



INTERLAKE CHILD CARE & LEARNING CENTER	Non-Profit Corporation Taxpayer I.D. #91-1186874	
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FAMILY HANDBOOK

2026-27



Interlake Child Care & Learning Center
Since 1982

Interlake's Mission Statement:

Interlake Child Care & Learning Center creates an inclusive and vibrant community with families and young children. Interlake's loving environment and anti-bias, culturally relevant curriculum inspires children to grow into competent, confident and compassionate citizens of the world.

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WELCOME TO INTERLAKE!

We look forward to building a strong relationship with you. The information provided in this family handbook is meant to assist in the process, and serves as a guide to center wide policies, procedures and requirements. In addition, you will receive a guide to your child's classroom, which outlines procedures and practices specific to that segment of our program. Individual classroom booklets give an overview of the classroom schedule, feeding and napping practices and other important, detailed information.

Interlake has an "Open Door" policy. This means that parents/guardians have access to their child during business hours, 7:30 am – 6:00 pm. We ask visitors to be sensitive to how their presence may affect children, especially at nap and meal times. Very young children (and others, too) may be uncertain of strangers, and older children may become rowdy with a new "audience," so we ask visitors to be as unobtrusive as possible when entering our classrooms. Also, our administrators, teachers, and support staff are happy to answer any questions you may have!

HISTORY

Interlake was founded in January 1982 by Christie Stein and Renee Richardson. In 2001, Interlake purchased the present site, which we have occupied since 1987. Some traditions, such as our annual "Stone Soup" event and our Graduation Party for children going to kindergarten, have been part of Interlake's traditions almost since the beginning. Interlake has a long history of focus on social-emotional growth, community awareness, and a child-focused program.

Our program is licensed by the State of Washington's Department of Early Learning to serve a daily maximum of 48 children ages 2 months to 5 years in four classrooms. Interlake is a non-profit program governed by a Board of Directors composed of current and former parents, community members and staff.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Building on our abiding commitment to the inherent worth, dignity and respect of every human being, we offer an experiential curriculum - one that builds on the developing interests and abilities of the children with activities and opportunities that broaden their worldview while developing their commitment to fair and environmentally sustainable habits of being.

INTERLAKE'S PHILOSOPHY

Respect for Children

Interlake holds the belief that children should be treated with the same respect and courtesy with which we would treat adults, allowing for explanation in the many areas in which they lack knowledge or experience. Children should have as much control over their choices, their own bodies, and their environment as it is possible to give them and still protect their psychological and physical safety.

Children come to us, regardless of age, as unique, thinking, feeling human beings. Our task is to know who each child is as an individual and to support and nurture that person in her/his own growth and own pace of learning.

Children of any age deserve to have their basic needs for comfort, rest, food, security, or any other physical or psychological need met without having to earn it. Our job is to listen carefully for the verbal or nonverbal

expressions of these needs, and to meet them in a way which clearly communicates to the child, "You are lovable, and you are important to me."

Experiential Learning

Our curriculum emphasis is on providing children of all ages with a wide variety of life experiences which broaden their view of the world around them, increase their sense of competence, and provide a solid experiential base upon which to support later academic learning. Adults can offer and invite many kinds of experiences, but need to follow the lead of the children, and build on the interests, developments, and talents the children express.

Extended Family Model

Interlake makes no attempt to duplicate family home life. This is partly because it would be impossible for a child care center to approximate that model, but mostly because we feel the model of an extended family provides a better way to support children and their families. As staff members, it is our task to establish a positive personal relationship with each child in our room.

This broadens the number of people a child can turn to for support, ensures that their needs will be met more promptly by whichever teacher is available (rather than a child having to wait until his/her assigned teacher finishes another task). In addition, this model gives children the opportunity to establish relationships with teachers of different personalities and teaching styles, and so strengthens a child's ability to establish relationships in general.

Respect for and Appreciation of Diversity

All Interlake's conversations, program materials, and activities should show respect and appreciation for all races, cultures, family structures, gender expressions, and people, and should not perpetuate stereotypes. Interlake staff will hold no cultural, family, or lifestyle model up as the ideal by which to compare others. In addition, Interlake promotes awareness and respect for diversity, but also an understanding of our global similarities, as well as our responsibility to protect and care for the health of our environment.

Interlake's goal is not only to provide an environment and program which celebrates diversity, but to take a proactive role in challenging and changing stereotypical thinking in ourselves and the children we serve. This means we will challenge racist, gender-related, or culturally biased statements and ideas we encounter in program materials, books/toys from home, or conversations of children. When challenging ideas expressed by children, we will do so in a way which supports the children in looking at or understanding things differently, recognizing that being children, they have absorbed stereotypes from the society around them.

Books and other resources which contain activities that have been shown to promote the growth of open, healthy attitudes toward cultural diversity among preschool age children are utilized at Interlake. Classroom materials, which reflect diversity and counter stereotypes, are also available for teacher use, and staff have the opportunity to request new materials.

Interlake's program does not observe holidays at school but parents and families are welcomed to share their own culture on an ongoing basis.

Peaceful Conflict Resolution

Interlake promotes the belief that it is possible to resolve conflicts without physical or psychological violence. In order for a child to learn to resolve conflicts without violence, the child must have the opportunity to learn and practice these concepts/skills:

1. That the child is lovable, capable, and worthy of love and respect just by existing (Self-esteem).
2. That all other human beings are valuable as well (Kindness).
3. How to know and express feelings and opinions clearly without belittling those of others, and how to insist that one's rights be respected (Assertiveness).
4. How to hear the feelings and opinions of others (Active listening).
5. How to arrive at a solution that works for everyone (Problem solving).
6. How to recognize and express feelings, including anger, in non-destructive, acceptable ways (Managing feelings).

At Interlake, our task is to teach these skills and to reinforce these concepts with all age groups at every opportunity. As one of the most powerful teaching tools, we ask all Interlake staff members to model these skills and concepts in all conflict situations with children, other staff, and families.

We take a proactive role in challenging aggression or violence portrayed in stories, program materials, and children's play. We do not permit toy weapons at Interlake, nor do we allow violent or weapon-related play to occur without intervention. Moments like these can be used as an opportunity to explain the cause and effect of aggressive behavior, and redirect children to safer alternatives.

Families

Interlake is a community of staff and families working together to give children the best possible start in life. We are an important part of the support network for Interlake families. Interlake promotes these beliefs about parents/families:

1. Guardians know their children and their children's needs better than anyone else - guardians are the expert about the children in their families.
2. All guardians fervently want the best for their children and care deeply about them.
3. At Interlake, we need to respond with empathy, compassion, and respect to all concerns expressed by guardians , and to all requests for information or advice.
4. Staff members view our relationship with guardians as a partnership, and work toward building a strong and trusting relationship with each family at the center.
5. All staff are expected to keep a positive and professional attitude when interacting with families.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Interlake participates with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is an authorized member of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). USDA & CACFP program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at <<https://www.usda.gov>>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the

complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

Interlake Child Care & Learning Center is an equal opportunity provider.

ANTI-RACIST POLICY

Interlake Child Care and Learning Center is building an anti-racist culture of belonging, where people can show up being their true selves, have accountability and is working to model anti-racist practices in our institutional and personal behavior. Our anti-racist policy supports people of color to feel safe in the Interlake Child Care (ICC) community and to actively address and interrupt microaggressions, harassment, racial discrimination, and other racial misconduct and behaviors. This includes behaviors, actions, or interactions that harm people of color and create intentional racial harassment or discrimination. This policy applies to all members who are a part of the Interlake Child Care community, including but not limited to: staff, board, volunteers, donors, and nonprofit and corporate partners.

ANTI-BIAS STATEMENT

We take a proactive role in challenging stereotypical thinking in others and ourselves. Our children, families and staff represent a diversity of cultural and individual backgrounds and we help children value differences as well as develop a positive self and group identity. We seek to find ways of incorporating family culture and caring practices to ensure that we are a welcoming community for you and your child. Interlake staff do not plan or incorporate activities focused on religious practices. We downplay commercialism (i.e. Disney, brand-names) and foster creativity and originality in play.

Children and their families are encouraged to share their experiences with us and with each other. We are always excited to have parents, guardians, and other family members represent their family culture through activities in individual classrooms and the Center as a whole. Activities may include songs, playing musical instruments, reading folk tales or facilitating cooking projects.

Should a family need our materials in a language other than English, Interlake will seek support from our community to translate materials in other languages, as well as seek interpreters in the family's home language.

Interlake's program does not celebrate holidays; we want everyone to feel welcome every day, regardless of their personal holiday practices. We do, however, welcome children sharing about their experiences of their family rituals and celebrations. Interlake celebrates other special days, such as birthdays and pajama days.

ADA (AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT) POLICY

Our center strives to serve all children, including those with special needs. We will make any reasonable attempt to accommodate physical, cognitive or other potential limitations under the guidelines of the ADA. While our center is wheelchair accessible, not every classroom is. Although as part of their ongoing education, teachers may receive some specialized training regarding a variety of disabilities, parents and guardians are primary educators in teaching teachers how to respond to the needs of their typically and non-typically developing children.

Upon touring and enrollment processes, please communicate with staff regarding any needs that you believe require special accommodations. You will be provided a plan of care (Health Plan form) to be completed by you and your child's healthcare provider to address any health concerns that the teachers or staff need instruction on.

HOURS OF OPERATION & HOLIDAYS

Interlake is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. An annual calendar of holidays, closures, and special events is distributed in August of each year for the forthcoming year.

We are closed for the following holidays:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Summer Break (week of Independence Day)
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving & Native American Heritage Day
- Winter Break (usu. December 24-January 1st)

We are also closed for six in-service days each year (spread through the year) to support teacher professional development, classroom enrichment, and conference prep. You can also review the calendar on our website, interlakechildcare.com.

SNOW & WEATHER CLOSURES

Interlake follows the Seattle Public Schools' (SPS) Inclement Weather Emergency Schedule. If Seattle Public Schools calls either a closure, a late start, or an early closure, then Interlake will make the same call. For SPS virtual days, where their school buildings are closed, Interlake will call a full closure. If there are adverse weather conditions during days when SPS are on break, the Interlake Administration team will make the decision regarding calling a closure, late start, or early opening. For any of these instances, an email will be sent to staff and families to apprise them of changes. Interlake staff may call you to apprise you of weather-related closures. For this reason, please ensure that Interlake has current contact information for you and promptly notify the school if your contact information changes.

During the school day, if the building is flooded (ground water, sewage, debris, etc.) we will close the center. Parents/guardians will be called to pick up their children for the day. If the affected areas can be safely cleaned and sanitized in time, the center will open the following day. Should there be a power outage during the school day that lasts more than 30 minutes, we will close the center and parents/guardians will be called to pick up their children for the day.

In case of a flood or power outage overnight, if the center is still experiencing an outage at 6:00 AM, the ED notifies the staff and families by email and Brightwheel notifications. If possible we will post a notice on the doors. Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible regarding any closures for the day following.

PAYING TUITION

Tuition is due on the first of the month. A monthly invoice will be applied to your Brightwheel account, received 10 days prior to the due date. Brightwheel prefers bank account transfers, and incurs a surcharge for using a credit card. You may also select to enroll in auto-payments. After payment, a transaction statement will be available through your Brightwheel profile.

Families may request to pay by check. All checks should be made payable to: INTERLAKE CHILD CARE CENTER. Returned checks incur a fee of \$25.

Any payment made after the 1st is subject to a late fee of \$10 + \$5 for each additional day. Interlake does not offer prorated tuition or tuition refunds.

FINANCIAL AID

WASHINGTON STATE SUBSIDIES

Interlake participates in the City of Seattle's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), which aims to provide tuition support for working families. To contact the City of Seattle's child care subsidy program, call the Seattle Human Services Department's Child Care Assistance office at 206-386-1050, or visit seattle.gov.

We are also Early Achievers accredited, and are able to accept DCYF vouchers. To request more information, you may call the Child Care Subsidy Contact Center at 1-844-626-8687, or visit dcyf.wa.gov.

FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Interlake Child Care is committed to making our program affordable to all families. We realize there may be circumstances where payment of the entire fee is a hardship. We strive to make our program available to as many children as possible, given our available and limited resources.

Please reach out to the Interlake Administration team for the Scholarship application form. Applications are accepted throughout the year. Families must reapply quarterly for continuation of scholarship.

Interlake's Scholarship fund is primarily supported by its fundraising efforts. We hope to continue and expand the scholarship program in future years, to support our mission, including honoring economic diversity in our school, and reduce the costs of early learning for low income families.

Individuals may support Interlake's Scholarship Fund at any time with individual and corporate donations through our Paypal account or by reaching out to the Administration team.

BEFORE YOUR FIRST DAY

Leaving your child in our care is one of the greatest acts of trust that you can demonstrate. To help you and your child during this transition, Interlake offers a 1hr classroom orientation visit, for your child + one or two parents/guardians, to come see the classroom, meet the teachers, and ask any questions you might have. This visit is offered at no charge.

Before the first day, all enrollment forms must be completed.

ENROLLMENT FORMS

The first step in enrollment is completing the following forms:

- Tuition Contract & Child Care Agreement
- Emergency Contact Information
- Personal Care Information
- Certificate of Immunization Status
- Health History Form
- Family Participation Form
- Photo Permission Form
- Medication Authorization Forms (e.g. sunscreen, diaper cream, lotion, hand sanitizer)
- Earned Income & Eligibility Application (EIEA)

Licensing also required an up-to-date Certificate of Immunization Status (CIS) for all children. Interlake is enrolled with the WAIS school module, allowing us to securely access each child's most recent CIS, provided they are in the system. Families may need to ask their pediatrician to update their child's information.

The EIEA is a requirement from the USDA, as Interlake participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The form asks for information on family size, and income for families qualifying for free or reduced price meal status. The food program is available to all children enrolled in the center.

All information– including health history, immunization history, and emergency contact information– is required by licensing. All documents are securely maintained in a private child file within the office. **Please notify the Administration team if your information changes, especially address, phone numbers, or emergency contacts.**

CLASSROOM RATIOS & CAPACITIES

Interlake is licensed to serve a maximum of 48 children per day.

The **Firefly Room** serves infant & waddler age students (2mo-12/18mo). It is licensed for 8 students, and led by 3 teachers. The WA state minimum ratio for this age group is 1:4 (1 teacher to 4 students), while Interlake strives to maintain 1:3.

The **Butterfly Room** serves waddler & toddler age students (12/18mo-30mo). It is licensed for 12 students, and led by 3 teachers. The WA state minimum ratio for this age group is 1:7 (1 teacher to 7 students), while Interlake strives to maintain 1:4.

The **Rainbow Room** serves preschool age children (30mo-42/48mo). It is licensed for 17 students, and led by 3 teachers. The WA state minimum ratio for this age group is 1:10 (1 teacher to 10 students), while Interlake strives to maintain 1:6.

The **Star Room** serves preschool age children (42/48mo to pre-K). It is licensed for 11 students, and led by 2 teachers. The WA state minimum ratio for this age group is 1:10 (1 teacher to 10 students), while Interlake strives to maintain 1:6.

Students transition to their next classroom over the summer and fall. Interlake works to schedule classroom visits for each child, so that they might become more familiar with their new environment and teachers. Interlake also offers a new classroom orientation for each family.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS & TRAINING

Interlake hires staff based on their professional experience in Early Childhood Education (ECE), their passion for working with young children, and relevant education. Interlake also pays special attention to potential teachers' philosophy of working with children. After hire, teachers and staff continue to further their professional development and hone their skills through classes and training.

New staff, substitutes, and volunteers complete a Portable Background Check which is in effect for 3 years. Staff are also required to have and keep current the following trainings: CPR/First Aid, HIV/AIDS, Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP), Safe Sleep, Child Abuse and Neglect Protocol, WA State Food Handler's card, and Medication Management. Each employee is required to have a negative Mantoux TB test upon employment.

All staff are required to complete either a 30 hour Basic Early Childhood Education training approved by the state or show that they have taken 12 college credits related to ECE. Staff are also required to complete 10 hours of training each year, which Interlake provides. Often these training take place at our in-services and during regular operational hours.

Each classroom team also has a weekly meeting, which gives teachers the chance to plan curriculum, discuss their classroom, and learn from each other. Every full time teacher gets weekly planning time during their regular schedule, giving them the opportunity to prepare curriculum and activities as well as document your child's growth on an ongoing basis.

MANDATED REPORTERS

We take seriously our obligation to protect the children in our care and your confidence in our program. Child abuse is an extremely serious matter. Under Washington State law and licensing requirements (WAC 110-300-0106), all child care staff are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.

If a staff member suspects or determines reasonable cause to believe child abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) or neglect has occurred – whether by a parent/guardian or by another staff member, they **MUST** make a report to Child Protective Services (CPS). It is up to a CPS caseworker to conduct an investigation and make a determination whether abuse has occurred. We may not be able to notify parents/guardians when CPS is called about possible abuse or neglect, depending upon the recommendation of CPS.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, Interlake is governed by a Board of Directors composed largely of current and former parents but also by members outside of the Interlake community. The Executive Director, hired by the Board of Directors, and several administrative staff oversee the day-to-day operations of the center and the classrooms.

The Board's responsibilities include: hiring and conducting performance reviews of the Executive Director; approving the annual budget and tuition rates; periodically reviewing, and always ensuring, Interlake's adherence to its Mission, Vision and Values statements; and setting policy priorities for the program.

The Executive Director oversees Interlake's unique program and vision, and certifies that licensing requirements are being met or exceeded. They ensure that Interlake staff are always striving towards the mission statement.

The Program Supervisor works closely with all teachers on a day-to-day basis. They observe and assist in all classrooms, ensure teachers have the resources to meet the needs of their curriculum, and lead weekly team meetings to provide regular feedback.

The Enrollment Coordinator oversees daily operations through scheduling and ensuring proper ratios. They maintain classroom rosters and tuition invoices, and handle corresponding paperwork for children, staff, and new enrollments.

All administrative roles work together to support the teachers with their required continued education, and to share feedback in regards to staff evaluation.

FOOD PROGRAM

Our Food Program Coordinator supports all classrooms through meal planning, cooking, and educating staff and children on nutrition and portion control, and supporting classroom cooking projects. Menus are posted weekly in each classroom, outside the kitchen, on the office door, and on our website.

Interlake participates in the CACFP/USDA food reimbursement program, which subsidizes meals for children. Annually we collect income eligibility forms from families, which determines the amount Interlake is reimbursed for our food program.

Our vegetarian program uses organic milk and organic baby food. Infants who are eating solids, Toddlers, and Preschoolers are served breakfast, lunch and two afternoon snacks, prepared on site. We emphasize fresh fruits and vegetables (frequently organic) as well as whole grains; and largely avoid the use of sugar, high sodium and processed or pre-prepared foods. We gladly accommodate children's food allergies – but in order to do so, we must have a physician's documentation of food allergies and instructions for making any substitutions.

Sample meals include cereal, milk, and strawberries for breakfast, black-bean cheese burgers with coleslaw and applesauce for lunch, "fruit smoothies" with whole wheat crackers for snack. We serve organic milk and water is available at all times during the day.

We use family style dining in our program, which means that small groups of children and at least one teacher sit at a table to share meals together. Teachers are able to model and encourage self-help and social skills. In this way, children are supported in learning the skills needed to serve and feed themselves, and discussion and learning continue to take place. The toddler room prepares children for family style dining through an emphasis on building self-help skills around the table, such as pouring, ladling food, and asking friends to pass the bowl.

Another important aspect of our food program is recycling and composting. In the preschool classrooms, recycling and composting are modeled and encouraged through curriculum and at mealtimes. With increasing independence children from all classrooms learn which parts of the meal are to be washed and which are placed in compost as they bus their dishes.

We serve no nuts or foods with nut products in them, because nut allergies tend to be especially virulent. We do not allow outside food or birthday treats at Interlake. Our teachers and staff are happy to provide you with alternate ideas to help your child celebrate a special day.

FORMULA AND BREASTMILK

Interlake participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). All enrolled infants must be offered a meal that complies with the CACFP infant meal pattern requirements. Infants may get hungry at times outside of typical mealtimes. For this reason, it is recommended that infants be fed on demand, which means feeding them when they show signs of being hungry.

As part of offering a meal that is compliant with the CACFP requirements, Interlake must offer an iron-fortified infant formula (containing 1 milligram or more of iron per 100 calories). All eligible formulas must have a statement reading, "Infant Formula with Iron" (or a similar statement) on the front of the formula package.

An infant's parent or guardian may, at their discretion, decline the infant formula offered by the center or day care home and provide expressed breastmilk or a creditable infant formula instead. There are numerous recognized benefits of breastfeeding. It is the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) that– if possible– families feed infants breastmilk exclusively for approximately 6 months after birth; and to continue to feed infants breastmilk, along with complementary foods through the sixth and twelfth month of life– and longer if desired.

The AAP recommends storing expressed breastmilk in the refrigerator for a maximum of 4 days. Frozen breastmilk that is thawed and refrigerated should be used within 24 hours, and should never be refrozen.

Prepared infant formula which is not being fed immediately must be refrigerated until feeding, and must be used within 24 hours. When being fed immediately, formula must be used within 2 hours of preparation. Once an infant starts eating, formula must be consumed within 1 hour; any leftover formula must be thrown away.

For both options, families are responsible for providing your child's bottles, and taking them home to be cleaned each day.

FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

PERSONAL CONDUCT

At Interlake, we all treat each other with dignity and respect, as we would want our children treated and as we teach them to treat others. Communication and interpersonal interaction among staff, parents/guardians and children is respectful and open. We model behaviors and language that value and respect every individual in our community.

Teaching and nurturing children is important and demanding work. At times it is difficult to bring our best selves into every interaction. This is also true of parents/guardians, who may come in at the end of a long work day, or are having to rush out to multiple demands. Teachers are expected to interact in a professional, friendly and approachable manner with each other and with parents/guardians. Teachers are subject to corrective action if they do not conduct themselves professionally in the classroom and throughout the center.

The same respect and professionalism is expected from parents/guardians in the classroom as well. Misunderstandings and mistakes can occur, but loud, harsh or aggressive behavior is inappropriate and disruptive at ICC. The Interlake Administration team are happy to provide support for staff and/or parents/guardians if needed during potentially challenging conversations. Hostile behavior or deliberate mistreatment of staff is not tolerated at Interlake, and continued behavior of this sort will lead to termination of care.

When parents/guardians or family members have questions or concerns regarding our programming or other practices, the first step is discussing classroom practices with the teachers involved. Interlake staff are happy to schedule a meeting or conference with families should the challenge require more time to discuss and decide on the best course of action.

If the difficulty is concerning payment policies, the first step is to contact the Administration team. For most difficulties, we are able to develop a collaborative solution with families, including individual payment plans. Should the difficulty go unresolved, after contacting the Executive Director, the family can provide a letter to the Board outlining the problem and proposed solution(s). The Board's decision is final.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Our non-profit program welcomes, and can only thrive, with help from volunteers. Part of what makes us unique is our focus on community – bringing together children, staff, and families. Interlake may be one of the first communities outside of the family that your child is actively engaged in, and we want that community to be a strong one.

Part of creating this intentional community is the active participation of families in our program. We have a family participation requirement of one hour per guardian per month, and there are many ways you can complete your hours!

The ways families get involved are varied and creative. You can also volunteer in the classroom, perhaps reading a story, sharing a skill you have, or conducting an activity to share an aspect of your home culture. We have Work Parties four times per year in which many projects, big and small, get done in and around the building; this is a great way to help out your child's school while getting to know other families!

Another way to get involved is to become a member of our Board or become involved with one of our Committees. Interlake's Board of Directors is composed of current parents/guardians and other family members/community members. The five committees we currently have-- Community Engagement, DEIAB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Belonging), Facilities & Technology, Financial Planning, and Fundraising-- coordinate most volunteer involvement.

Many close family friendships have been formed over the garden bed, and many families have discovered each other for playdates. Because we do emphasize the relationships among families, staff and children, many families find a niche they enjoy here at Interlake, and go beyond the participation requirement of one hour per month per guardian.

Parents/guardians and other family members are encouraged to participate in evaluating our operations by completing an annual family survey. Families on active military service are exempt from performing Family Participation Hours.

FUNDRAISING & DONATIONS

Donations to Interlake are tax deductible and greatly appreciated! Interlake's vision is to create and sustain a modern learning center where children, families and teachers thrive through an emphasis on social and emotional competencies, diversity, social justice and fiscally responsible management. As a non-profit, Interlake uses fundraising to help close the gap between what tuition covers and the true cost of care.

Most of our fundraising occurs during the Spring Annual Auction, and the GiveBIG campaign in April/May. We have tried to streamline fundraising and expand on reaching out to a broader community of potential donors. Funds go toward maintaining our building, adding outdoor installations/enhancements, providing high quality programming, and hiring and retaining creative, dynamic and qualified teachers and staff. All contributions matter, regardless of size, and all help us to provide high quality care to children and families on a daily basis.

Many employers will match employee donations to our non-profit organization. If you give through United Way, you can designate Interlake to receive either a one-time or ongoing donation. Many employers such as Microsoft have Matching Gift Programs that can benefit non-profit community organizations such as Interlake. Upon request, we're happy to write a receipt for tax purposes.

PRIVATE CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS WITH STAFF

What makes Interlake such a warm and unique place is the sense of connection and community that occurs among the children, families, teachers and staff of Interlake Child Care and Learning Center. From time to time, Interlake teachers and staff may agree to provide different types of services, such as off-hours child care, house-sitting, pet care, etc. for individual families.

Interlake is not responsible for after school or weekend private child care arrangements made between families and Interlake personnel. These are individual child care arrangements separate from events sponsored by and for Interlake Child Care & Learning Center. If families should choose to use the child care services of off-duty Interlake employees, they do so at their own risk. If a family chooses to use Interlake personnel for such care, in doing so it also agrees to protect, indemnify, and hold harmless Interlake, its officers, and employees from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions and causes of action whatsoever arising out of or relating to any loss, damage or injury, including death, that may be sustained while utilizing the privately arranged services of employees of Interlake.

LATE PICK-UP FEE

Interlake closes at 6p; all students must be picked-up and signed out by the time of closing. After 6p, the closing staff have materials to sanitize, among other tasks to prepare the classrooms for the following day. What's more, many of our staff have families or other obligations to attend to after hours. Whenever possible, please aim to arrive at or before 5:55p. Please consider how children may need time to transition out of their activities, or that items might need to be collected from your child's storage.

Brightwheel keeps a log of the times children are signed in and out. **Any sign-out after 6p is subject to a late fee equal to \$5 + \$1 for each additional minute, applied through a Brightwheel invoice.**

CHANGING YOUR CHILD'S SCHEDULE

To request a reduced schedule, Interlake requires a 60-days official notice to the Administration team, although more notice gives us more time to accommodate schedule changes.

Requests to *increase* a child's schedule require more time to accommodate. Most often, we are able to accommodate this over the summer / fall, during transitions and new enrollments.

WITHDRAWAL & GRADUATION

Interlake requires 60-days official notice to the Administration team prior to withdrawing your child.

"Official notice" includes an email to <admin@interlakechildcare.org>, a written notice delivered to the office, or a phone call to the Administration team.

Interlake does not offer prorated tuition. A family may choose to leave mid-month, but the final month's tuition is due in full.

TERMINATION OF SERVICES

If families choose to withdraw from Interlake, they must give 60-days official notice. However, Interlake may elect to terminate care for families who have exhausted all other alternatives. This may include:

- Repeated outstanding tuition invoices, or repeated non-compliance with program policies.
- Parent / guardian behavior or actions that disrupt the safety of the program and its members.
- Student behavior or actions that exceed developmentally appropriate aggression, and cannot be resolved through the procedures outlined in the Aggressive Behavior Policy

CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

INFANT PROGRAM

Our primary role is establishing trusting relationships with the infants in our care. Children learn that they can trust familiar adults to respond to their needs and follow their lead to explore the world around them. Through the bonds among children, families and teachers, we create a reliable, safe, and comforting atmosphere that reinforces the trust children learn at home.

As children grow from infants to “waddlers” (how Interlake refers to the 12-18mo range), our teachers change-up the activities to support children's physical, social and cognitive development. These activities include times where an infant teacher will accompany the waddlers on a visit to the toddler room to explore and provide new activities.

We welcome breastfeeding in the classroom. In the Infant Room there is a cozy rocker which can be set up in a quiet area.

TODDLER PROGRAM

Children develop autonomy when adults give them opportunities to do things successfully on their own. We help children become confident in their own efforts by honoring their efforts and providing experiences that foster their sense of competence. By setting appropriate, clear limits, toddlers feel safe to explore their newfound independence. Teachers will help children settle into the new environment and routine by setting up invitations to play and helping them engage.

Often, 1-2 year olds start to experience stronger emotions around drop-off time. Teachers use words like “You are safe at school,” “Parents always come back,” and “We all go home at the end of the day.” We listen to each child's cues and needs, and allow them to choose their calming techniques. This could be a hug, reading a book or holding a soft toy. These are the stepping stones for them learning emotional regulation. Pacifiers are ideally only used only during nap time, to encourage language development and expression during the day.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Children continue to develop their sense of autonomy while deepening their bonds with their peers. We have two preschool classrooms, one classroom upstairs (the “Rainbow Room”) for younger preschoolers, and one classroom downstairs (the “Star Room”) for older preschoolers.

Children are encouraged to experiment, explore, and pursue their own interests. Preschoolers grow in their abilities to engage in critical thinking as their ideas are challenged, confirmed, elaborated on, or changed as a result of their interactions with their peers and adults in our program. Our curriculum also involves more in-depth experiences in areas such as science, math, literacy, language, the natural world, and discussing social/emotional experiences that help children learn about and investigate their world.

When children transition beyond preschool, our teachers are able to provide consultation to their new teachers at the family's request. The child's primary teacher can also complete an assessment or evaluation for their new school, upon the family's written request.

LESSON PLANNING & CURRICULUM

Each age group has a specific classroom guide for more detailed information regarding daily schedules, curriculum, and activities within each classroom. Our overall curriculum framework takes into account the whole child and focuses on all aspects of development – physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language. We look through a social justice and anti-racist lens, reflecting upon what this means and how we infuse these themes not only into our curriculum, but in the way we interact with every person in our community.

Interlake uses an emergent curriculum framework, which focuses on intentionally observing each child and creating a curriculum that responds to children's interests and skills. Curriculum is planned, but is also what happens in the classroom as the children interact with each other, the activities, the teachers, and the environment. Teachers use their knowledge of each child to challenge children within the curriculum and to invite them to master new skills.

Interlake holds a strong belief in the importance of play as the primary way in which children learn about the world and their place in it. Developmentally appropriate experiential play provides children opportunities to use developing skills (i.e. counting, sharing) and think creatively. Our focus on the social and emotional development of children helps to provide a framework for their development of self-management and peer interaction skills, which are important for success in Kindergarten and beyond.

CLASSROOM DAILY UPDATES

We want to keep you informed as to what and how your child is doing at Interlake. In all of our classrooms, teachers are glad to talk with you when doing so doesn't interfere with supervision and care of the children. All classrooms utilize Brightwheel to some extent to provide updates throughout the day to families. Brightwheel is used to log medications, naps, meals, and daily activities. Families can also send messages through Brightwheel directly to the teachers, who reply when able.

Each class also prepares a biweekly curriculum and lesson plan, detailing the activities planned for both inside and outside. Teachers make intentional choices with the activities made available, the books being read, or the circle time discussions each day. Families receive an email going over the past two weeks, and the plan for the following.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS & PARENT CONFERENCES

Teachers keep ongoing assessments of each child's developmental process which enable us to plan programs to meet the individual developmental needs of each child. Teachers collect and analyze data from formal and anecdotal (informal) observations and conversations with parents/guardians, and other teachers and staff. Our curriculum is geared to support individual children's development and interests. Conducting observations and completing the assessment tool quarterly ensures that the curriculum is appropriate for each child. Each child

has a portfolio in which teachers put observations and anecdotal material, photos, representative artwork, etc. which shows how the child has grown over time.

Interlake uses Brightwheel to observe and document child development in each classroom. Interlake also uses the Creative Curriculum assessment tool that goes over several checkpoints of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and language development. During family/teacher conferences, parents/guardians share information about their child and together, teachers and families collaborate on developing curriculum and providing practice for building specific skills. The completed conference form is signed by the family and the child's teacher at the end of the conference.

Interlake also uses the Ages and Stages (ASQ-3) developmental screening within 90 days of a child being newly enrolled, and at least yearly afterwards. Families participate in the screening, which helps families know if their children might benefit from further evaluation by a pediatrician or other professional.

Assessments and other sensitive child and family information remain confidential. Parents/guardians can access and review their child's portfolio and assessments upon request.

CLASSROOM TRANSITIONS

All transitions to the next classroom happen in the summer or fall, as spaces are made available through folks heading out to a summer program, or as the kindergarteners graduate. Transitions occur for children who are of age for the next classroom, when they are developmentally ready, and when space in the roster is available.

Prior to the transition, families will be notified, and children will begin having visits to their next classroom. These transition visits steadily include more times of the day, and more activities in the new classroom each day. This helps children to get to know and become comfortable with their new teachers, peers, and classroom. The child's family will also be invited to meet the teachers, visit the new room, learn about classroom routines and expectations closer to the transition date.

Star Room children who are of eligible age for kindergarten (≥ 5 yrs by Aug 31) are expected to have their "Happy Last Day" graduation either on or before the last available care day in August (before starting their kindergarten school). Kindergarten bound students will not be able to stay in care into the following September or school year. Families interested in delaying starting kindergarten can reach out for resources around transitional kindergarten.

OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS

Interlake contracts with the Seattle-King County Public Health Department for consultation and training. Our nurse consultant visits the infant room monthly, per licensing requirements for programs serving infants (WAC 110-300-0275). They also observe in other classrooms and are available to consult with families and staff that have questions, concerns or are interested in community resources and referral information. The nurse consultant is a Registered Nurse, currently licensed, with training and/or experience in Pediatric Nursing or Public Health.

If a child is involved in therapies outside of Interlake, our staff is happy to meet with the family and consultants to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP), or to otherwise collaborate to meet the needs of the child and family. Additional resources may be found on the last page of this handbook.

If it's ascertained that a child and family's needs surpass our abilities to provide the most appropriate care, four weeks written notice of termination of care will be given. Prior to termination, Interlake will adopt procedures

established for biting or aggressive behavior (see Biting policy for more information). We may also invite a developmental specialist to help us assess and provide the best care for the child and put the family in touch with community resources.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

SIGN IN, ATTENDANCE, AND ABSENCES

You are legally responsible each day for signing your child in upon arrival and out upon departure. Sign in is done via Brightwheel. Each approved pickup for a child is assigned a 4 digit PIN. PINs are not to be shared. If you would like to add someone to your child's approved pick-up list, you can add them on your own through Brightwheel, or you can email the Administration team to add them on Brightwheel. If this person has temporary approval, please let the Administration team know.

We need an accurate list of the children present at all times, especially if we should have to evacuate the building for any reason. No one other than a parent or guardian may pick up a child without your prior authorization in writing. If you want someone to pick up your child who is not pre-authorized on your emergency contact list, please add them or have a member of the Administration team add them to your child's Brightwheel account. If someone other than a parent/guardian is picking up your child, staff *will* ask for verification of identity (usually in the form of a driver's license or ID) until they are familiar with that family member/friend.

Please let us know when your child will be absent. That way, our teachers will not be wondering or worried about your child's whereabouts. If your child stays home due to communicable illness (i.e. Conjunctivitis/Pink Eye, Strep Throat, etc.), please let us know so that we can post a health notice. Also, we receive frequent requests for drop-in space, sometimes even for the same day of care, and knowing whether your child will be gone helps us in responding to those requests.

HANDWASHING

We ask that families and children wash their hands upon arrival to help keep "outside" germs out. Hand washing can be a part of your goodbye routine with your child. Goodbye routines are different for every family, and may include hugs and kisses, a story, a joke, or perhaps your child will find an amusing way to "push" you out the door. A good drop-off can help your child to have a good day.

DIAPERING

Interlake asks families to provide your child's diapers; you may supply us with cloth and/or disposable diapers. Interlake provides diaper cream and wipes. Should you want us to use diaper cream (other than the bulk cream the program provides), parents/guardians must complete a medication form for our staff to administer over-the-counter medication. Please check your child's cubby/basket on a regular basis to ensure there are enough diapers and clean clothes.

POTTY TRAINING & TOILETING

Children will learn how to use the toilet in their own way and at their own pace. Potty training at Interlake begins in the Toddler room, where teachers invite children to try the potty and where children become familiar with the process. Your child does not have to be toilet trained in order to move into our preschool program.

Children's interest in using the toilet begins in the home. We will work closely with you in helping train your child to use the toilet when and as it becomes appropriate. While our teachers are very interested in partnering with parents/guardians, we follow the child's lead, particularly when it comes to bodily functions.

Children in the toddler and preschool programs are offered to "try the potty" at regular times of day. If they decline (sometimes with a blunt refusal), we let them know that their diaper will be changed and that they can try later. Children should be competently and confidently using the toilet at home for at least three consecutive days before coming to school in underwear.

CLOTHING

Please label your child's clothes with a permanent marking pen or label in order to avoid items becoming lost or going home with someone else. Please provide your child with at least two complete changes of clothes.

Children at Interlake spend time both indoors and outside. Children in all our classrooms have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of sometimes-messy activities. From time to time, teachers may also request additional items of clothing or personal protection, like face masks, to ensure the health and continued participation of your child in program activities.

Well-fitting shoes are an essential part of an active toddler and preschool wardrobe. Their movements can be hampered if their shoes are too big or too small. Having an extra pair of boots or shoes is especially helpful when the weather is as unpredictable as Seattle's. In both the preschool and toddler classrooms, children will need separate indoor and outdoor shoes to save wear and tear on our floors and to be better prepared for all kinds of weather.

Weather appropriate outdoor gear is essential for all children, even infants, who will play outside every school day. Infants also go outside on a daily basis unless the weather is particularly extreme. Please update your child's clothing at Interlake periodically, to assess if it's weather-appropriate or if your child has outgrown their clothing.

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

Toys that children bring from home can be hard to share and are easily damaged or lost. Some items can be brought, such as "lovies" (e.g. a favorite blanket and/or a stuffed animal for nap time) for toddlers and preschoolers; books and music are items that can be shared with groups and can be a welcome part of our curriculum and program planning.

Thanks for your help in tracking your child's personal items. **Please keep any toys from home either at home or in the car,** especially materials or books that glorify violence, war, stereotyping, fighting, weapons, or other potentially aggressive behavior. Please also leave children's digital media at home.

WALKS/FIELD TRIPS

One way Interlake builds a cohesive community is by giving children ample outdoor experiences. All classrooms have planned off-site time, referred to as either a walk or a field trip. Longer field trips are more common in the summer. This may be to the local park, to the store to buy items for an activity, the post office, library, or a trip around the block to look for life (plants, bugs, worms, etc.). Teachers bring the classroom "grab-n-go" bags containing water and first aid supplies whenever they leave the premises with children. Infant students are in strollers, or baby carriers that strap to the chest. Toddlers use a walking rope. Preschoolers are partnered with either another student, or a teacher.

All classrooms explore the neighborhood, or visit Woodland Park or even the Zoo– but the preschool may explore a bit farther, including the Pacific Science Center, the Ballard Locks, or other family friendly destinations. Families are notified in advance of any field trip. **We love having parent chaperones! Just ask your child's teachers.**

We must have a signed permission slip for your child to participate in a field trip. Certain field trips may require a fee along with the permission slip. Only the preschoolers might use Metro bus lines or other means of public transportation for their field trips within the Seattle area. Interlake is not liable for any incidents that may occur when using public transportation.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY & CHILD RESTRAINT POLICY

Interlake teachers, staff, and families are not allowed to transport children in private vehicles during school hours. No carseats or child restraint systems will be used.

There are two possible exceptions, which can only occur at the family's choice. Interlake will never make these arrangements.

Should a parent or guardian choose to make these arrangements, they assume responsibility, and Interlake is not liable for any incidents that may occur.

- A parent or guardian chaperone on a school field trip may elect to use their private vehicle to transport their own child to and from the field trip destination *only* if they are not returning to the school after the field trip. They may not transport any other students.
- If a family registers either a teacher or staff member as an approved pick-up for their child, the approved teacher or staff member may use their private vehicle to transport that child for drop-off or pick-up only. They may not transport the child during their regular day at school. They may not transport any other students.

RESTING TIME

To lower the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Washington Administrative Code (WAC 110-300-0291) requires that infants under one year old be laid on their back in an assigned crib without a blanket or other items. In our Infant program all children are laid to rest on their backs. If an infant turns over while sleeping, the provider must return the infant to his or her back until the infant is able to independently roll from back to front and front to back. Interlake may not use a sleep positioning device unless directed to do so by an infant's or toddler's health care provider. When infants are showing signs of being tired we lay them down to sleep.

When infants reach approximately 10 months and are developmentally ready, we place them down for a nap on a nap mat. This way they have time to get used to this method of napping before they transition to the Toddler room. Because children in the infant room do not use blankets during nap, infants or any children in the infant room will be placed in sleep sacks provided by the family.

Toddlers and preschoolers use nap mats during their resting/nap period, which are cleaned and sanitized weekly, unless needed more often. Nap mats and nap sheets are provided by Interlake, and families are asked to bring a nap blanket and any stuffed animal or soft doll (usually referred to at our center as a "lovie") that a child may need to comfortably rest at school.

Nap sheets are used by only one child at a time and are laundered weekly or more often as necessary. We require families to take home nap blankets weekly for laundering, and ask for volunteers to take home nap sheets in the preschool room so as not to overload our laundry facilities.

We are required by licensing to provide a rest period (WAC 110-300-0265). Children choose to rest or to sleep. Often, children do not realize they are tired until they slow down for a few minutes. Children of all ages need to recharge their batteries so they can go back to all that playing and learning! After about 45 minutes, children who are not asleep are offered quiet activity choices such as reading or drawing.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

The heart of our program is helping kids acquire the social and emotional self-management skills that are foundational for success as human beings. By “guidance,” we mean guiding children’s behavior to help them gain control of themselves and to interact with others in a responsible manner. Difficult situations are also learning opportunities, and Interlake graduates are well prepared to interact with peers and teachers in kindergarten (and beyond) using their developing social-emotional skills.

Corporal punishment is never used at Interlake by anyone, including parents, family members and guardians. Humiliation and withdrawal of emotional support are also never used at Interlake, and we do not use time-outs in our classrooms. If a child is physically out of control, we will help them calm down, and if they are being unsafe we will have them “take space” by being in a safe place with specific choices (i.e. read a book or make a sensory tub choice) or they may stay with a teacher.

Interlake Child Care and Learning Center uses positive child guidance. This is philosophically a good match for us and is an effective practice with young children. Research has shown time and again that using this kind of guidance really does work.

Interlake has a written guidance policy which is followed by all the staff, and which is available to families when they enroll a child at Interlake. As an overview, the following principles frame our guidance policy at interlake:

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Positive discipline is about teaching valuable life, thinking, and social skills in a way that makes sense to children. As children get older, they can be more involved in the process of creating rules and finding solutions to problems. Here are the foundations of positive discipline as we practice it at Interlake:

Respect

Staff should model kindness and respect towards staff, families, and children. Staff should also respect their own needs and the needs of the community. Effective discipline is not about punishing, nor is it about letting children do whatever they wish or ignoring the needs of others.

Communication

Both adults and children should use respectful words to ask for what they need, and adults should model the kind of respectful listening skills they expect from children. Children “listen” better when they are invited to think and participate in problem-solving instead of being told what to do.

Knowledge

All behavior has a purpose, and teachers are more effective when they understand the motivations for a child’s behavior. By learning about stages of child development and about each individual child’s emotions, development, and family structures, adults become better aware of what causes children’s behavior. Dealing with the reasons behind behavior can be as important as dealing with the behavior itself.

Empathy

Discipline is more effective when an adult takes the child's perspective. We model empathy by treating everyone's feelings as important. We also help children to have empathy by naming children's feelings and pointing out how to recognize the feelings of others. While adults can and should help children express emotions in appropriate ways (such as taking deep breaths before stating a problem) it is not appropriate to minimize children's feelings or to dictate how they should feel (i.e., we don't say, "you shouldn't be angry about that.").

Problem Solving

It is our goal at Interlake to teach social and life skills. Adults and children focus on working together to find solutions to problems. Positive discipline is not intended to blame or shame a child or make the child "feel bad" about a mistaken behavior. Children take initiative when they feel respect and encouragement from those around them, and feel more empowered and confident when they know they have the ability to work through their problems.

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY

The core of Interlake Childcare and Learning Center's Philosophy is to encourage communication, empathy and respect for all children and adults. Interlake is a community of engaged families and strong teachers who collaborate to create the best learning experiences for our children and to help them succeed. Our goal is to provide calm and consistent support to the children and help them outgrow any aggressive behavior phase as quickly as possible to protect the other children and allow for the child to continue in our care.

This policy defines aggressive behavior, details the common aggressive behaviors in early education and the steps we will take to resolve these concerns before suspending care.

Aggressive behavior is, "any physical, emotional or verbal act which may result in placing him/herself, other children and/or staff members within the center in an emotional, physical, harmful, hurtful or unsafe situation. " The early learning years are a critical time for children to learn to control their thoughts, feelings, attention, impulses, and behavior. Often, persistent aggressive behavior may indicate that a child needs more time, support, and practice to develop their social and emotional skills. When serious concerns arise, we partner with parents and professionals who specialize in supporting children's social and emotional health.

Biting is a normal stage of development, commonly seen in infants and toddlers — sometimes even in preschoolers. It is a natural phenomenon, and almost all young children will try biting at least once. We recognize that children may attempt to bite other children for a variety of reasons, including:

- **Infants:** Experimental, sensory exploration, teething
- **Toddlers:** Frustration, fatigue, attention seeking, confined spaces, inability to communicate
- **Preschoolers:** Aggression, deliberate

While children, families, or teachers should not be blamed or ostracized when a biting incident takes place, it is often scary, frustrating, and very stressful for everyone involved. When a biting incident occurs, our goal is to help children who are bitten feel better by giving them care, support, and advice on handling threatening situations. We also strive to teach more appropriate behaviors to children that bite.

The following steps will be taken should an instance of biting occur:

- Staff will stay calm but intervene with a firm “stop!”
- The bitten child will be immediately comforted, and the wound attended to (soap and water, bandage, ice pack).
- The biter may need to be safely removed; if so, they will be redirected to a safer area and given a safer alternative.
- After both children have had time and space to calm down, both children will be spoken to in a loving and respectful manner, while given an opportunity to explain the problem in their words.
- Teachers will reinforce, “biting is not safe” and “we use our words to say the problem.”
- Teachers will work together with both children to find a solution and determine the message that was *trying* to be said (e.g. “I need space,” or “I don’t like that,”)
- The parents of both children will be notified about the incident, and Incident Reports will be filled out.
- A teacher will continue to observe the biter and monitor behaviors.

Kicking and hitting is not unusual for young children as a way to get attention or to get their way. They have not yet developed the skills to make their wishes and needs known. A child may also be acting out because of the home environment (e.g., Is there something going on at home that is stressing the child, for example a new sibling or a divorce? Is the child exposed to domestic violence or TV with violent themes and images?).

The following steps will be taken should an instance of kicking or hitting occur:

- Acknowledge the child’s feelings (e.g. “I see you’re upset that your not getting a turn.”)
- Set clear limits (“It hurts their bodies if you to hit or grab someone because you want that toy.”)
- Redirect children to safer alternatives (“Let’s try playing in the sandbox for three minutes. Then we can try again.”)
- Offer positive reinforcement when safer choices are made (“I noticed you asked for a turn, thank you for listening!”)
- Help children practice joining a game safely, or getting another child’s attention in a positive manner (“Do you want to invite them to play hide and seek? Let’s ask them together.”)
- Role play scenarios with puppets to teach safe behavior and developmentally appropriate language: (including “can I have a turn?”, or “stop!”, or “how many minutes?”)
- Facilitate check-ins, and help the child understand the cause and effect of their actions
 - Check-in process
 - Identify the feelings of both children
 - Identify the actions that led to those emotions
 - Think of solutions together
 - Try out the best one

If instances of aggressive behavior continue for two consecutive weeks where there is approximately one hurtful incident each day, Interlake will work with the families to take the following steps:

- We will notify the parents/caregivers about the harmful incidents and will develop an action plan with the parents/caregivers for improving the child’s behavior.
- We will contact the Public Health Nurse to advise on actions for improving the child’s behavior.
- When we approach parents/caregivers about the fact that their child is biting/kicking/hitting, we require them to work with us to help their child learn to stop these acts.
- **In the case of biting:** should a child have three separate instances of biting on a given day, the child’s parents/caregivers will be called and the child must be picked up immediately. This is to prevent further

incidents and to calm until the next care day.

- We may invite a developmental specialist to observe the child in a group care setting to offer additional solutions. The family may also be referred to a behavior specialist at 360PediatricTherapy or Seattle Children's after one month to further assess the behavioral needs of the child.

TERMINATION OF CARE (EXPULSION)

As a last resort, the Executive Director may suspend the child from the Child Care Center if the child's aggressive behavior becomes especially hazardous, or if the behavior does not improve even after consistent efforts. The Executive Director may also consider terminating the care agreement if the family refuses to engage or cooperate with Interlake's policies and procedures to work towards improvements with their child's observed behaviors.

ILLNESS & EXCLUSION POLICY

Our job is to protect, as far as we can, the health and safety of children and our staff. Our illness exclusion policy is based on child care licensing and public health requirements. We post notices when cases of communicable diseases occur, as well as report them to the local health department and our licensor.

If symptoms are observed while children are at school, parents and guardians will be called to pick-up children as soon as possible. **Children must be out of care for at least 24 hours(business day) or until symptoms resolve.** They can return when they're symptom-free without fever reducers (i.e. Tylenol, etc.). If your child is staying home sick, please call, email, or message on Brightwheel to let us know their symptoms, as we may need to post a health notice and track illnesses in our program. We also just like to know how your child is doing!

Our general exclusion criteria are listed below. The general return to care policy is the child must stay home for at least 24 hours, and symptoms must be fully resolved before returning to care. For certain symptoms, a note from a healthcare professional may be acquired that states a child is no longer contagious, and the child may return to care as directed by their doctor.

As a private school, Interlake may, should the need arise, instate a more stringent exclusion policy than that of King County Public Health.

- **Fever:** anything at or over 100.4° F
- **Vomiting:** 2 or more instances
- **Diarrhea:** 2 or more loose or watery stools; or any blood or mucus in stool
- **Unexplained rash:** a doctor's note may be acquired stating the child is no longer contagious
- **Open or oozing sores:** a doctor's note may be acquired stating the child is no longer contagious
- **Lice:** Children can remain in care until the end of the day head lice are found. Children may return after they have received their first treatment. Parents should consult with a child's health care provider for the best treatment plan for the child. The life cycle of a louse is about 25 to 30 days, so sometimes treatments need to be repeated 7 to 12 days after the first treatment to kill newly hatching lice.
- **Scabies or ringworm:** Children can remain in care until the end of the day scabies or ringworm are found. A child with scabies may return after they have received their first treatment. Children should see their health care provider to be assessed and get an appropriate prescription for treatment and instructions on its proper use.
- **Symptoms of a respiratory illness:** including coughing, sneezing, or runny nose
- **Eye discharge or conjunctivitis (pinkeye):** a doctor's note may be acquired stating the child is no longer contagious

- **Sick appearance, fatigue, and/or not well enough to be able to keep up with program activities.**

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

Staff are required to have first aid, CPR, HIV/AIDS, and Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP) training. In case of minor injury or accident, staff will administer basic first aid. In case of an emergency, in which a child needs immediate medical attention, staff will call 911 to request an ambulance. Afterwards, we will immediately contact the family. Interlake staff may not transport the child in a private vehicle. If the child needs to go to the hospital, they will be transported in the ambulance. If the family has not yet arrived at Interlake, the Executive Director or an available member of the Administration team will accompany the child until the family is available. The closest hospital is Swedish Ballard. If we cannot contact a parent/guardian, we will call local emergency contacts you have listed on the Emergency Contact Form.

Injuries are documented on our Accident/Incident form and logged. The original is placed in the child's cubby in their classroom for you to take home. A copy is also saved in the child's file. A copy of our Health Policies is posted in each classroom, which outlines in detail our procedures in case of illness or accident, as well as daily procedures for sanitizing and infection control. We can provide you with a copy upon request.

MEDICATIONS

For any medication needing to be administered at school by Interlake staff, a signed medication authorization form must be on file. If your child requires any medication, please reach out to the Administration team to request the appropriate document. Please include the child's full name, the name of the medication, reason for the medication, dosage, method of administration, frequency (can NOT be given "as needed,"), duration (start and stop dates), special storage requirements, and any possible side effects (use package insert of pharmacist's written information).

For prescription medications, medication must be in the original container, and labeled with the child's full name, name of the medication, dosage, frequency (can NOT be given "as needed"), and duration and expiration date. **For over-the-counter medications, instructions for the age/weight of the child must be included on the label,** or a health care provider's instructions must be included with the medication.

Staff document on the dose of medication through Brightwheel. Medications are always stored out of reach of children. Staff are responsible for storing and retrieving medication from the designated locations throughout the center. All medications must be stored out of reach of children. Medications that require room temperature storage are stored in the child's classroom, in a separate, child-proof container, located next to their classroom's first aid kit. Emergency medications are stored in a secure bag that is labeled with their name and attached to their classroom's grab-and-go bag. The emergency medication will always travel with the child when moving inside and outside. Medications that require refrigeration are stored in a separate, childproof container in their classroom's corresponding refrigerator (infants and toddlers have a fridge in their classrooms; preschool uses the kitchen refrigerator).

For children with allergies, asthma, or other ongoing health concerns, the parents or guardians will need to fill out the Individual Child Health Care Plan, including the need for any rescue medications or breathing treatments (such as albuterol). For any expired medications, it is the family's responsibility to remove the old medication for safe disposal outside of the school.

SAFETY DRILLS & DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Fire drills are conducted monthly. During fire drills, all children and staff, including infants in evacuation cribs, evacuate the building and stand against the fence in the yard. Fire extinguishers are inspected annually.

Earthquake drills are conducted quarterly. The Emergency Preparedness Coordinator calls out “Earthquake. Turtle Down!” Staff and children are to get on their knees, tuck their head, and cover the back of their head with their hands. We go through the steps to ensure that everyone is okay and the building is safe. If you hear your children discuss or pretend they’re experiencing an earthquake, it’s likely that we have had a recent Earthquake Drill. Evacuation drills are conducted quarterly, and include children and staff evacuating the building to our designated relocation area. Notification of drill completion will be shared through Brightwheel from time to time.

Procedures for medical, poison, fire, emergency lockdown or other emergency situations are included in our Crisis Management/Disaster Preparedness Manual, located in each classroom, and are available for review. The ED or Emergency Preparedness Coordinator orients new staff and reviews the policies with staff regularly (Crisis Management/Disaster Preparedness Manual).

Interlake has provisions of food and other emergency supplies for children and staff. For any children who need on-going medication, rescue medication (Benadryl, Epi-Pen), or asthma medication (albuterol), we’re required to have a 3 day supply. In addition to food, our emergency supplies include water for children and staff, a battery operated radio and flashlights, among other supplies. Our Emergency Preparedness Coordinator routinely checks our emergency supplies and also conducts our drills.

PESTICIDE POLICY

Interlake is dedicated to using the least amount of chemical control of pests in our program in order to provide the healthiest environment possible for our children. We do not regularly apply any pesticides to our facility/building. In the event that any pesticides are ever used, a notice will be posted so that all families will be notified 48 hours in advance. A copy of our full Pesticide Policy, created by the Public Health Department, is available for your review upon request.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Screen time may be implemented, pursuant to WAC 110-300-0155, in our Preschool classrooms to provide enrichment through science and technology curriculum activities. Notice will be provided to families through the curriculum. Alternative activities can be made available at the family’s request..

FINAL NOTES

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to speak to a teacher or the Administrative team. There are also several ways in which Interlake communicates information to all families or classrooms and families can communicate with each other. These include our public website (www.interlakechildcare.com), Facebook page, email, and Brightwheel messages. Thank you for reading through our manual and getting to know a little more about our Center and how things work. We’re glad you are here, and look forward to building relationships with your child and with you.

WELCOME TO INTERLAKE!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

PROGRAM	CONTACT	WEBSITE
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Child Care Resources	206-329-1011	childcare.org
City of Seattle – Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)	email: education@seattle.gov phone: 206-386-1050	seattle.gov
Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF)	email: familycenter@childcare.org phone: 1-800-446-1114	dcyf.wa.gov
Department of Social and Health Services	844-626-8687	dshs.wa.gov
Experimental Education Unit, UW	206-543-4011	haringcenter.washington.edu/eeu
FamilyWorks Food Bank and Resource Center - Wallingford	206-694-6727	familyworksseattle.org
Food Resources	email: HSD_Info@seattle.gov phone: 206-386-1001	seattle.gov
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) - Early Learning Resources	360-725-6000	k12.wa.us
Poison Control	800-222-1222	triage.webpoisoncontrol.org
Program for Early Parent Support (PEPS)	206-547-8570	peps.org
Seattle Children's Hospital	206-987-2000	seattlechildrens.org
Seattle King County Public Health Department	206-296-4755	kingcounty.gov