations. Any surfaces used in potty-time will be disinfected appropriately (sprayed with a disinfectant and hung to dry, outside if possible). Children will be as clean as diaper wipes and paper towels can get them before they are re-dressed.

Late Pick-Up: Parents are required to pick their children up no later than the time agreed upon at enrollment. If they are going to be late, parents are required to call the Center so the staff can make appropriate adjustments and ensure further care for your child. If you do not call, the staff will begin calling contacts listed on the Emergency Contact Information 5 minutes past your scheduled pick-up time. Late Pick-Up notices will be given to parents who are 5 or more minutes past their contracted pick-up time and there is a \$5 late fee for every 10 minutes you are late. After three Late Pick-Up notices in six months, services will be suspended for five days. The Center Director will meet with you to discuss your child's schedule and pick up time when your child returns to the program. If you receive two or more formal late notices within the next three months, services will be discontinued or hours adjusted to assure you pick up prior to closing.

If a child has not been picked up by the time the Center closes (3:30 p.m.), the staff will begin calling the parent and/or Emergency Contacts. If no one can be reached, the staff will wait at the Center with the child for a maximum of 30 minutes. By 4 p.m., the staff will call the Police Department and the child will be released into their custody. The child will be taken to Valley Of The Moon Children's Home: 55 Pythian Road, Santa Rosa, (707) 565-6350

Absences and Wellness Policy: We expect that all children attend the program on a regular and consistent basis. Regular attendance provides structure for the child and we believe that this enhances the child's growth and development. Since there are many families on the waiting list who need services, we ask that you make a commitment to bring your child to the program every day.

We also understand that there will be time when your child will be unable to come to the Center because of illness, family vacation, or other reasons. If your child will be absent, call the Center and notify the staff. Failure to contact the Center by the third day of a child's absence may result in termination of services. When your child returns to the Center, DO NOT adjust any notes written on the sign-in/out sheets; Center staff will document the child's absence and reason per our State guidelines.

Absences are considered **excused** for the following reasons:

- Illness or quarantine of the child when the specific illness is stated
 - See "Illnesses" section below
- Illness of the parent/guardian
- Family emergency
 - Serious illness or death in family
 - Safety concerns
 - Court appearances
 - Incarceration of a parent/guardian
 - Time when a child is recovering from a trauma
 - Other family problems that would prohibit a parent from bringing a child to care
- Court ordered visitations
 - Copies of any/all court-orders must be maintained in the child's file and updated any time a new ruling is made
- Best interest of the child
 - Family vacation
 - Special day spent with family member or friend
 - Kindergarten Enrollment
 - **Per Title 5 regulations, no child is to have more than 10 absences due to the child's best interest**

While we do not limit the number of excused absences, **unexcused absences are limited to 3 per calendar year**. Irregular or occasional attendance in the program may indicate that there is really no need for childcare. If there is a continuing problem with attendance, the Center Director may conduct recertification before the approved time has lapsed at which point you will have an opportunity to discuss your family's situation and work together for an appropriate course of action. If your child is going to be out of the Center, please call to inform the staff of the reason (707-303-3548) or the absence will be considered unexcused.

Any absence that does not meet the guidelines listed under excused absences will be considered unexcused.

Leaves of Absence: Leaves of absence from the program are generally not available. However, if there is a family emergency, as described earlier under excused absences, please discuss the situation with the Center Director so arrangements can be made for your child to be absent from the Center without termination of childcare.

If you choose to take extended time away from the program for other than excused absences, your child will be disenrolled. Your child will be placed back on the wait list, but that will not guarantee future enrollment.

Reenrollment would be done only from appropriate referrals and the CEL list; therefore we cannot guarantee that your child would be re-enrolled in the program.

Illnesses: Our goal is to do our best to protect your child, other children, and staff from unnecessary illness. However, young children are typically sick 6 – 8 times each year, usually with respiratory-related illness. Most children with mild illnesses can safely attend childcare. We do our part by making sure children wash hands, disinfecting toys and surfaces, and sending sick children home.

We exclude children from care when:

- An illness keeps the child from participating in the program.
- Because of an illness, the child requires more care than the staff can provide without compromising the needs of the other children
- Having the child in the center poses an increased risk to other children and adults with whom the child comes in contact.

It is sometimes difficult to know whether to keep a child home. Obviously, if a child is ill enough that s/he wishes to lie down, s/he doesn't belong at the center. When we have a question, we follow the Child Health Connections Guidelines. They recommend exclusion when a child has:

- A fever along with behavioral change or other signs of illness such as sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, etc.
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as unusual tiredness, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, continuous crying or difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea-runny, watery or bloody stools.
- Vomiting-more than once in a 24-hour period
- Body rash with fever
- Sore throat with fever and swollen glands or mouth sores with drooling.
- Eye discharge-thick mucus or pus draining from the eye
- Head lice or nits (eggs)
- Severe coughing-child gets red or blue in the face, or makes high-pitched whooping sound after coughing
- Child is irritable, continuously crying

Any time your child visits the doctor, please provide the Center with a copy of a Doctor's Note including a diagnosis and treatment plan (if applicable).

If any child is diagnosed with a communicable illness, we will post a notice at the Center for a period no less than seven days. It will share what diagnosis was made and common symptoms associated with that illness. We are not medical professionals and these notices will only share general information. If you suspect your child has the illness, please bring them to a qualified doctor for a check-up.

If your job or school situation does not allow you to stay home with your child when he/she is ill, we recommend that you develop a sick childcare plan before illness occurs. The Community Child Care Council (544-3084) may be able to provide referrals. **Our Center cannot care for sick children.** The teachers check each child's health upon arrival each day. If your child exhibits symptoms of illness, she/he will not be allowed to attend that day. While at the Center, if he/she becomes ill and is unable to participate in the program, we will call you to pick up your child. You must pick your child up within 30 minutes of being contacted. In the event that you cannot pick up your child, staff will ask you to make arrangements with someone. Please understand that the staff needs to be with the children, and it is your responsibility to make necessary arrangements for your child to receive the care he/she needs while ill.

If you are keeping your child home due to illness, please call the Center to notify the staff 303-3548. Children must be free from illness and able to participate fully in the programs before returning to the Center.

Medication: If your child needs medication during school hours, medication must be provided by the parent/guardian in the original container with labeled information specifying the appropriate dosage. Also, a medical release form must be signed for each medication prior to staff dispensing medication. We dispense medication at Noon each day. You may also choose to come to the Center to administer the medication yourself. Please see the Center Director or your child's teacher if you have any questions.

Nebulizers and Inhalers can be provided at school. A release form must be completed by the parent/guardian before the staff administers any medication. The parent/guardian must provide instruction on how to use the nebulizer or inhaler appropriately.

Immunizations: All children must have current immunizations before entering A Special Place Preschool.

Behavior: We expect all children enrolled at A Special Place to respect themselves, other people, and the environment around them. We realize that children's typical development may include experimentation with misbehavior and "testing limits." In addition, children who have gone through stressful life experiences may exhibit behaviors which are, at least partially, a reaction to these challenging life circumstances. When children show problem behaviors, we set clear limits, redirect them to more acceptable ways of expressing their feelings, model and reinforce desired behaviors, and work with children using a variety of therapeutic interventions to modify their behavior and gain their cooperation. We help children work out conflicts between one another by giving them support and encouraging them to "use their words" to tell the other child how they're feeling or what they need. Likewise, we help children appreciate the feelings of other children and facilitate that positive interaction and peaceful conflict-resolution.

Sending Children Home: In order to provide a safe place for all children, we will not allow aggressive or violent behavior in the Center. A child who harms another child or staff member (one serious incident or multiple minor incidents without regard to discipline) will be sent home for the remainder of the day. Children can also be sent home if they become out of control to the point that they are not able to calm down and regain composure after staff intervention. You will be notified and are required to pick your child up, or make other arrangements for pick-up, within 30 minutes. Failure to respond to calls from the Center or return messages left, and/or failure to pick your child up in a timely manner, will result in suspension and/or termination of services. If your child is not picked up within 30 minutes, they will not be allowed back at the center the following day. If there are more than three late Incident pick-ups in six months, the child will be suspended for five days. Two additional late pick-ups in the next three months will result in disenrollment.

An Incident Report will need to be signed upon pick up; one copy will be provided to you and one will be kept in your child's file. The child may not participate in the program while waiting for pick-up. If a meal happens during this time, the child will not be allowed to eat in the dining area with the other children; he/she will be provided a meal, but separated from the other children.

We encourage parents to discuss incidents that occur with their child so he/she understands why they can't remain at school, as well as what he/she should do next time. This also helps show children that we feel the same way about poor decisions that hurt other children. However, parents are encouraged not to add any other punishment to being sent home. We advise against using this time away from the Center as a treat for the child as it sends mixed messages about what behavior is acceptable.

If there is a pattern of continuing, serious misbehavior, the Center Director will discuss the issues with the parent and develop a plan to modify the child's behavior. This plan will include prevention and intervention strategies to be used at the Center, activities the parent can do at home, referrals to other specialized services ELI, Triple P parent education, and/or counseling (for the parent, child, or both). YWCA staff may also physically restrain a child using an approved technique in situations where the child is aggressive or violent and is at risk of hurting him/herself, other people, or property. A child will only be physically restrained if they cannot be soothed by kind, calming words, the presence of someone they know, or time to themselves.

Children whose behavior continues to endanger the safety of others may be suspended from the program at the discretion of the Center Director or hours reduced until support and resources are accessed by the parent. If the problem behavior continues to present a danger to themselves, other children or staff, or property, despite attempts to intervene and modify it, then the child will be disenrolled from the program. Parents will be given as much advanced notice possible, but if a child's behavior threatens the safety and well-being of other children, the termination of childcare may need to happen immediately. We are committed to doing whatever we can to make the experience in our program a mutually satisfying one.

Parents are encouraged to inform the Center of their discipline methods or set up rules and positive discipline/consequences at home that mimic what is being done at the Center. Parents/Guardians, Teachers, Therapists, and other Staff needs to work as a team otherwise it is easy for a child to get confused if there are too many different sets of rules to follow. Also, consistency is key in behavior modification and/or effective discipline, so if we are all working off of the same Behavior Plan we'll be more effective with your child. If you would like to practice new discipline methods and different

techniques, please talk to the Center Director as we can make arrangements for you to work with your child in the Center.

Clothing: Shoes that fit and stay on your child's feet will help ensure your child's safety and comfort throughout their day. Thong-type or open toed shoes are not permitted, but children may wear closed toe sandals. We prefer that children do not wear "super hero" clothing to school. Such clothing often encourages a very physical type of play that we feel is inappropriate in our setting. Washable play clothes should be worn because children will be actively exploring their environment, which may include paint, sand, and other messy materials. When children get wet or if an accident occurs, they will be changed into the spare set you provided and their soiled garments will be sent home. Please return school clothes as soon as possible and make sure to provide a fresh set of clothes for your child, unless other arrangements were made with the Center Director.

Field Trips: Field Trips are a regular part of the program and may include scheduled field trips or simply a walk in the neighborhood. Parents will be notified in advance of all scheduled field trips requiring transportation and what accommodations need to be made in order for your child to participate. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate as helpers for any/all fieldtrips. We will post notices for spontaneous neighborhood walks. A First-Aid kit and the children's emergency medical authorization will be taken on all field trips. Staff is trained in First-Aid and CPR.

Sunscreen: We ask parent/guardians to apply sunscreen to children each morning, especially during the summer months as they spend more time outside. Staff will reapply sunscreen to children whose parents have agreed to have it applied, after nap. If there are any allergies or other limitations on your child's use of sunscreen, please note it on the Sunscreen Application Authorization form during enrollment. You may opt not to have sunscreen applied to your child.

Holidays Closed: The YWCA recognizes 12 holidays throughout the year. Although the dates will vary slightly from year to year, the Center observes New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Junior's birthday, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, through New Year's Day. The center will be closed on the above-mentioned holidays as well as teacher professional development days, please refer to calendar and newsletter if you are not sure.

Staff In-Service: Two to three times each year we take the opportunity to advance the training of the Center Staff to ensure the quality of the program we are providing for your child. These days are considered In-Service days and the Center is closed and no childcare is available. We will notify parents of scheduled dates so alternate arrangements can be made. There is a school calendar and those days are marked a year in advance.

Counseling / Art & Play Therapy: A Special Place preschool is in the unique situation of being the only therapeutic preschool in Sonoma County. We recognize that the dynamics of a family are ever changing and sometimes children need some extra support in coping with these changes. Therefore, we offer on-site art/play therapy to children enrolled as an optional service. If the staff at the Center believe your child would benefit from Therapy we will discuss it with you, then one of the Therapists from CFSA will contact you about the requirements for that portion of our program. Also, if you are interested in Therapy for your child, please discuss this option with your child's primary teacher and/or the Center Director.

Parent Participation: You are requested to volunteer 4 hours a month but can work as much as you like. We welcome your participation. As the child's primary teacher, you play a vital role in your child's

learning by laying the foundation for their interest in school and supporting their growth. We hope you will choose to visit the center often, participate in the children's field trips, attend family events, and perhaps, even volunteer to help with some of the Center's projects. The Center also invites parents to participate in the Parent Advisory Group, which provides a place for parents to advise the Center about the program, and the mandatory monthly Parent Education Meetings, which offers education around specific parenting topics as well as a group setting to discuss issues and get support from other parents. For more information, please talk with the Center Director about any of these parent involvement activities.

At-Risk Support Services: Support Services are different things for different families. Our requirement is that parents must receive ongoing support services that best responds to their needs. Examples of ongoing support services could include, but aren't limited to: Triple P parenting classes, participation in a 12-step program (AA, NA, and ACA) with or without a sponsor, counseling, Mandatory once a month parent meetings, or DV Support Meetings.

We believe that life with a preschooler brings particular rewards and challenges and we want the best for each child and family at A Special Place. Our work with families who have young children has repeatedly shown how helpful it is for parents/caregivers to feel a sense of community. We know that parents whose own needs are met are usually better able to respond to their child's needs. We want to help you do that. We know that many of our parents have busy lives with school, work, childcare needs, etc. and seeking support services could mean another "to do" in your life. However, it is an essential part of our program so you can get support for yourself in some way and continue to increase the quality of life for your family. Many of our families are very appreciative of the connections they've made and the help they've received.

The support services that will best support your family is a decision that you will make. You'll have an opportunity to speak with the Center Director about your family's situation, as well as what you'd like for yourself and your family. You may also choose to speak with the YWCA Director of Program Impact and/or the Clinical Therapeutic Supervisor for further input. This will also be an opportunity to talk about your child, their needs, strengths, and areas to improve. You may find that we validate concerns you already have. The Center Director will then provide you with a number of community resources, and you're on your way to a healthy support system. Since the support systems vary as widely as our families and their needs, there is no mandate for the amount or regularity of services you receive. Our basic concern is that parents feel supported. Our expectation is that parents meet regularly with someone in the community or through the YWCA on a regular basis.

If you would like to seek services independently, or do not feel comfortable discussing your needs with the Center staff, you can call the YWCA hotline for additional resources and referrals. **That number is (707) 546-1234.** They will answer it as a Domestic Violence hotline, but that is not the only type of referral you can request. Let them know what your situation is and get some resources.

Confidentiality: Confidential information is any information obtained in the course of providing services. In order to best serve children and families, we use a team approach. Important information relevant to better understanding and serving each child and family may at times be shared with teachers, counselors, and supervisory staff. Also, referral agencies and other professionals working with our program's families may be consulted and information exchanged when we feel it is in the best interest of the child. The use of disclosure of financial or other personal information will be limited to purposes directly connected with the administration of the childcare program. No other use of this information shall be made without the parent's prior written consent. There will be no disclosure of confidential information beyond these guidelines, either during the time of services or after service has ended. Families will be given the YWCA Release of Information (ROI) to fill out as needed.

Also, as you get to know families in the center, and learn more about their individual situations, we ask that you respect their privacy and not tell anyone about what they have or are experiencing. This includes, but is not limited to divorce, child protective services interventions, restraining orders, homeless shelter residence, and/or issues of domestic violence. PLEASE do not post any pictures on Facebook that involve other children, or share with family or friends.

We look forward to providing a positive first learning experience for you and your child.

Thank you we look forward to working with you and your child.

Wendy Adams