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**2023/2024**

**Ms. Colleen (Lead Teacher)**

**Ms. Michele (Lead Assistant)**

**Welcome**

We are so excited to start a new school year in the Rainbow class! There is so much growth that occurs in this year and we can’t wait to get started. You will find that there are many more activities made available for your child throughout the day. With this we find that the kids begin going from their independent or parallel play to beginning to engage in associative play with their classmates as they explore different ways to play. They will be learning how to play together and how to communicate effectively with each other.

In addition to our changing play, Rainbow’s learn a new set of self-help skills. They are working on how to put on their coats, socks, shoes, and change their own clothes. Potty training is also a major topic in the Rainbow class as we move from wearing diapers to wearing our big kid underwear. The independence that these kids gain over the next year is truly remarkable. We can’t wait to watch the transformations that occur throughout the school year.

We are looking forward to starting the new school year with our fantastic new Rainbow class. We are excited to get to know each child and their families

**Getting Started**

When you come in for your first day of the school year, you will find that each child has a cubby to keep their belongings. This is where you will keep their coats, boots, extra clothes, special nap time items, etc. We ask that each child has at least two sets of extra clothes to be kept in their cubbies. These will come in handy if/when we get super messy or wet and need to be changed. A coat and boots can also be kept in your child’s cubby for when the weather begins to turn wet and muddy. We do try to get outside as much as possible and will be going outside if it is lightly raining. Our playground has a covered area, but most of us like to explore the puddles that can form. If your child has a special nap time blanket or stuffed animal, it could also be stored in their cubby. Please refrain from putting any toys or food into the cubbies, as often other kids may get a hold of it.

In addition to each child having their own cubby, they will have a Parent Pouch. This is where you will find notes from teachers, the office, incident reports, etc. Please make sure to check your parent pouch every day at pick up. There are also pouches for each teacher to leave them a note if you would like to.

Right under our Parent Pouches, you will find your child’s Art File. Each child has a file folder that gets filled with all of the art work they do during free choice, at the easel, or project time will be found in our art files. They are so proud of all of the work that they do at school and love to tell their families all about it.

In the morning, we find that quick drop offs typically help your child get their day started. Please drop off before 9:30. We begin our morning circle time shortly after. If the Stargazer class is in session please enter through the Rainbow class door off our playground, or the side door off the Dewdrops playground.

**Daily Schedule**

7:00-8:30-Free Play in Main Classroom

8:30 AM-Open Rainbow Classroom / Free Play /Outside (weather dependent)

8:30-9:35 AM-Free Play / Creative activities and learning areas open while children arrive /Outside (weather dependent)

9:35-9:0 A4M-Clean-Up Time / Transition to Circle Time

9:40-9:55AM (10AM max.)-Circle Time- Name Recognition, Story, Songs, Projects (Can extend up to 30 mins. If ALL children are engaged)

10:00-10:20AM Snack and Hand Washing

10:20-10:30 AM-Diaper Changes / Bathroom Duties

10:30-11:00AM-Free Play / Art Projects / Cooking Projects

11:00-11:05AM -Clean-Up / Transition to Outside

11:05-11:40AM-Outside on Rainbow Playground

11:40-11:55AM-Circle Time- Group games, stories, or songs while lunch is set-up

11:55-12:00PM-Transition to Lunch, Hand Washing

12:00-12:30PM-Lunch

12:30-12:45PM-Lunch Clean Up / Diaper Changes / Bathroom Tasks

12:45-1:00PM-Resting on Nap Mats

1:00pm- Nap Time / Pick-Ups

3:00pm-Nap Ends (early riser can do quiet activities)

3:00-3:30pm-Nap Beds Away / PM Snack / Diaper Changes / Bathroom Tasks / Free Play

3:30-4:00pm- Outside on Rainbows Playground

4:00-4:30pm- Extended Outside Play/Indoor Free Play

4:45-5:00pm -Diapers changes / Bathroom Tasks (if needed)

5:00pm –Snack Time

5:30pm – School Closes

**Curriculum**

The Rainbows follow an Emergent Curriculum. Each week the Rainbows learn about a new topic or theme. The books, art projects, cooking projects, songs, etc. we do for the week relate to the topic or theme of the week. The topics for the week are chosen based on the interests of the classroom or events that are relevant to their lives. I find that the kids are more interested and willing to participate in planned activities if they are intrigued about the topic we are learning about.

In planning for activities, we take into consideration the Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks. Each activity that is done at our school sets out to meet one or more of these objectives.

Our classroom is designed to enhance learning with designated centers. We have our book loft, dramatic play house, science, math, fine motor, art, and block areas. Each center is filled with activities designed to work of specific development and learning objectives. We have materials are rotated through these learning centers.

**Learning Through Play**

The majority of learning that happens in the Rainbow classroom is done through our play. Learning through play is not about children wondering aimlessly around a room dumping baskets and throwing blocks. Instead, learning through play takes a carefully prepared environment that invites young children to explore, examine, question, predict, test, investigate, trial, error, and manipulate. Through play, learning is different for every child because every child is learning at his own pace, learning in his own style, and guided by his own interests.

Our job is to aid in your child’s learning by providing learning experiences during their play. We often teach counting, colors, letters, shapes, etc. through interactions during your child’s play. It is also our responsibility to provide the play materials that will bring forth learning. The materials in our classroom do not serve only one purpose, they are open ended allowing your child to explore their possibilities: They are intentional.

During play is also when we learn how to interact with our peers. It teaches us to communicate effectively, recognize that others have different emotions about a situation, and so much more. Our play is extremely important to all of our developmental areas.

**Daily Chart**

Every day we record information about your child's diapering/pottying, meals, and nap on our daily chart.

Diapering and pottying are recorded several times throughout the day, typically during our major transitions. You will find two letters recorded, for instance D/W. The first letter is the state of your child's diaper or underwear and the second letter is what they did on the potty (diaper/potty). Here is what the letters mean.
D=dry
W=wet or pee
BM= bowel movement
LBM=loose bowl movement
A=accident
N=refused to use potty

Also on our chart we record what your child has eaten at morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack.
A=all
S=some
T=tried a bite
N=none

The last bit of information found on this chart is nap time. We begin nap by 1 and end at 3. We record what time they fell asleep and what time they woke up.

The daily charts are located on the clipboard hanging on the wall next to the bathroom in our classroom. Daily charts are kept for the week. The ones from the week are found behind the one for that day.

**Assessments**

During the school year, we conduct assessments three times a year. Within the first 90 days in the Rainbow Classroom your student will be assessed using the CDCs developmental screening. This will give a quick overlook of your child’s social/emotional, language/communication, cognitive, and movement/physical development. In addition to assessing if your child is meeting these benchmarks for their age, it screens for any potential developmental delays.

In addition to the CDCs screening, the Shyne School uses our Procare system to assess your child’s overall development. Throughout the year, we collect documentation on the Procare app to help aid us in understanding their development. Documentation looks like photos and notes about what they are doing in class. In the Rainbows you will receive information on your child’s development via Procare in Fall and Spring

In the Fall, the Rainbows are assessed using the benchmarks for Toddlers (18-36monts). These benchmarks include building relationships, touching, seeing hearing, and moving around, growing up healthy, communicating, about me and my family and culture, and learning about my world.

In the Spring, the Rainbows are assessed using the benchmarks for 3-4 year olds. The categories being assessed are the same as toddlers, but the markers of what your child can do are different as their abilities are changing.

In addition to our assessments on Procare and the CDC developmental screening, each family will receive a letter of recommendation prior to re-enrollment. In this letter, we will discuss your child’s progress in the above categories and in their potty training. Typically, by the end of January I can have a good understanding of your child’s progress in potty training and can provide information on if I feel they will be able to potty train by the August 1st deadline, or if they are going to need a little more time. The goal of this recommendation is to find the class that will help your child be the most successful in school.

**Parent Teacher Conferences**

The Rainbows are constantly changing and developing. Due to the rapid growth that happens during our year together, families are offered Parent Teacher Conferences throughout the school year. These are a time for us to be able to talk in depth about your child’s development, potty training, behavior, or any other additional support or guidance your family needs. Parent Teacher Conferences can be held via zoom, in person, or over the phone.

In the Fall, all families are offered Parent Teacher Conferences to discuss how your child is adjusting to being in the Rainbow Class and go over the assessments completed at that point. At this point in the year, I prefer to arrange a meeting with each one of our families to build connections and share how your child is doing in class.

**Portfolios**

Throughout the school year we will be collecting artwork, pictures, and other mementos from your child’s time in the Rainbows. Portfolios will also contain reports derived from the Procare assessments completed throughout the year. At the end of the school year the collection of work will be organized into a booklet for you to bring home and keep as something to remember your child’s time in the Rainbow class.

 Families are always welcome to take a look at their child’s portfolio. They are kept in the right side teacher cabinet above the counter in our classroom. Please feel free to check them out, but I ask that they remain at school.

**Communication**

Parents can communicate with their child’s teachers using the Procare App. Messages can be sent to and from the staff that are working in your child’s classroom. These messages could be anything from your child running late or staying home to discussing their development. Sending messages on Procare helps all of the staff working with your child remain on the same page.

In addition to exchanging information about your child, the Procare App is used to share photos which show some of the activities your child has been doing while at school. We send photos on a regular basis to help build the home-school connection.

**Social Development**

While in the Rainbow classroom we see a huge leap in social skills development. Most of the Rainbows begin the year engaging in Solitary or Parallel play and leave our class engaging in Associative play. It is such a fun progression to watch as our group develops through these stages.

Stage 1: Solitary Play

This is the first stage of play. Babies and toddlers (birth to around two) are in this stage. They love to be with family members and also enjoy time by themselves. They are very busy exploring and discovering their new world. These very young children tend to play alone regardless of whether other children are in the same room.

Stage 2: Parallel Play

The second stage of play begins around the age of two. Children play next to each other simply because they are in the same area but they are engaged in their own activities. They play side-by-side, watch and listen to each other. At this age they are interested in the same toys and both see the toys as belonging to them.

Stage 3: Associative Play

At this third stage most children are still playing independently but often do the same thing as other children. For example, if one child puts on a dress-up outfit, another child will put one on also. The children will begin to interact through talking, borrowing and taking turns with toys, but each child acts alone.

Stage 4: Cooperative Play

This stage becomes quite apparent in the later preschool years, (during the 4th and 5th years), when children have acquired the skills to interact together for the purpose of play. Speaking and listening skills are more developed so children can communicate with each other. Children can share ideas and tell each other what to do. Communication about play is the critical skill of cooperative play.

As we move through these stages the Rainbows are becoming aware of what others are doing around them. In becoming aware of their classmates actions, they are learning how to interact with them effectively. Rainbows learn how to communicate with their peers verbally and nonverbally. This is a very exciting development, but can also bring up some problematic behaviors as we maneuver through this stage using trial and error.

**Emotional Intelligence**

In the Rainbow classroom we spend much of our time building your child’s emotional intelligence. This means being able to identify how they are feeling as well as how others are feeling. We spend a great deal of time identifying what it looks like to be having certain feelings. For instance, if someone is mad they may be furrowing their eyebrows and crossing their arms they may be feeling mad. We are having conversations about how others are feeling regularly and point out the characteristics that we are seeing outwardly to help the kids identify how they are feeling. For instance, we might say to something like, “I see that you are shouting and scrunching your face up, it looks like you are mad.” And then follow it up with a conversation about why they are feeling that way and help find a solution together. Having regular conversations about our feelings and what they look like help to build emotional awareness about ourselves and others.

**Behavior Management/Building Empathy**

With all of the growth in our social skills, we also face the issue of behavior management. The Rainbows often learn to first express themselves nonverbally before using their words. We work hard to help all of kids use their words when interacting with each other. Let’s remember we are working with a group of 14 kids living by the toddler’s creed:

If it's mine it's mine,
if it's yours it's mine,
if I like it is mine,
if I can take it from you it is mine,
if I am playing with something ALL of the pieces are mine,
if I think it is mine it is,
if I saw it first it's mine,
if I had it then put it down it is still mine,
if you had it then you put it down it is now mine,
if it looks like the one I have at home it is mine,
if it is broken it is yours

In doing so, we do a lot of coaching of our Rainbows to help them identify when they have hurt another’s feelings or body. If a child does take something or hurt another, it is their duty to check on the other child. They are coached to first ask, “Are you ok?” then ask, “What can I do to make you feel better?” The child on the other end is also coached to let them know that they do not like what has happened.

The Rainbows avoid using the phrase, “I’m sorry” as many of our kids do not understand the meaning. Working on having the kids check on their classmates instead begins to teach them empathy. It helps them to understand how their actions affect others around them.

When giving directions to the Rainbows when they really don’t want to do what is asked, we give them choices. Now, these aren’t just any choices they are definitely leading choices. Either option the kids choose is a right choice. For instance, when waking up (which is a big transition in the day) we ask if the kids want to get their shoes on or make their beds first. Both are jobs that need to be done, but giving the choice empowers the child to make their own decisions. This is used frequently throughout the day.

**Diapering**

We do our diapering in our classroom's bathroom. If your child has a wet diaper, we do stand-up diaper changes. When they have BMs, we use the fold down diaper changing table. All diapers are stored in our bathroom. Each child has a cubby that is to be kept stocked. Please check your child’s diaper cubbies regularly and keep them well stocked with diapers or pull ups. I try to send out a reminder email when your child has only a day or twos worth of diapers left.

As we transition from diapers to pull-ups during our potty training process we ask that the kids use pull ups with sides that can be reattached. This makes it easier to change them if they have a BM.

When in pull ups, we begin working on self-dressing skills. We will remove the soiled pull up, but work towards having your child put on their clean pull up and clothes on their own. This helps in furthering their potty training as they gain more independence in the bathroom.

If your child is in a diaper or pull-up and requires diaper cream, you may bring some in from home to be stored in our bathroom. Diaper cream must be in the original packaging and require a diaper cream form to be filled out so we can keep it on hand. We will only use the diaper cream when your child has visible signs of irritation unless otherwise discussed.

**Potty Training**

The Rainbows work very hard throughout the school year to go from wearing our diapers to becoming potty trained. Potty training is a huge developmental milestone that is met while your child is in our class. It can also be an at times frustrating process, but it’s important to remember that everything is going to work out. Potty training is in the hands of your child. They are the ones that know when they need to go potty. They are the only ones who can control their pottying. But, with that being said, here are a few tips for helping you through this process from the book, Mommy I Have to Go Potty: A Parents Guide to Potty Training by Jan Faull M.Ed:

**Preparing**

* At 18 months, buy a potty chair and place it in the bathroom.  When your child sits on it, take notice, establish eye contact and say, “Look at you, you’re sitting on the potty just like mommy and daddy.”
* Bring the potty out of the bathroom.  Your child can sit on it when watching TV.  Put dolls and teddy bears on it too.
* Establish the routine of having your child sit on the potty before climbing into the bathtub.   Don’t expect any results. This is just time to get your child familiar with sitting on the toilet.
* Once your child turns two, work to establish a potty routine where your child sits on the potty twice a day, once before bath time and again before putting pajamas on.
* Don’t ask your child, “Do you want to sit on the potty?”  Any two-year-old will automatically say “No!”  Just say, “It’s time to sit on the potty.”

**Getting Started**

* Notice if your child is dry up to 1-½ hours and stops playing or walking to poop.  These are signs of control; it’s time to start teaching your child to use the toilet.
* Put your child in disposable training pants and then take her every 2 hours or so to use the toilet.  Once on the toilet encourage the child to go, but don’t show disappointment if she doesn’t perform.  Practice is an important step on the road to potty training.
* Once your child starts performing on the toilet put her in panties when at home.  Use a disposable training pant when going to the grocery store or to visit at Grandmas.
* Be sure to consult with your childcare provider as to how she proceeds with toilet training.  Usually experienced caregivers are skilled at teaching children to use the toilet.  Both parent and caregiver should work together and communicate regularly as to the child’s progress.
* Be prepared to deal with accidents.  Don’t be horrified when a child poops or pees in underwear.  Clean the child and the floor with a matter-of-fact attitude.  Then put her on the toilet so the child eventually makes the connection that urine and stool goes in there.

**Resistance**

* If your child meets with no success, keep her in disposable training pants full time.  Take a break from any rigorous training.  Wait a couple of months and try again.
* If potty training becomes an emotional battle between parent and child over who is in control, drop back and give it a rest.  Adjust your frame of mind and try again later.
* Your roll in the potty training process is to positively influence your child to use the toilet when the child’s body is physically developed to the point where the child can hold in the urine and stool, and then release it into the toilet.  But the ultimate control lies with the child.  Avoid coercing, forcing or manipulating a child to use the toilet.
* If you find yourself in a potty training power struggle tell your child this: “Your job is to learn to use the toilet, my job is to help you learn.  It’s your body.  Someday you’ll pee and poop in the toilet.  If you want to wear underpants that’s fine.  If you want to wear a training pant that’s fine, too.  You decide.  When you want to use the toilet is up to you, I’ll help you.”
* If your child becomes constipated, retains bowel movements or develops encopresis, seek medical help.  If your child is approaching four years old and continues to have numerous wetting accidents, talk to your doctor.

When it becomes time for your child to make the transition into underwear, we will have a discussion on their progress at school as sometimes it differs from at home. Also, we will need to have lots of spare clothes available for your child because accidents do happen.

Being completely potty trained is a requirement for moving up into the Stargazer classroom. All Rainbows are required to be fully potty trained by August 1st in order to transition into the next class. We work hard to help all of the kids meet this requirement.

**Self-Help Skills**

Throughout the year the Rainbows become much more independent with their self-help skills. They will be working on putting on their own shoes, dressing themselves, becoming potty trained, clearing their own spots from the table, etc. This is another one of the major growth areas for the Rainbows. We coach them through these self-help skills, but eventually they will be doing them all on their own.

So, if you see that your child’s pants are on inside out or their shoes are on the wrong feet, it means that they were able to do it their selves. It is an accomplishment. Now, with saying that, once they are getting proficient at these skills we begin working on getting our shoes on the right feet and our clothes on correctly. It is a learning process.

We ask that families also begin to help build their child’s self-help skills as well. This means that we are increasing the amount of responsibility that your child has. Try having them dress themselves at home, help with chores, etc.

**Nap Time**

Nap time is held daily in the Rainbow classroom. After lunch we begin to make our transition into our class’s naptime. Lunch is over at 12:30. After the kids have cleared their lunch spots they make their way to change their diaper, go potty, and put on a nap time pull up if needed. Once they have finished in the bathroom they find their way to their nap mats and read books as we settle down to go to sleep. Once all the Rainbows have gone to the bathroom, quiet music is turned on and books are put away. Teachers sit with the children helping them to calmly fall asleep.

Each child has a nap mat of their own. The school provides the mat, sheets, pillows, and a blanket. If your child has a special blanket or lovey they would like to sleep with families are welcome to bring them in. Bedding is washed weekly here at school.

As the year progresses, we find that many children are needing shorter naps. We are able to limit naps to one hour by parent request. Unfortunately, we are unable to eliminate nap time completely as it can be disruptive to the rest of the sleeping class.

We ask the students are not dropped off during nap time as it can disrupt the sleep of our students. If you need to pick up your child during nap time, please let us know in advance so we can have your child ready for you and limit disruptions.

**Thank You**

Thank you so much for sharing your child with us. We love being able to be a part of your child’s growth and development. We strive to create a partnership with our families to work together in the education of your child. We are so excited to have every one of our Rainbows in our class. They each bring so much to the table and all have something truly special and unique to them.