

Employee Handbook

Revised March 2026



861 Western Avenue Brattleboro, VT 05301
familygardeninc@gmail.com
(802) 254-8882



Welcome to The Family Garden!

A year round non-profit childcare for children between the ages of 6 weeks to 5 years.

Our History

The Family Garden Inc. opened in Brattleboro, VT on March 22, 2004. The Family Garden is a family-style early care and education center serving the needs of children ranging in age from six weeks through five years. Family Style early care and education programs do not have an “infant room,” a “toddler room,” or even a “preschool.” We believe children grow and learn best with a low teacher to child ratio, within a diverse age group and with the same educator throughout their early childhood lives.

Our Mission

Here at The Family Garden, we believe that children grow and learn best when they feel secure and have a feeling of belonging. Therefore, we at The Family Garden provide a caring, comfortable and safe environment by establishing routines that are predictable and consistent, as well as treating all children equally with gentleness, honesty and respect. We will encourage children to treat their peers in the same manner.

We offer an emergent curriculum and we strive to enhance social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth in our children. The Family Garden fosters curiosity, independence, creativity and self-esteem by taking into account individuals’ abilities and interests. Our child initiated and teacher supported play is an essential component of our program.

We are an all inclusive school and provide equal opportunities for learning and education to all children regardless of race, creed, sex, religion, national origin, or physical condition

Our Philosophy/Curriculum

Family style early care and education can also be said to be attachment-style early care and education. The Family Garden believes that secure attachments are the foundation for healthy development: mixed age groupings and a low teacher to child ratio are ways in which we strive to foster those strong connections.

Multi-aged programming and small group numbers provide a perfect setting for social and emotional development. Children will have many and on-going opportunities to interact with a

diverse community, helping to care for younger children and developing negotiating skills with older children. Teachers are best able to talk through tough social situations when there are fewer numbers of children and they are at different developmental stages.

The Family Garden has a general schedule which may vary based on the program developed by the teachers and the season. The schedules provide a balance of active and quiet play, adult directed and child directed play, indoor and outdoor play while balancing the social, emotional, physical and cognitive needs of each child.

Children learn by trying, doing, being frustrated, observing, and interacting. The teachers at The Family Garden facilitate experiences for the children to learn in the above mentioned ways as well as through role modeling and supervising the interactions among the children.

Finally, we "do not for a child what a child can do for him/herself". We strongly encourage the development of age appropriate self-help skills and appropriate language for social interactions. These important skills are taught through the modeling of both the teachers and the older children.

Our Beliefs

We believe it is important for all teachers to be well educated in the field of child development. Combined, we have many years of higher education and experiences, hundreds of hours of training, and an extensive knowledge of children.

The Family Garden employees are here because we want to be. We are committed to working together as a team, keeping in mind the best interests of our co-workers and our enrolled families.

The Family Garden Believes:

Social/Emotional development is at the center of the early care and education agenda.

- Teachers do validate and label all feelings, even uncomfortable ones like angry, sad, disappointed, frustrated, etc. It is okay to feel how and what one feels.
- Negative behaviors are opportunities to guide positive growth
- Teachers are not the "child police" waiting to catch "bad" behavior. We praise and highlight appropriate behavior, good choices, progress, and success.
- Timeouts are the exception, not the rule
- Teachers use supervision and positive guidance techniques, preferring the term "taking space" rather than "timeout".

Children are easily influenced by labels given and opinions of adults

- Teachers keep their personal negative views about the world and the creatures in it to themselves
- Bodily functions are a normal part of life. Teachers address “messy” and “life-y” situations with calm, loving kindness and acceptance.

All parents want to do well by their children. How Parents do this may differ from our approach

- It is our role to support and educate parents positively without judgement
- Teachers respect parents’ wishes and choices made for their child/ren regarding food choices, potty training and sleeping.
- Comments are never made in front of other parents or over the heads of children.

Teachers are in the early care and education field because they choose to be

- Teachers have a passion and find pleasure in working with children.
- When feeling burned out or exhausted, teachers seek out appropriate avenues for wellness (rest, relaxation, refreshment for all levels of self).

Children need to be given opportunities for experiences their bodies crave

- Children need to run, jump, and climb, testing and challenging their bodies and the world around them.
- It is the job of the teachers to “spot” them and allow for natural consequences.

Statement of Policy; Policies and Procedures

Purpose and Intent

The purpose of The Family Garden in preparing this document is to set conditions of employment so as to promote orderly and peaceful relations with the employees, to achieve uninterrupted operations, to achieve the highest level of employee performance consistent with safety, good health, and to maintain the highest level of service to the families of The Family Garden.

It is the policy of The Family Garden that no person shall, on the grounds of their race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, handicap, age, or marital status be discriminated against in employment or in any way be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits in connection with The Family Garden.

This policy applies to recruitment, selection of personnel for training opportunities, promotion, transfers, disciplinary actions, terminations, and all aspects of program activities.

This policy is based on Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 624 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA") and all other applicable employment-related laws.

State Licensing Rules and Regulations

All staff are expected to be knowledgeable in State Licensing Rules and Regulations for Child Care and are expected to follow all procedures as outlined in the Rules and Regulations for care of children. Failure may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Substance Free Workplace

The Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 requires The Family Garden, as a federal contractor and grant recipient, to certify that it will provide a drug-free workplace. As a result, the following is prohibited:

Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or substances, including the illegal use of prescription drugs.

The illegal use, sale, manufacture, distribution, or possession of drugs while on The Family Garden business or premises and while operating vehicles on The Family Garden business.

The use, sale, possession, transfer, or purchase of alcoholic beverages on The Family Garden premises or while performing The Family Garden business, except in connection with The Family Garden-authorized events; and

Working under the influence of alcohol, prescription or nonprescription drugs that could impair judgment or motor functions and potentially place persons or property in jeopardy.

The Family Garden will not condone criminal activity on its property, or on property under its direct control, and will take appropriate action up to and including terminating an employee.

As a condition of employment, employees must abide by the terms of this policy and must notify

The Family Garden of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace not later than five days after such conviction.

The Family Garden has the right to conduct a search of all organizational owned property (desks, cabinets, etc.) and employee property on the facilities, such as vehicle, handbags, and briefcases, if there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a violation of the substance abuse control policy has occurred. The Family Garden may, but is not required, to obtain the employee's consent when property belonging to or used by an employee is to be searched.

Smoking Policy

The Family Garden is a smoke-free workplace and complies with the Brattleboro Town School District policy to include banning the use of all tobacco products in all buildings, on all

properties and in all facilities. This ban extends to all employees, volunteers, and visitors attending The Family Garden-sponsored events and meetings.

Probation of Harassment

It is the policy of The Family Garden to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from harassment and violence based on disability, gender, marital or parental status, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. The Family Garden prohibits any form of harassment based on disability, gender, marital or parental status, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

It shall be a violation of the policy for any pupil, teacher, administrator, and other personnel of The Family Garden to harass a pupil, teacher, administrator, or other member of personnel through conduct or communication based on disability, gender, marital or parental status, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

Personnel are required to take prompt action and report any act of harassment as defined by this policy to the Director. If the complaint involves the Director, the report should be made directly to the Board.

The Family Garden will act to investigate all complaints, formal or informal, verbal or written, of harassment due to disability, gender, marital or parental status, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation, and to discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel who is found to have violated this policy.

Any pupil, teacher, administrator, or other personnel who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or violence under this policy or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct prohibited by this policy is entitled to make an internal complaint to be responded to pursuant to this policy and/or to pursue additional remedies provided by federal and state law. Complaints of harassment may be made to the Vermont Human Rights Commission, 133 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05633-0001; or to the federal Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, Director, Compliance Division Area II, and Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education, Region 1, John W. McCormack, Post Office and Courthouse, Room 222, Post Office Square, Boston MA 02109.

Harassment means unlawful harassment, which constitutes a form of discrimination. It means verbal or physical conduct based on a person's race, creed, color, national origin, and marital status, sex, sexual orientation, or disability and which has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an employee's work performance or client program participation creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Sexual harassment is also a form of unlawful harassment and means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

Submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or employment participation.

Submission to or rejections of harassment is used as a component of the basis for decisions affecting an employee or program participant.

The conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with performance, participation or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Examples of harassment include but are not limited to physical aggression or force or the threat of physical aggression or force (violence), demeaning comments or behaviors, slurs, mimicking, jokes, gestures, name-calling, graffiti, stalking, sexual advances, use of nicknames emphasizing stereotypes, comments on manner of speaking, negative references to customs, and derogatory comments regarding surnames. The Director is the person responsible for receiving verbal or written reports of harassment. Any employee who witnesses or receives a report of harassment shall inform the Director immediately. If the complaint involves the Director, the report shall be made directly to the Board President.

Upon receipt of a report, the Director must determine whether the complaint should be immediately forwarded to the Board or whether it will be handled on site. If the complaint is handled on site, a report of the action taken must be forwarded to the Board within five days. When the Director determines that it must be forwarded to the Board it will be done immediately, without screening or investigating the report. The Director may request, but may not insist upon, a written complaint. The Director will forward a written statement of the facts alleged as soon as practicable to the Board. If the report was given verbally, the Director shall personally reduce it to written form within 24 hours and forward it to the Board. If the complaint involves the Director, the complaint shall be made or filed directly with the Board President.

Submission of a good faith complaint or report of harassment or violence will not affect the complainant or report of harassment or violence will not affect the complainant or reporter's future employment.

The Board will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the Board's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform to any discovery or disclosure obligations. By authority of the Board, upon receipt of a report of complaint alleging harassment or violence shall immediately undertake or authorize an investigation may be conducted by the Director and/or Board President.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of any other methods and documents deemed pertinent by the investigator.

The investigation will be completed as soon as practicable. After the completion of the investigation, the investigator will decide on that decision, along with the evidence supporting that decision, to the Board. The Director and Board will take appropriate action in all cases where the investigator concluded that this policy has been violated. Any person who is determined to have violated this policy may be subject to action including, but not limited to, warning, suspension, exclusion, expulsion, transfer, remediation, termination, or discharge. Board action taken for violation of this policy will be consistent with requirements of applicable collective bargaining agreements state and federal laws.

The Board will discipline or take appropriate action against any pupil, teacher, administrator, or other personnel member who retaliates against any person who reports alleged harassment or violence, or any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such harassment or violence. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment.

Under certain circumstances, alleged harassment or violence may also be possible abuse under Vermont Law. If so, the duties of mandatory reporting may be applicable.

This policy shall be conspicuously posted throughout each site in areas accessible to staff members. This policy shall be reviewed from time to time for compliance with state and federal law.

Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

All staff members MUST certify that they have not been found to have abused or neglected a child in any way, nor have they been convicted of any offense(s) involving violence or inappropriate behavior with children. All The Family Garden staff are considered mandated reporters, their obligation as a childcare worker is to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to Department of Children and Families (DCF) at 1 802 257 2888.

Confidentiality

All staff members are expected to respect the privacy of persons served by The Family Garden and other related agencies and confidentiality of information regarding the persons served. At all times, both within the office and outside, it is imperative that all staff members maintain propriety and an appreciation of the importance of keeping confidential all information concerning program participants, including staff children, even though some such information may become a matter of public record or reported in the media. No program participant-identifying information shall be shared with any outside organization or individual without first obtaining a written release from the program participant or their guardian.

*No program participant should be discussed with anyone, including to other staff members, outside of work, including through online messaging/texting.

Gossiping Policy

In our workplace, gossip is an activity that can drain, distract and downshift our job satisfaction and take needed attention away from the children. We all have participated in this, yet most of us say we don't like it. In order to create a more professional workplace, we are making a commitment to create a gossipfree environment.

Gossiping is defined as casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true.

You will notice that gossip is a noun – which means it is something you DO. That also means that gossip is something you choose to do-and you can choose NOT to do. You enter into gossip by choice-you can opt out of the activity at work. In order to end gossip means to end a particular type of communication – and that can be talk, text, social media, or email communications.

Gossip always involves a person who is not present.

Unwelcome and negative gossip involved criticizing another person.

Gossip often is about conjecture that can injure another person's credibility or reputation.

In order to have a more professional, gossip free workplace I promise to:

- Not speak or insinuate another person's name when that person is not present unless it is to complement or reference that individual regarding work matters.
- Refuse to participate when another mentions a person who is not present in a negative light. I will change the subject or tell them that I have agreed not to talk about another individual.
- Choose not to respond to negative emails, texts or social media posts, or use emails, texts, or social media posts to pass on private or derogatory information about another individual from the workplace.
- While off the job, I will not speak to another co-worker about people at work in a derogatory light. If I have feelings, I will select to talk to someone not at the workplace.
- If a co-worker does something unethical, against procedures, or disruptive I will report this to the director to take corrective action.
- I will mind my own business, do good work, be a professional adult and expect the same from others.

Standards of Appearance: Demeanor

Dress Code

All staff shall wear appropriate attire during work time. Attire MUST be suitable to be on the floor working & playing with children between the ages of 6 weeks and 5 years. The Director reserves the right to send an employee home at any time to change attire if it is not appropriate for The Family Garden.

Demeanor

The Family Garden employees must demonstrate a child Centered, Family Friendly demeanor always.

Child Centered- Child is safe physically and emotionally, Child experiences a warm, responsive, and engaged teacher/caregiver, child experiences an interesting, content-rich learning environment.

Family Friendly- Families feel that both they and their child are respected, Families feel they are treated fairly and that policies are clear and fair, families are clear that their child is experiencing care as described above.

All communication between adults and children should be transparent and about school or program activities.

Staff must maintain a professional demeanor that is calm, patient, and respectful at all times by:

Modeling Appropriate Behavior: staff are expected to be positive role models, demonstrating the behaviors they wish to see in children.

Communicating Positively and Respectfully: All communication with children, parents, visitors, and other staff members should be courteous, thoughtful, and considerate, while also only relating to school or school activities. Communication of other negative or unrelenting topics should be brought to the director or saved for after work.

Active Supervision: Employees must be careful and conscientious in performing duties, maintaining active supervision of children's activities and interactions to intervene and guide children before situations escalate.

Confidentiality: Maintaining the privacy of children and their families is required. Information should only be shared with authorized personnel or parents as appropriate.

Demeanor Summary:

During your shift at The Family Garden, the employee is expected to maintain a positive work ethic in order to help create a comfortable and positive environment for all children, families and other employees. We understand that everyone has rough days and it can be hard to leave it at the

door, but ask you to keep in mind that constant negativity can take its toll on the individuals around you. If you are having a hard time doing so, it is important to communicate with the Director.

Mental & Physical Health

The Family Garden employees must demonstrate clear mental and physical health when involved in school functions, on school property, when representing The Family Garden in the community, during working hours, while interacting with students, families, co-workers, Board Members and or team members.

Telephone and Computer Use

It is important that all educators' full attention remains on the children enrolled at The Family Garden at all times, for both educational and safety reasons. Therefore, personal cell phones may not be kept on your person while in any classroom during work hours. Cell phones should remain silent, and set aside or put away with other personal belongings while employees are clocked in.

The use of personal cell phones in our center is permitted only during approved breaks, outside the classroom, or outside the presence of the children, unless being used for communication with the Director, for using Brightwheel or taking pictures of approved children. Employees may not use their personal cell phones for talking, texting, checking voicemail, or any other purpose in the presence of children enrolled at our center.

When educators leave the center with their children on an excursion during work hours, cell phones may be carried to use in the event of an emergency.

In the rare event that a staff member needs to take a personal call or answer a text during work hours, this needs to be communicated to the director and the other teachers in the room.

*Excess use of a personal cell phone without directors permission will call for a write up or being sent home for the rest of the day.

Social Media Policy

Employees of The Family Garden may not, for any reason, associate with the organization's clients on any social media outlet including, but not limited to, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, ect...unless the relationship existed prior to child enrollment.

Keys

Keys are to be used during regular business hours only. If an employee needs access to the work place outside of business hours, they shall obtain permission from the Director ahead of time. Before arriving at work.

Breaks

Each employee that works an 8 ½ hour shift will receive a 30 minute unpaid break. This gives teachers a chance to make personal calls, do errands and eat. Breaks are scheduled during lunch/nap time. Either the Director, another classroom teacher, float or Sub will be available to cover classroom supervision. Breaks outside of scheduled time must be approved by the Director.

Staff Recruitment, Employment & Discharge

The operation of the Board, the direction of the workforce, including the right to plan, direct and control department activities; schedule and assign work to employees; determine the means, methods, processes, materials, and equipment; maintain the efficiency of employees; determine the manning of jobs; to create, revise and eliminate jobs; to establish and require reasonable rules and regulations; hire and terminate; maintain order, and suspend, demote, discipline, and discharge employees for just cause are rights the Director and the Board, except as otherwise specifically noted in writing.

The Family Garden staff will be recruited, selected, and hired according to the regular hiring policies. Announcements of vacancies will be made available to The Family Garden staff, as well as through public advertisement. Qualified candidates may be hired from The Family Garden without public announcement as determined by the Director and the Board.

The Director and possibly a board member may interview all candidates who have submitted a formal application. Staff selection will be based on established procedures of personal interviews, reference checks, and compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

The following procedures are requirements for the hiring The Family Garden staff members:

- A criminal records check must be completed (post-offer, pre-employment).
- Completion of all necessary paperwork including W-4, emergency card, copy of insurance, and all other forms deemed necessary.
- A copy of a new employee's official college transcript for the personnel file is required within the first week of employment along with three references and a resume.
- Within three months of hire, staff members must have obtained training in basic first aid for children, injury prevention and emergency readiness.

Physicals

Physical wellness is a vital part of working with young children. Vermont State Child Care Licensing Regulations and The Family Garden Employee Policies always require employees to be well while in the presence of children. Wellness includes, but is not limited to, adequate nutrition, sleep, hydration, health (physical, emotional, and psychological) and cognitive ability.

Types of Employees

- A. Regular Employee (hourly pay is negotiated): An employee who is hired with no predetermined terminal point of employment, contingent upon availability of funding, and who has successfully completed the initial probationary period.
- B. Temporary Employee (hourly pay is negotiated): An employee who is hired for a specific period purpose, such as to replace a regular employee on leave who is expected to return, or to provide individual assistance to a program participant for a designated period. A temporary employee is not eligible for any employment benefits.
- C. The Board and Director, as required by federal regulations, will determine salaries and benefits for The Family Garden staff. The Board and Director will review pay scales on a regular basis. Merit raises will be determined by the the Director and Board of Directors regarding Employee Performance Appraisal; however, a merit raise may not be offered during a contract that is longer than one academic year.

Resignation

Unless specified otherwise, two weeks prior written notice is requested. Certain circumstances may require notice as determined by the employee, director, and the Board President.

Exit Interview

In all cases, an employee leaving The Family Garden, Inc., whether by resignation or by termination, will have an exit interview conducted by the Director. Final wages due will be paid on the next regular payday. Benefits generally terminate on the employee's last day of regular employment. The employee's building key and any other property of The Family Garden must be turned into the Director prior to receiving final paycheck.

Performance Evaluations

Regular Evaluations: At the completion of the first year of work and every year thereafter, there will be an annual evaluation. Evaluations can also occur more frequently if circumstances warrant a shorter time frame in the judgment of the Director. The employee and Director each fill out the evaluation form, then meet and discuss the evaluation and the employee's goals for the coming year. The Director will gather peer input. Following the evaluation discussion, the employee will prepare a written statement of the goals and actions planned to meet the goals for the coming work year and give it to the Director. Both the employee and the Director sign the evaluation.

*The Board and staff evaluate the Director annually.

The Board and Director, as required by federal regulations, will determine salaries and benefits for The Family Garden staff. The Board will review pay scales on a regular basis. Merit raises will be determined by the Director and Board of Directors regarding Employee Performance

Appraisal.

Probation, Discipline and Discharge

New Hire Probationary Period: A new employee shall be a probationary employee for a period of ninety (90) working days from the date of hire and may be discharged within that period at the discretion of the Director (with Board approval) and without recourse on the part of the employee discharged. An employee who has completed their probationary period shall not be disciplined, suspended, or discharged except for just cause.

Regular Employee: In connection with the discipline, suspension, or discharge of an employee, the Director shall give the employee reasonable notice or a reasonable warning of the specific complaints with respect to the employee's performance; provided, however, that neither prior notice nor warning shall be required in connection with the discipline, suspension, or discharge of an employee for any of the reasons set forth in the following paragraph.

Just cause for discipline, or discharge of an employee shall include, but not be limited to,

- Leaving a child unattended
- Failure to report neglect or abuse to DCF
- The stealing of The Family Garden property or the property of a fellow employee or of any other persons on the premises
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while carrying out responsibilities;
- Assaulting a fellow employee or any other person on the premises
- Insubordination
- Failure to promptly report an accident on the premises
- Recklessness in the performance of duties which results in an accident
- The commission of any illegal act for which he could be charged with a felony under the criminal laws of the state
- Breach of confidentiality
- Behavior which in any manner endangers or threatens to endanger the life, health, safety or well-being of other persons, or which has, or threatens to have, an uncontrollably adverse effect on The Family Garden operations.

In a normal circumstance, complaints, issues of staff performance or other misconduct (allegations), will be investigated by the Director. During this period of investigation, at the

discretion of the Director, the employee may be placed on paid administrative leave for the convenience of the organization.

The following represents examples of some offenses worthy of disciplinary action:

- Poor work performance
- Falsification of employment application materials
- Any instance of unprofessional or inappropriate conducts
- Any instance of abuse, harassment of or harm to The Family Garden participants or fellow employees
- Coming to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Damage or loss of The Family Garden property
- Neglect of job responsibilities
- Unacceptable absences or tardiness
- Unacceptable electronic usage
- Violation of confidentiality policy
- Rude or inappropriate behavior towards The Family Garden participants or fellow staff members.
- Harassment
- Unwillingness to maintain physical wellbeing
- Noncompliance of The Family Garden policies

If discipline is warranted, any or all the following actions may be taken:

Verbal Warning: A verbal warning may be given to an employee who is failing to perform adequately on the job.

Written Warning: If the verbal warning does not result in the expected improvement or if more severe initial action is warranted, a written reprimand shall be issued to the employee with timelines for improvement established by the Director. Except in the case of an immediate written warning, the written warning will include documentation of previous steps taken. A copy of the warning will be given to the employee, reviewed, signed indicating receipt and placed in the employee's personnel file. The employee may choose to give a written response to be attached to the written warning and included in the personnel file.

Disciplinary Probation: An employee may be placed on probation if his/her performance is seriously deficient. Written notice will be given to place an employee on probation including a corrective action plan stating each deficiency with accompanying timelines. If the individual has not corrected his/her deficiencies during the probationary period, dismissal is indicated.

Disciplinary Suspension: An employee may be suspended under any condition or circumstance which would otherwise result in dismissal if, in the judgment of the Director, extenuating circumstances or an exemplary prior work record justify a less severe action. A written notice, stating the reason(s) for suspension, will be furnished to the employee, including the time for suspension and whether it is with or without pay.

Dismissals:

(a) Dismissal following correction action: when the required corrective action has not been taken within the time limits established by the Director, dismissal is warranted,

(b) Immediate dismissal: an employee may be discharged without warning, without notice and without pay in lieu of notice in emergencies. Decisions to immediately dismiss an employee must be authorized in advance by the Board.

Emergencies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Employee behavior which in any manner endangers or threatens to endanger the life, health, safety, or well-being of other persons, or which has, or threatens to have an uncontrollably adverse effect on The Family Garden operations
- Deliberate falsification of records, reports, timesheets, etc.
- Actual or attempted fraud or embezzlement
- Extreme insubordination
- Unsuccessful completion of the introductory period
- Breach of confidentiality
- Excessive Absenteeism
- Excessive Electronic Usage
- Neglect or physical abuse of a child
- Withholding of food, nap, or other comfort from a child
- Yelling or the use of harsh tones of voice
- Conviction of a felony for any offense committed while employed by the school.

- Leaving a child unattended (inside or outside)
- Allowing a child to leave The Family Garden with an unauthorized person
- Sleeping while supervising children
- Insubordination that shows gross disrespect such as threatening, cussing, or yelling at fellow staff, parents, and/or Board of Directors
- Coming to work-or work-related functions under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Noncompliance with The Family Garden Policies

Right to Appeal/Grievance Procedure

It is the intention that grievances be settled at the lowest step possible. The parties are encouraged to settle grievances informally as circumstances allow. No grievance shall be considered unless it is presented to the Director or Board within fifteen (15) working days of the occurrence of the act, or failure to act, of which the employee complains.

Step 1 - The employee shall present a written statement of his/her grievance to the Director. The Director shall respond within five working days from the date of the discussion.

Step 2 - If the grievance is still unresolved, the grievant may within ten working days give written notice of his/her appeal to the Board. If the Board rejects the grievance, he/she shall inform the grievant within five working days.

Step 3 – If the grievant is still not happy at this time, he/she may call the State Licensing Division at 1 800 540 7942.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

The Family Garden wishes to promote the use of negotiation and mediation as early interventions in employee conflicts. The goal is to resolve conflicts before they escalate to unmanageable levels and to maximize, wherever appropriate, the input of the parties involved in the conflict in designing solutions that meet the needs of the parties within the context of The Family Garden obligations.

Entering mediation does not compromise, replace, or preclude any employee's legal or civil rights to take the conflict elsewhere if no resolution is reached. Mediation will not be used to replace or preclude the appropriate role of Director or any other section of the personnel practices. Certain issues may be determined to be inappropriate for mediation such as but not limited to violence in the workplace, serious criminal matters, or significant imbalances of power. All mediations are voluntary and confidential.

Informal First Steps:

All employees are encouraged to speak directly with the person with whom they have a conflict

whenever possible. If this is not possible, or if the informal conversation does not resolve the conflict,

The employees will be encouraged to consider utilizing any third party agreeable to all parties to facilitate a conversation. This will be considered an "informal conversation". If the conflict is not resolved here,

The parties will be asked to consider taking the conflict to "formal" mediation provided by the Director. A Board Member may also attend if seen necessary.

Formal Mediation:

The conflict will then be referred to the Board of Directors, who will conduct an intake, explain the process of mediation, and determine whether mediation is the appropriate venue for resolution and explore who should be involved in the mediation.

If the parties agree to try mediation, the Director may select an appropriate Board Member and set up the mediation.

Mediation is a confidential process. Persons not directly involved, as parties to the mediation will not have access to the contents of the mediation process or the agreement if one is reached. However, relevant parties will be informed whether an agreement has been reached. If the terms of an agreement affect parties not at the table, the disputants will be asked how they wish these parties to be informed.

If the conflict is not resolved in mediation, the employee has 5 working days from the termination of mediation to initiate the formal employee grievance procedure as described in these personnel policies.

Excessive Absenteeism

The Family Garden strives to provide the highest level of service to children and families. Regular attendance by staff is key to the delivery of consistent, high-level services. Employee absenteeism, unscheduled leave and tardiness can have detrimental financial and programmatic impact on our ability to effectively operate.

Regular attendance and punctuality are critical factors in an employee's overall contribution to The Family Garden. Employees are expected to be at The Family Garden at scheduled times, return from breaks and work their scheduled hours. If something unexpected delays an employee, the Director should be contacted as soon as possible. The minimum call-in requirement is one hour before the scheduled work shift the employee must call each day of the absence unless otherwise directed.

Excessive absenteeism may be defined as:

- Any pattern of absences connected but not limited to weekends, holidays or leave

- More than 10 days sick time per calendar year
- Five consecutive absences with no medical documentation. A simple return to work note is unacceptable.

Excessive absenteeism or tardiness may result in corrective action up to and including termination. Scheduled time off, such as pregnancy/delivery, approved vacation, personal days, holidays, bereavement leave, jury/witness duty, trainings, scheduled medical appointments, family leave, leave of absence or industrial injury/illness, The Family Garden-initiated time off, or any absence protected by law is not considered part of excessive absenteeism.

Contracts

Each employee will be offered a contract for a set number of hours per week at a set amount per hour, as designated by the Director and Board of Directors.

Reduction in Force

The Family Garden staff positions are based on program changes in response to community needs. Staff contracts are made according to program funding. A reduction in force occurs when funding for the program under which the employee is hired is not available or programmatic changes are necessary.

Full Time Employee Benefits

The Benefit schedule is as follows, per year

Sick/Personal Days

- Seven sick/personal days will begin occurring upon hire and will be available after 90 days of employment.
- Regular attendance is critical
- If ill an employee must call the director/site manager, preferably the night before or at the earliest possible time, a minimum of an hour before their scheduled start time.
- Failure to notify the Director/Site Manager of an absence will result in disciplinary action.
- A minimum of one week's notice in writing is appreciated when requesting time off
- When taking planned personal or vacation days, a staff member can first submit an advanced written request (email or text is okay) then fill out a request form, which will be granted on a first come served basis and will depend on staffing availability for that time off.

Paid Holidays

These may include, but are not limited to:

- Martin Luther King Day
- Presidents Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- 4th of July
- Labor Day
- Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after
- Employee's Birthday (must be taken within two months of employee's birthday)
- Christmas Break
 - Extra days may be added based on the calendar year.
 - Employees will be paid for Snow Days

* We reserve the right to close for extra days surrounding the holidays, deep cleaning in the event of widespread sickness or occasional half days.

Paid Vacation

During the first year of employment paid vacation is provided from December 24th through January 1st. The second week of paid vacation will begin occurring upon your one year anniversary date and the third week upon your five year anniversary date. Vacation time should be used within one year of accrual. Only five days can carry over beyond a year. Vacation weeks may not be granted the week before or after Winter Break.

Vacation Accrual

Time Employed	Earned Vacation Days
First Year of Employment	Week of 12/24 - 1/01
One to Five Years of Employment	Week of 12/24 - 1/01 Plus Five Days

Five+ Years of Employment	Week of 12/24 - 1/01 Plus Ten Days
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Insurance Opportunities

All Family Garden employees have access to Aflac services.

Sign on Bonus

A \$300 sign on bonus will be given to employees 90 days after their start date with no infractions.

Trainings

The Family Garden offers paid trainings in order to meet yearly requirements. We also help to cover some of, if not all costs in order to help further your education. How much The Family Garden will cover will be discussed among the Board of Directors.

Employment Classification

- Salaried employees are those who supervise, evaluate and can hire or fire employees.
- Full-Time Employees work 40 hours a week.
- Part-Time Employees work 10-20 hours a week.

Note: Only in some specific cases, working overtime will be permitted and overtime will be paid; therefore, when anytime over 40 hours is worked, it must be pre-approved by the Director. Working overtime hours that are not pre-approved by the Director, can be grounds for termination of unemployment.

Juror or Witness

The Family Garden will grant leave when a staff person is summoned to serve as a juror or subpoenaed to appear in court as a witness. The staff person shall be paid the equivalent of his/her contracted daily pay for each day served as a juror or a witness. If the staff person receives compensation for this service, that compensation shall be deducted from the amount reimbursed by The Family Garden to ensure that the staff person receives the equivalent of his/her contracted daily pay. Leave without pay will be granted to a staff member who must appear in court in connection with any legal proceeding in which he/she is a civil plaintiff or a criminal defendant.

Reimbursement of Expenses

Employees must obtain the Director’s approval before incurring expenses for which they wish to be reimbursed. A completed “Request for Reimbursement form” with receipts for expenses must be submitted to and signed by the Director. Reimbursement requests for approved expenses generally will be made at the next pay period.

Bereavement Leave

A staff member shall be entitled up to 3 days leave with pay in the event of a death in the staff member's immediate family for the purposes of attending the funeral of the family member. The staff member shall notify the lead teacher/director when he/she elects to take bereavement leave. In the event of a death in the staff, a member's immediate family additional leave may be granted at the director's discretion. Requests for the use of bereavement leave for non-family members must be made to the director and Board. The director and/or Board reserve the right to grant this request, or not.

Maternity Leave

All Family Garden staff (whether full time or part time) will receive 8 weeks of paid maternity leave based on 70% of their current salary at the time of their child's birth. Staff may choose to return to work after 6 weeks and then will receive full pay once they start work.

Staff are eligible to an additional 4 weeks for a total of up to 12 weeks of maternity leave, with prior approval from the Director. However, only 8 weeks will be paid (at the 70% level); the remaining time (up to 4 weeks) are unpaid. Staff can choose to use vacation time or sick leave for this time, once approval for time off has been given by the director.

Staff will begin receiving maternity leave payment at the 70% level once their child is born. If staff begin their leave prior to birth, they can use vacation or sick pay to cover their time until the child is born (with Director approval).

If Maternity leave coincides with Family Garden time off benefits, the benefit will be in addition to the 8 weeks of paid leave.

Military Leave

Employees who are members of a reserve component of the Armed Services either are entitled to leave without pay during periods in which they are required to attend training or are called to active duty during periods of armed conflict. The Family Garden will require satisfactory proof of active duty.

Breastfeeding

The Family Garden offers the choice to employees to breastfeed or pump during their scheduled hours of work without being subject to loss of wages.

Child Tuition Discounts

The Family Garden will waive all enrollment fees for staff children attending. After one year of employment at The Family Garden, an employee may apply for a tuition discount. The discount will be based on childcare needs, as well as employee performance, and the program's available finances. The maximum employee discount is 25% of current tuition rates.

Staff Development

Each year The Family Garden budget funds according to available program resources for staff development activities such as trainings, workshops, and conferences. Staff development funds may be available to all Family Garden staff. The Family Garden staff shall participate in a reasonable amount of training (min 15 hours) which is intended to improve and expand their job skills as determined by the Director. Staff members are expected to attend staff meetings and trainings.

Each staff member must complete an Individualized Professional Development Plan (IPDP) at the start of their position. The IPDP is an on-going working document that must be revised by each staff member throughout the year. Staff will review IPDP's with the Director every six months.

Workplace Safety/Security

Hazardous Weather Conditions

It is our general policy that The Family Garden will remain open to serve the needs of working parents. On hazardous weather days, The Family Garden will follow the cancellations of the Brattleboro public schools. If the public schools are delayed by one hour, The Family Garden will begin at 9:00 AM. If the Brattleboro public schools are delayed by two hours, The Family Garden will begin at 10:00 AM. Cancellations will be announced over the local radio stations. In the rare event that the Governor declares a state of emergency, the Director will close The Family Garden. If individual towns declare a state of emergency, staff residing in those towns will not be expected to report to work. They will not be expected to charge their personal time for these rare situations and will be paid. In all other situations, staff can make the personal choice about whether to report to work, if the employee believes it is too dangerous to travel; employees who do not report for work must use personal or unpaid time to be fair to those who do report to work.

Accident Prevention Statement and Safety Rules

The Family Garden, Inc. believes that Accident Prevention in the workplace is the responsibility of all parties. The safety and welfare of all employees, independent contractors and volunteers is a goal of the program that will only be achieved with the cooperation of all the staff. First and foremost, we all must take responsibility for working safely in our classrooms, in shared areas and on the playground.

To promote safety in the workplace, the following rules must be followed by all employees, independent contractors and volunteers working at The Family Garden:

Keep classrooms and shared areas clean and free of toys and debris.

Any spills on the floor of the classrooms and shared areas shall be cleaned up immediately.

Hallways shall not be used for storage. Hallways must be clear of debris for emergency access and safety reasons.

A Playground Sweep will be done daily. All toys must be cleaned up and put away, and the cover must be put back on the sandbox.

Any problems in the classroom, shared areas, and playground with equipment or the building should be reported immediately to the Director for repair and/or removal.

Access to The Family Garden & Records

Parents/Guardians have free access to The Family Garden during regular school hours without prior notice.

Written records concerning children may be reviewed by parents/guardians at any time if it does not interfere with a class in session. Copies will be made available upon request; written records will be kept on the premises of the school during school hours and are inaccessible to anyone other than staff members, written permission from the parent/guardian is required for anyone else to review these files.

Emergency Situations *Refer to Emergency Procedures Handbook

General

At start date, all employees will be instructed in emergency evacuations. In the event of an emergency such as a natural disaster, fire, bomb threat, etc. the Director will call The Board President while Lead Teachers Start calling parents. If this parent is not answering, they should proceed to the next family on the list. In the case of a Vermont Yankee, emergency The Family Garden staff will follow the procedure outlined in the VY evacuation plan.

Fire drills (Happen Monthly)

- When a bell/whistle or alarm sounds teachers are to exit safely and quickly with children.
- Do not worry about shoes or coats.
- A teacher should take with them the emergency bag which should hold up to date names and emergency information for children, teachers, and a first aid kit.
- Seek the closest exit.
- Gather at the front gate or back playground gate.
- Do a headcount.
- Do not enter the building until the Director has directed you to do so.

Nuclear/Natural Disaster

- The Family Garden would either shelter in or evacuate.

- If we evacuate the town will provide transportation to the Bellows Falls High School.
- See procedure outlined in VY evacuation plan.

Missing or abducted child

- If a child is missing from the premises, the police (911) and the Child Development Division will need to be contacted immediately.
- The child's parents should also be notified right away.
- Attentive supervision, frequent head counts and appropriate adult to child ratios can further safeguard our children from incidences such as these.

Prohibited Persons

- A person shall be prohibited from the facility when his/her presence or behavior disrupts the program, distracts the teachers from their responsibilities, intimidates or promotes fear among children or adults or when there is a reason to believe that his/her action or behavior will present a risk of harm.
- Any person who is prohibited by the above-mentioned criteria shall be asked to leave The Family Garden property. If the person refuses to leave, the police shall be called to help escort them off the premises.

*** Staff will also review the Emergency Response Plan Handbook Every Year**

Care and Keeping of a Quality Teacher

Children are only cared for, as well as the adults who care for them, are cared for. Therefore, it is vitally important that teachers of young children take good care of themselves. Physical wellness is a vital part of working with young children. Vermont State Child Care Licensing Regulations and The Family Garden Employee Policies always require employees to be well while in the presence of children. Wellness includes, but is not limited to, adequate nutrition, sleep, hydration, health (physical, emotional, and psychological) and cognitive ability.

The work that early childhood educators do is not easy. In fact, it is emotionally and physically exhausting and yet, with the right attitude it is awesome and uplifting. As a young child's teacher, you are modeling for them how to get along in the world both with others and within themselves.

Take care of yourself physically:

- Eat a healthy diet
- Get plenty of rest and exercise

- Practice good hygiene and illness control
- Take care of your back!

Take care of yourself emotionally:

- Do not let frustrations build up. Problem solve with your Director or Board if needed, during time away from the children.
- Play, laugh, and enjoy your time with and without children
- Network with other early childhood educators
- Recognize the work you do as a valuable, worthy profession.

Take care of yourself intellectually:

- Keep yourself out of a teaching rut; take classes and workshops to keep fresh and excited.
- Network with other early childhood educators.

* The Director and Board will review any matters not covered in the above sections as they are brought before them.

Policies & Procedures

Accident/Incident/Behavioral Reports- An incident report form must be completed for any incident or accident, which causes physical injury to a child, visitor, parent, or staff member. Incident forms are filled out on Brightwheel as well as on a paper copy that the parent needs to sign stating they have received notice. An incident report must also be filled out for any visible injury that a child comes to school with.

For a child that causes an injury to another child, it should be documented on Brightwheel as an observation if minor. This could include light hitting, pushing, pulling hair, etc. Behavioral Reports must also be written for any physical harm leaving any marks or broken skin, or emotional harm caused to children or staff, from the actions of a child's behavior.

Any serious injury must be brought to the Director's attention, at which time a parent/guardian will be contacted. If an injury requires immediate attention by medical personnel, employees will follow the program's EMERGENCY PROCEDURES.

Reports must be made no matter the time of day or what children were involved

Accreditation- The Family Garden is part of the VT STARS program. All staff will be involved in this process of creating and maintaining a high quality, developmentally appropriate program. The Family Garden will strive to continue to be a 4 STAR program, employees will be expected

to meet requirements for this rating system.

Allergies- Documentation of children's allergies can be found in their enrollment paperwork and should be documented with a physician's statement. This information will be kept in the child's file. Children's food allergies will be posted in the classroom and will be referred to before preparing and offering food to children.

Arrival and Departure- Arrival and departure times can be difficult transitions for some children and parents. Staff sensitivity during this time includes greeting and welcoming each child as they arrive and being supportive to parents so that they feel comfortable leaving their child in our care.

The classroom will have a current child attendance sheet and a listing of persons authorized to pick up individual children. This information shall be kept on Brightwheel and in a central location. It must be easily accessible to staff. If a person picking up a child is unfamiliar to staff, they must always request photo identification and check authorization list before releasing the child.

Late Pick-Up Policy- The Family Garden pick-up times range from 4:00 to 5:00 PM. After your scheduled pick-up time, staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian or an emergency contact/alternate pick-up person as authorized. The Director will also be notified. If no one can be contacted and the child is not picked up an hour after scheduled pick-up time, the local police department will be notified. At that time, they will assume physical custody of the child until the family can be reached.

Communicable Disease Control Procedures- Employees are required to review and follow universal precautions and procedures to ensure a safe and healthy environment. See Our Communicable Disease Control Procedures Form.

Daily Schedule- A daily schedule will be posted in each classroom and must include opportunities for developmental age-appropriate individual and group activities, as well as meals, snacks, indoor and outdoor play. Staff is also encouraged to post a pictorial schedule at eye level for the children to refer to. This will assist the children in learning the daily routine and will help to create a more predictable, stable environment.

Discipline- The Family Garden recognizes discipline as a process, which includes teaching, guiding, and reinforcing. All staff are expected to be familiar with and follow our program's

Guidance and Discipline Policy- All employees are responsible for the physical and emotional wellbeing of every child attending our program. If an employee sees or hears another employee dealing with a child in a way that does not support our program's guidance and discipline policy, they should offer immediate intervention on behalf of the child. The incident should then be brought to the attention of the Director.

Environment- Employees are expected to keep their assigned classrooms clean and safe in accordance with communicable disease control procedures. Each room must have a spray bottle of 1 TBSP. bleach to 1 quart of water for the purpose of disinfecting tables, mats, etc. This solution should be prepared in advance and always kept out of the reach of children. Bleach is not to be stored in the classroom, it must always be under lock and key. Staff should refer to the Communicable Disease Control Procedure Form, as a guide for all items that require disinfecting.

Maintenance- Employees are responsible for daily classroom maintenance including sweeping and mopping the floor, vacuuming the rugs, disinfecting toys and tabletops, and bringing all bagged trash out to the dumpster at the end of the day. If you have a maintenance task that needs to be completed, please speak with the Director.

Field Trips- Parents/Guardians must be informed of all field trips including the destination, estimated time of departure and return. A permission slip must be signed by a parent/guardian prior to a child's participation on a field trip. A general permission slip can be signed in advance for neighborhood walks.

A complete first aid kit and rescue medications must be taken on all field trips and neighborhood walks. The kit should also include children's registration/emergency information and emergency information for each staff member. A cell phone must also be brought.

First Aid- First Aid supplies will be kept in each classroom out of the reach of children. Non-porous disposable gloves are available in first aid containers and in all classrooms and must be used when treating injuries. All injuries are to be documented on an accident report. First Aid and CPR training will be made available to all staff and is a requirement as stated in each job description.

Hand washing- Hand washing is the greatest measure that staff and children can take to reduce the spread of infection and disease. Staff should teach and model for children correct hand washing methods as outlined in the Communicable Disease Control Procedures Form. Employees and children should wash their hands thoroughly upon arrival each day, before serving and eating food, after toileting and diapering and before cooking activities.

Illness- Children should be observed throughout the day for symptoms of illness. Symptoms of illness may include:

- Vomiting
- A temp, of 100 degrees or higher
- Diarrhea
- Sore throat

- Runny nose with discoloration
- Crusty eyes
- Discharge from ears
- Unidentifiable skin rashes with fever

Staff should watch for a combination of symptoms along with behavior changes when determining whether a child should go home. When contacting parents/guardians, staff should share specific symptoms but should refrain from diagnosing a specific illness.

If a child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, a notice must be posted on the parent bulletin board alerting parents/guardians to the illness and providing any necessary information. Contagious illnesses that are common in-group childcare are conjunctivitis, chicken pox, strep throat, impetigo, and Coxsackie's disease.

Inclusion of Children with Special Needs- Our program is designed to meet the strengths, interests and needs of each child enrolled. Our program and curriculum provide every child an equal opportunity to participate in our daily activities that are appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability.

We make accommodations and modifications necessary to meet the needs of all children.

If warranted, we will develop an individual emergency procedure for any enrolled child with special needs.

The emergency procedure, individualized curriculum, classroom modifications, and other program activities should be informed by input from the parents, Early Education Services (EES), Early Essential Education (EEE), Children's Integrated Services (CIS), or the special needs services of WSESU through direct consultation or through the IEP, appropriate health, nutrition services and/or mental health services, and any other appropriate service agencies.

We communicate regularly with EES, CIS and EEE, and welcome their specialists into our classrooms. We incorporate goals and activities from the IEP into our individualized curriculum plans. All classroom teachers must attend IEP development meetings for children with special needs; if a teacher is not able to attend a meeting, the Primary teacher of the child with special needs must attend that child's IEP development meetings.

Lice- The Family Garden has a Nit Free Policy regarding head lice, which includes staff responsibilities. See **Nit Free Policy**,

Medication- A medication administration form must be completed by the parent/guardian when medication is required. These forms are in the office. One employee in each classroom should be designated to dispense medication. Employees must record each medication dosage and the time

it was dispensed on paper form and on Brightwheel.

Prescription medication must be in the original container with a current date, the child's name, length of dispensation, and the physician's name clearly printed on the label. Non-prescription medication must be accompanied by a written authorization from the child's physician with clear instructions, including length of dispensation.

Parent Involvement- Parents play a primary role in supporting their child's growth and development and are encouraged to be involved in the program and to spend time at the center. Opportunities to participate and communicate with program staff will be available at parent-teacher conferences and other Family Garden events. The Family Garden recognizes and supports the diversity in today's family structures and backgrounds and includes both cultural and familial activities and experiences as part of our daily program.

Meals- The Family Garden encourages parents to provide nutritious meals and snacks each day. All food will be stored, prepared, and served in a sanitary manner. All food will be served on a plate or napkin. All hot foods and liquids shall be kept out of children's reach. Staff is encouraged to sit with the children during meals, as this is a pleasant and social time. Children are encouraged to help themselves and to participate in cleaning up as appropriate. Children are not to be forced to eat and should not be made to sit for long periods at the table waiting to be served. Staff and children must wash their hands before handling food. Children's food allergies shall be posted in the classroom.

Parking- Parking spaces closest to the building entrance should be reserved for parent drop-off and pick-up. Parking is available by our back playground fence.

Playground

Staff will always accompany children out into the playground and supervise their activities. They should maintain a ratio of at least 1 adult to every 10 preschoolers (ages 3+), 1 adult to every 5 toddlers (ages 2-3), or 1 adult to every 4 infants (under 2 years of age).

Staff should situate themselves to ensure that all areas of the playground can be seen by at least one adult.

Staff should not be sitting the majority of outside time. They should be up and interacting with children.

When children are using the climbing structure, a staff member should be stationed close to the structure to assist a child if needed.

If a child needs to use the bathroom, they must notify the staff member on duty that they are going to the bathroom. An adult must accompany the child into the building and let the teacher inside know that a child needs to use the bathroom. If the adult outside is within ratio the second

adult will accompany the child to the bathroom and then back to the playground.

Children should be discouraged from the following activities:

- Climbing the fence
- Digging anywhere other than the sandbox
- Depositing sand anywhere other than the sandbox
- Standing on the picnic table, bins, or sandbox cover
- Twisting or going sideways on swings
- Jumping off the stairs
- Fighting or pretend fighting
- Opening the gate
- Playing in the exit stairwell

Bathroom

Toileting- In addition to having scheduled bathroom times, children will be allowed to use the bathroom as needed. Children will be supervised and there are no toys, books, bottles, etc allowed in the bathroom. Children will need to wash their hands when finished.

Diapering- Diapering procedures are hung next to every changing table and will be followed by all staff. Staff will view this handling of every diaper as a positive experience and not refer to feces as “gross”, “disgusting”, “dirty”, ect. It is all natural and no child should be made to feel ashamed. After, help the child wash their hands.

Toilet Training- At The Family Garden we believe Children should only be toilet trained when they are ready. Teachers will work with the family to determine a child’s readiness and create a plan. It is the child’s choice to use the bathroom. Teachers will encourage, but not force any child to use the toilet.

Accidents- Accidents happen! They will be handled calmly and without reprimand or judgement. The soiled clothes will be washed here, unless parents prefer to wash at home.

Visitors- Anyone coming into the building to visit an employee, or a classroom must check in with the Program Director and will be asked to sign in and out of our visitor's book, which is at the building entrance.

Volunteers- The Family Garden will serve as a site for a variety of volunteer opportunities. Orientation, supervision, and leadership will be provided to all volunteers. In accordance with

licensing regulations, volunteers must never be left alone with the children and cannot be counted in adult-child ratios. Any issues or concerns relating to a volunteer's performance should be brought to the attention of the Director.

Communicable Disease Control Policy

Preschools are at high risk for spreading communicable diseases due to the large number of children kept in close quarters. Our ability to prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases is strengthened using **universal precautions** and procedures - usual and ordinary steps that reduce the risk of spreading infections.

They are **universal** because they refer to steps that are taken in ALL cases, regardless of whether an individual is known to be infected, and they are **precautions** because they require foresight and planning and are integrated into existing daily safety guidelines. The following procedures incorporate the basic principles of disease prevention and management and are designed to keep our program a safe and healthy environment for all.

Definitions:

Communicable Disease: An illness due to an infectious agent or its toxic products. It can be transmitted to a susceptible host either directly from an infected person or indirectly from an intermediate carrier.

Body Fluids: Includes saliva, blood, phlegm, vomit, urine, and feces.

Chlorine Solution: A mixture of 1-part household chlorine bleach to 10 parts water. This solution must be made daily as it loses its effectiveness if stored longer than 24 hours.

Proper Hand Washing Techniques

- Use soap, preferably liquid, and running water.
- Rub hands vigorously as you wash them.
- Wash ALL surfaces including back of hands, wrist, palms, between fingers and under nails.
- Rinse hands well. Leave water running.
- Dry hands thoroughly with a single use paper towel.
- Turn off water with a clean paper towel.
- Throw towels away.

Personal Practices

- Any body part or any item of clothing, which contains body fluids, must be washed immediately with soap and water, regardless of if gloves were used during the contact.
- Hands must be washed with soap and water according to proper hand washing techniques, upon arrival each day, after bathroom use, before and after serving food or

administering medications, after sneezing, wiping noses and after any other situation where germs could be spread.

Wear Disposable Protective Glove

- Staff will wear disposable protective gloves in the following situations:
- Whenever handling food
- Whenever direct contact is expected with body fluids, or when working with any surface or item that has been in contact with body fluids.
- When emptying trash or waste containers that have been exposed to infected items or that contains food remains, etc.
- When performing any housekeeping task that may involve contact with body fluids. - If clothing or bedding is soiled, all items must be placed in a sealed plastic bag. - Soiled diapers will be disposed of in a designated lined diaper pail. - Gloves will be disposed of in a sealed plastic bag and placed in a covered trash receptacle.

Disposable gloves are available in the classroom and first aid kits.

Adhere to Proper First Aid Techniques

- Inspect yourself. Check for broken skin, especially on the hands. Cover any open cuts or abrasions.
- Always wear gloves when administering first aid.
- Using gloves, clean up any blood or other body fluid promptly using chlorine bleach solution. If a mop or bucket is used, both must be disinfected with fresh bleach solution after use.
- Wash hand with soap and water immediately after cleaning body fluids to avoid possible contamination.

Environmental Conditions

- Diaper receptacles will be bagged daily and emptied at the end of the day.
- Lunch tables will be wiped down thoroughly with bleach solution before and after meals
- Classroom tables and sinks will be wiped down thoroughly with bleach solution daily
- Refrigerator and microwave oven must be cleaned monthly. Spills must be wiped up immediately.
- Toys that are mouthed must be disinfected when no longer in use or removed from the common use until the item can be disinfected.

NIT FREE POLICY

A child cannot be in attendance if he or she has a contagious illness.

One of the conditions that is classified under contagious illnesses is **head lice**.

Head lice are sesame-sized insects that are found on the scalp or hair shaft. Lice deposit their nits (eggs) on the hair shaft near the scalp, especially on top of the head, behind the ears, and at the nape.

Nits are tiny, grayish-white eggs that are oval shaped. They are attached to the hair shaft by a glue-like substance that makes it difficult to remove. Lice are spread by direct contact with an infected person, or their hats, combs, brushes, pillows, bedding, etc. Itching and scratching of the head is an important symptom.

If a child has head lice, they will need to be treated with a lice-killing shampoo. All family members should be checked and treated if nits are found. Lice shampoos can be purchased without a prescription at a local drug store. All bedding and personal items should also be washed in hot water.

Since lice treatments do not necessarily kill 100% of all the nits, it is important to remove them. There are special combs available for this purpose.

After treatment and the removal of all nits, a child can return to the center.

Enforcing our Nit Free Policy - Staff

- Classroom staff should conduct periodic head checks when there has been an outbreak of head lice at the center.
- Staff are not responsible for removing the lice or nits.
- Parents/guardians must immediately be contacted, and the child will be sent home.
- When a child returns to the center after being treated for head lice, a staff member must re-check their head in the presence of the parent/guardian.
- A child will not be able to stay if any nits are present.
- As a precautionary measure, when there is an outbreak of head lice in a classroom, all children's personal belongings will be stored in secured plastic bags until the classroom has been nit-free for a period of two weeks.

Guidance and Discipline Policy

Behavior Guidance Policy

Many children are experiencing school for the first time upon entering The Family Garden. As children begin to interact in a group setting challenging behaviors, such as yelling, grabbing, hitting, etc. are likely to occur. To maximize a positive environment for all our children, and to minimize the possibility of inappropriate behavior, The Family Garden has developed a progressive guidance plan. Our staff is prepared to use the following discipline techniques:

Individual Management

The foundation of this plan is based on a developmental program that reduces the possibility of inappropriate behaviors:

- **Reasonable Expectations**
- **Developmentally Appropriate Practice** - Teachers will not expect children to do things they are not cognitively, socially, or emotionally ready to do.
- **Special Needs** - Our teachers are familiar with an individual child's special needs and the appropriate techniques needed to work with that child.
- **Activity** - Children will have interesting, challenging, appropriate things to do and adequate materials to do them.
- **Modeling** - Our teachers will model appropriate behavior.
- **Supervision** - Ratios are maintained and each child's health and safety are protected.
- **Reinforcement** - Teachers reinforce appropriate behavior.

Redirection

- Teachers will offer alternatives to children engaged in undesirable behavior.

Verbal Intervention

- Anticipation of behavior and intercession BEFORE the problem occurs.
- Encouragement and assistance in using words to solve the problem
- Explain expectations of acceptable behavior

Use of phrases such as:

- "I need you to..."
- "In this school you may..."
- "Hitting your friend is not OK. You can tell him that you don't like what he's doing."

Use techniques that encourage the Child to be the problem solver:

- “Use your words...”
- “I see you’re working it out... let me know if I can help.”
- “I wonder how you’ll solve this problem?”
- Redirection Approach again

Logical Consequences

Use of adult proximity to help child find his/her own self-control

The teacher helps the child understand the logical consequences of his/her actions by removing an object, activity, etc. that is causing the problem.

On rare occasions, if a child becomes physically, emotionally, or verbally abusive to the other children or teachers and is not responsive to the efforts of the staff, as mentioned above, to stop the behavior they will be given one warning. If the behavior continues, the parent will be called, and the child will need to be picked up immediately and removed for the remainder of the day. If this procedure does not resolve the behavior, other action may need to be considered; this would be discussed and determined by the Director and parent. If parents and director are unable to resolve a disciplinary issue, it will be brought to the Board of Directors for discussion to determine the appropriate course of action. Following a significant incident involving the health and safety of any child, a child may be unable to attend school until the board is able to meet, create and offer an action plan.

In response to any unacceptable behavior, staff members WILL NOT use the following discipline measures:

- Corporal punishment (hitting, striking)
- Restraint -unless necessary to protect the child or others
- Sarcasm
- Ridicule
- Humiliation
- Isolation
- Any method that may damage the child's self-esteem

Staff Children Guidelines

- All children will be treated equally while attending The Family Garden, whether they are staff children or not. No favoritism.
- All teachers are responsible for the children even if the parents of the child(ren) are in the room.
- Our Guidance and Discipline Policy should be enforced and followed no matter your relation to the child or if the parent is in the room.
- Parents of children that attend must treat their children as they would any other child in their care.
- All required documentation, including Incident and Behavioral Reports, will be made, even if the parent is in the room when it occurs.
- We will hold the same expectations for all children

Employee Agreement

The employee handbook has been prepared for your information and understanding of the policies of The Family Garden, Inc. Upon completion of your careful review of this handbook, please sign the statement below and return this agreement to the Director.

I, _____, have received and read a copy of The Family Garden Employee Handbook and have familiarized myself with the contents of this guide. I acknowledge, understand, accept, and agree to comply with the information contained in The Family Garden Employee Handbook. I understand this Handbook is not intended to cover every situation that may arise during my employment but is simply a general guide to the goals and policies of The Family Garden. I understand that The Family Garden may modify or change the terms described in the guide at any time, with or without prior notice.

I further understand that The Family Garden Employee Handbook and any provisions contained in the handbook do not constitute a guarantee of employment, a guarantee of any other rights or benefits, or a contract of employment, express or implied. I understand that my employment is at will and that my employment may be terminated at any time for any reason, with or without cause and with or without notice, at the option of The Family Garden or at my option.

Employee's Name: _____

Employee's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Director's Name: _____

Director's Signature: _____

Date: _____