



NAEYC Accreditation: 723993

Office Of Early Childhood License: 12267

Family Handbook

2023-2024

Sterling House Community Center

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Welcome from Director of Youth Development

Dear Sterling House Preschool Families,

Welcome to Sterling House Preschool! We are proud to be the first preschool established in Stratford and have been providing early childhood education since 1932 - that is 90+ years of service!

Our program is licensed through the State of Connecticut and accredited by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children). We are proud of our accreditation status which continually represents a high mark of quality care and education.

We partner with you to support the holistic growth of each individual child in all areas of development: social, emotional, physical, cognitive, language, and creative. We want each child's experience to be positive, filled with activities that are both challenging and rewarding as we support their preparation for kindergarten.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me along this journey. We are grateful for the opportunity to support your child's healthy development and learning. Thank you for choosing our Preschool and welcome to the Sterling House Family!

Sincerely,

Michael Rosati
Director of Youth Development

Welcome from Preschool Team

Dear Sterling House Preschool Families,

Welcome to Sterling House Preschool, educating children since 1932. Here at Sterling House Preschool, we strive for a balance between play-based learning and the academic benchmarks to prepare them for kindergarten. Our preschoolers are between the ages of three and five, or turning three by December 31st of that academic year.

This handbook is one of numerous efforts to establish and maintain positive communication between home and school. We have compiled all essential information in this one location for your convenience. All of our State of Connecticut Licensing policies and NAEYC accreditation policies are also outlined throughout this handbook.

Thank you for choosing Sterling House Preschool for your child's most formative education years. We are honored to serve your family.

Here's to a great school year!

Sincerely,

Amy Kapitan
Preschool Director

Linda Douglass
Preschool Teacher

Before We Begin...

In order for your child to begin in our program, the following paperwork must be completed and turned in to the main office:

- Updated Medical Form (due each year)
- Absent Parent Emergency Treatment Form
- Walking Field Trip Permission Slip
- Behavior Management Form
- Family Handbook Acknowledgement (at the end of this handbook)

Non-discrimination policy

Sterling House proudly welcomes children and families from many backgrounds, races and religions. We are sensitive to the diverse needs of families and our staff make every effort to support each child and family. We will do our best to provide written and verbal translation with families as needed. We encourage you to share your culture with us, so we can create a welcoming, inclusive, classroom and curriculum.

Sterling House Preschool Introduction

OUR VISION

Every child enters kindergarten ready to reach their full potential and become independent responsible individuals.

MISSION

The mission of Sterling House Preschool is to provide and maintain a classroom setting that is safe, emotionally secure, supportive, and planned for independence. We want each child's experience to be positive; filled with activities that are both challenging and rewarding. Our goal is to support the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of our children, while igniting a love for learning. Our preschoolers are encouraged to observe, predict, explore, discover, experiment, and to take pride and responsibility in their work. Our space is bright, vibrant, stimulating, rambunctious, and spirited.

CORE BELIEFS

We believe that happy students, happy families, and happy teachers can create one terrific school!

Together, we strive to make:

- students, families, and teachers feel safe, comfortable, and accepted.
- healthy and respectful relationships that are promoted by all members of the school community.
- students feel encouraged to be leaders and positive role models.
- parents and community members are actively engaged.
- a setting in which positive behavior is reinforced.
- a culture of high expectations in which the improvement of learning outcomes for all students is emphasized.

PHILOSOPHY

Sterling House Preschool supports and nurtures the growth of the whole child through the following 4 domains: social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and creative. This is done through the guidance of the Early Learning and Development Standards within a play-based environment.

Curriculum 2.A

We are proud to use The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool. This is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features hands-on, project-based investigations as a pathway to learning. It includes the most up-to-date early childhood development research and offers the embedded support and guidance to effectively bring a content-rich, developmentally appropriate curriculum to life.

The curriculum includes 9 units of study. Foundational skills are embedded into each unit. For example, social-emotional, physical, language and literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, and the arts.

The units of study include: Building a Classroom Community, Balls, Buildings, Clothes, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Trees, Water, Wheels, and Exercise.

We encourage building a sense of community inside the classroom, by creating an environment that is welcoming and open for young children, and grants the child the ability to make worthwhile choices in an accepted partition. We welcome and boost the uniqueness of each child, and we work separately with each student to discover his/her best learning styles and methods.

Lesson Plans

A weekly lesson plan will be posted on the family board outside the classroom door. It will also be provided through Seesaw. We encourage parents to review these plans to support their child's education; by reading similar books and practicing the same finger plays and singing the same songs. This will reinforce the learning that occurs in the classroom environment.

Assessments

Students will be assessed on a variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students.

Weekly goals are chosen from the CT DOTS and Early Learning and Development Standards to direct the teaching strategies and environment changes to the curriculum. The goals are written on a continuum scale where we can observe the child's progression.

Sample Class Schedule

The daily schedule establishes a consistent sequence of activities that help young children to predict the order of events to feel more secure and in control of their day. The following is a typical daily schedule the class follows:

8:00-9:15am	Children Arrive/Table toys and centers
9:25-9:35am	Whole group meeting time
9:40-10:00am	Snack
10:00-10:30am	Free play/center time
10:45-10:55am	Small Group instruction
11:00-11:45am	Outside play/ Weather permitted
12:00-12:30pm	Lunch/AM Students Dismissal
12:35-1:00pm	Large Muscle Movement/outside play
1:15-2:45pm	Rest time
2:45pm-3:00pm	Snack
3:00-3:15pm	Story time - Read aloud
3:15-3:30pm	Outside play/Dismissal!

Staff Credentials

Our teachers are creative, responsive, and nurturing. They are certified in First Aid, CPR, Administration of Medicine, and have a degree in Early Childhood Development. Our teachers are background checked before employment. Each educator is required to fill a certain amount of hours of professional development trainings' to better themselves and help their students to be successful in and out of the classroom.

Daily Operations 19a-79-3a(d)(7) CT OEC

Drop off Procedure

Our doors open at 8:00am for drop off. Families will join their preschooler in the building to help with the following before entering the classroom:

- Sign in your child on the clipboard.
- Assist in emptying and hanging up their backpacks in their cubbies, any jacket or coat on their hook, and washing their hands. Each Monday, rest time bedding will go in their container located in the auditorium.

At 9:15am we will be locking the back entrance and you will have to come in through the front of the building. We encourage you to make doctor and dental appointments for your child before or after Preschool hours. If by chance you are running late, please notify us ASAP by sending a message on Seesaw or calling the office.

Here are a few tips to help in the morning:

- Allow yourself a few extra minutes to get your child settled.
- Have your child learn where their coat hook and cubby is, so they can put away their own things.
- Be sure to replenish your child's extra clothing bag.

Establishing a calm and reassuring routine helps to get your child's day off to a good start.

Pick-up Procedure

AM children will dismiss right after lunch at 12:30pm under the pavilion. **Full day children** are dismissed at 3:30pm under the pavilion. Please sign children out on the parent sign-in/out clipboard. Belongings from the day as well as artwork or any other notices will be collected and go in a folder provided by the school. During inclement weather, we ask families to join us in the building and pick up will happen in the classroom.

When someone other than a parent is to pick up a child, please communicate this to a staff member (via phone call or through Seesaw app). **Persons listed as an alternate pick up, will be required to show photo ID (ie: driver's license).** Please be sure to call or send a Seesaw message to the staff members letting us know if someone different is picking up.

Children are released only:

- To an authorized parent/guardian

- To a person authorized by written permission from the parents
- To an authorized person with picture identification and/or other identification
- To an authorized sibling 18 years of age or older

State Licensing requires that any request for a new person to be added to your child's pickup list must be in writing and delivered by the parent to the Center.

Late Pick Up Policy

Our program ends at either 12:30, 3:30, or 6:00 pm each night, depending on your child's enrollment schedule. Arriving any time after those three times is considered a late pick up. Please do not be late picking up your child.

If you are going to be late, please call, email, or message the teachers to let us know. Two staff members will remain at Sterling House with the child at all times. If the child has not been picked up 5 minutes after the scheduled pick up time, a staff member will then attempt to call the child's parents/guardians using the numbers provided.

If the parents/guardians cannot be reached, a staff member will attempt to call all the emergency contacts that were provided by the parents/guardians at the time of enrollment.

The police will be called after 30 minutes if the parents or other adults specified on the release form cannot be reached. At that time, the child will be released to the police. The non-emergency number for Stratford's Police Department is (203)385-4100.

If the child is picked up after their designated pick up time:

- The first late pick up is a written warning. The family will be reminded of the policy.
- A second late pick up will result in a \$25 late fee.
- \$25 will be added for every 15 minutes the child is not picked up.

Please note:

- late fees will be implemented regardless of notification of late arrival.
- this policy is in effect for the entire school year.
- excessive lateness will result in withdrawal from the program (excessive lateness is defined as 3 late pickups).

Parking Lot Safety

Please drive cautiously and observe other people walking through. There are many cars and children. Park in the designated parking spots and avoid parking/leaving your car in the loading zone area in front of the preschool building. When leaving your car to walk into the building, please hold on to your child to keep them safe. Please do not idle in your vehicle when waiting to

drop off or pick up your child. The only exception to this is extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures (5A.25).

Additional Parking Lot Reminders:

- Please park in the designated parking spaces only. Please do not pull up in front of the garage, in the “no parking area” in front of the side entrance, or in front of or beside the dumpster.
- Please be mindful of handicap parking spaces and the "no parking area" surrounding those spaces.
- Please go slowly entering and exiting the parking lot and be cautious when pulling into or out of your parking spot.

Preschool Schedule and Closure Information

Preschool will begin on **September 6, 2023** and will go until **June 7, 2024**, when our graduates celebrate!

Please see the Preschool calendar for additional information regarding half days and closures.

We like to host opportunities to welcome families to preschool. Some of our fun family events include:

- Trunk or Treat for Halloween
- Jingle Bell Breakfast
- Movie Night
- Tea Party
- Shamrock Ball

The staff will be in touch with confirmed dates of our family events. We look forward to building our classroom community together with our families.

Incident Weather or Emergency Closures

CLOSURES: In case of extreme weather the team at Sterling House will assess if we can open safely. Please be on the lookout for a message from the team. Decisions will be made by 7:00am.

DELAYED OPENING: If there is a two hour delay, we will open at 10am.

EARLY DISMISSAL: If there is a weather-related early dismissal, we will reach out to communicate pick-up time, which will be 12:30. We will contact you by email, SeeSaw, or phone call to let you know.

Please note: snow days and cancellations are not made up by Sterling House Preschool in June.

Expectations

For Students

We encourage you to review below with your child and to use these phrases at home as well.

Every child will **WASH THEIR HANDS** upon arrival in the bathrooms located across from the classroom, PRIOR to entering the classroom. Every child will wash their hands before and after eating snack and lunch, after using the bathroom and after playing outside.

Children are to wear **LISTENING EARS** at all times in the classroom and on the playground without shouting and yelling. When a teacher asks us to do a task, we will use listening ears and follow through. We encourage your child to show respect to the teachers.

While indoors we will use our **WALKING FEET**. This will prevent any injuries to themselves or another child. Running is strictly for outside on the playground. There is no running in the auditorium, hallway, or on the ramp.

Children are to treat others with **RESPECT**, which means to be kind and gentle with our bodies. We will not hit, kick, punch, and push their peers or teachers. Children will be gentle with classroom toys. We will not break toys or hit anyone with them when we become upset or angry. While sitting in the library, children will gently look at the books and not rip pages or step on books.

For Families

Parents/caregivers must sign their child in and out daily on the attendance clipboard. Please communicate (i.e. child's morning, who's picking up, early dismissal, etc.) with the teachers before leaving.

Allow yourself a few extra minutes to get your child settled. Your child will learn where their coat hook and cubby is, so they can put away their belongings. Teachers will help them put their lunch box in the refrigerator. Be sure to replenish your child's extra clothing bag. **Please make sure to label lunch bags, thermoses, water bottles, jackets, hats, mittens, and bedding.**

For those children who stay for rest time, their bedding will be sent home every Friday, please make sure to send in a bag that morning to collect their belongings. Please wash the bedding on the weekend and return it back into their bedding containers Monday morning during arrival.

School Policies & Procedures

Dress Code

We ask that children come to school dressed in clothes that are suitable and appropriate for the season, learning should be messy and fun! Many of our activities involve art materials such as paint, water, cooking materials, etc. It is best that your child comes dressed comfortable knowing his/her clothes can be soiled. Please be sure to hang sweaters for chilly days in Fall and Winter months on their hooks.

At Sterling House Preschool, safety is paramount. Therefore, we ask that you send your child to school wearing close-toed shoes that are supportive and protective, sneakers with socks are best. Children who come in with sandals or flip flops are not permitted to play on the playground, and you will receive a phone call to bring socks and sneakers for your child. Those who are not wearing proper footwear will be required to sit on the bench until a parent can come bring the proper shoes.

NO JEANS, although it may make their outfit look cute, it is hard for them to pull up and down while toileting. Please send them to school in sweatpants or leggings as they are easier for the children to wear while using the bathroom.

Toileting

ALL CHILDREN MUST BE FULLY POTTY TRAINED before attending school. Fully Potty trained means a child is able to use the bathroom with no assistance, knows when they need to go and has no more than one accident a week. Children must have practiced using the toilet in public. Children must have the skills to go to the bathroom and take care of themselves for the most part. **DO NOT SEND THEM TO SCHOOL IN PULL UPS, UNDERWEAR ONLY.** Every family is encouraged to keep a change of clothes in their cubby for such occasions. If a child has an accident more than twice in one day, we will call you to pick up your child.

Outside Policy 5.A.07

During warm and sunny months please apply sunscreen at home before arrival.

We will be going outside in temperatures of 25 degrees or more. This number includes the wind chill. If the wind chill makes it feel like 17 degrees, we will not go outside. Please be sure they are dressed appropriately with clothes that are dry and layered for warmth.

Nutrition Policy

Snack 10.B.08.i

We provide two nutritionally balanced **SNACKS**, one in the morning and one in the afternoon right after rest time. Our nutritious snack is composed of one fruit (fresh or cup), dairy (yogurt or cheese), grain (i.e. cereal-cheerios and kix, nutri grain bars, bagels, etc.), etc. We allow the children to have one cup of juice with a morning snack and water with an afternoon snack. Mealtimes are relaxed, rich with conversation and fellowship; a time to practice our table manners.

Sample Snack Menu

Monday AM Snack Yogurt & Nutri-grain Bars	Tuesday AM Snack Graham Crackers & Fruit Cups	Wednesday AM Snack Cheerios & Craisins	Thursday AM Snack Apple sauce & Annie's bunnies grahams	Friday AM Snack Bagel with cream cheese & Craisins
PM Snack Goldfish & Cheese Sticks	PM Snack Apple Slices & Veggie Straws	PM Snack Chips & Salsa	PM Snack Pirate's booty & Raisins	PM Snack Carrots with Ranch dressing

Lunch 10.B.08.i

Lunch boxes must arrive with the child each morning at drop off. Families shall provide labeled, leak-proof food and beverage containers and utensils required to eat that particular meal (plate, bowl, napkin, spoon, and fork). To prevent choking, all food must be cut into bite-size pieces, ready to eat. We do not provide lunch for the students.

A frozen ice pack must be in the child's lunch box daily. Per state regulations, ice packs must be store bought and have a hard-plastic exterior. Plastic bag-gel ice packs, homemade ice packs, teething rings, or injury ice packs are not permitted.

At lunch time, the children will be assisted in opening up their lunch. If your child likes hot lunch, i.e. macaroni and cheese, or ravioli's, please send it in a thermos. Thermos'will be placed on a black cart in the kitchen.

Food Safety

Be sure to cut up their food into non-choking hazard sizes. We cannot let children eat whole grapes, carrots, hotdogs, etc. please cut these items into sizes of pennies. **Please do not send popcorn in your child's lunch as it is a choking hazard.**

Birthday Celebrations

We like to celebrate birthdays with songs, birthday crowns, and special treats. The parents and staff work together to make the day a memorable occasion. Below is what you need to know for a birthday celebration in preschool:

- Families may bring in goodie bags for students to take home and enjoy at home! Goodie bags must remain **peanut free** and there must be enough for **the entire class**.
- Families may drop off a sweet or savory treat for them to enjoy with their group! All items must be **peanut free** and there must be enough for **the entire class**.
- Families are not able to join the student for their celebration, but they are able to send in goodies for the class to enjoy!
- If you are looking to celebrate your child's birthday, **please be sure to communicate ahead of time with the teachers so they can be made aware and prepare for it.**

Tardiness and Absences

In order to take full advantage of the educational program being offered by Sterling House Preschool, your child should be in school on time each day. The preschool years are the time when children are forming attitudes about school. By bringing your child to school consistently and on time you send the message that you value education. **We ask that you do not send your child in no later than 10:30am, unless you notify a teacher.**

Proper attendance is vital for successful early learning experiences. If the child will be absent or late for any reason **PLEASE CALL OR SEND A SEESAW MESSAGE no later than 9:00 am.**

A note of vacation and scheduled days off shall be given in advance to the Preschool team. After five unexcused absences, the team may call to review this policy and attempt to resolve the absenteeism concern. After ten or more consecutive days of unexcused absences, the child's enrollment in the program may be in jeopardy.

To ensure consistency in your child's education, please schedule family vacations and other leisure events during the scheduled school breaks (see calendar for specific dates).

Discipline Policy

The goal of discipline is to help the child develop self-control and move toward appropriate social behavior. Examples of developmentally appropriate methods utilized for resolving conflict are:

- Positive guidance when disputes arise among children or between a child and staff, the staff will encourage a “talking out” process where the goal is to acknowledge feelings and find solutions using the children’s ideas wherever possible.
- Setting clear limits - staff will encourage and model positive behavior, positive reinforcement, the use of peer support and clearly defined rules.
- Redirection - A child who may be aggressive or who is disruptive or destructive of other children’s work may be asked to make an activity choice in another area. Staff will continuously supervise children during disciplinary actions.

Staff will not be abusive, neglectful, or use corporal, humiliating or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child will be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety or health of the child or others, using least restrictive methods, as appropriate.

Discipline/guidance methods – 1.B.09

- **Our Goal:** to work as a team to maintain children in our program and avoid the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures. This team includes teachers, director, parents/guardians, and support agencies as needed, for the best development of each child. (1E.1)
 - Students at Sterling House Preschool will never be disciplined using physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion. For example: shaking, hitting, spanking, shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, rough handling, forcing a child to sit down, or physically forcing a child to perform an action (1B.8). *It is **never** permissible for staff to use any form of physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when discipline a child.* (1B.10)
 - The role of the teacher is to model and teach positive problem solving. Students, who have conflicts or problems with other children or teachers, will be encouraged to verbalize their anger, frustration or concerns. Our teachers and staff guide rather than punish or discipline.
 - Challenging Behavior (3B.2): “any behavior that interferes with children’s learning, development and success at play; is harmful to the child, other children or adults; puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure”[1]
 - Examples: physical aggression, relational aggression, verbal bullying, whining, testing limits, refusal to follow direction or observe classroom rules.
 - When challenging behaviors are present, the classroom staff will assess the function of the behavior and work with families and professionals to develop an **individualized action plan** to address the behavior. The plan will include

positive behavior support strategies. These include removing materials or modifying the classroom environment that triggers challenging behavior, or create a predictable daily schedule so children know what to do and when to do it

- All reasonable attempts will be made to work with the child and the family to resolve the behavior problem. Teachers will keep parents informed of the progress made. Referrals to community resources or an outside evaluation may be suggested.
- **TERMINATION:** If a parent refuses to work with teachers or community supports/resources in resolving the problem and/or the behavior problem persists or escalates into a chronic situation requiring greater need for care than Sterling House Preschool teachers can provide, the child's enrollment will be terminated immediately. Exclusionary measures are not considered until all other possible interventions have been exhausted, and there is agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child. If exclusionary measures must be taken, our program will offer assistance to the family by accessing services and an alternative placement.

Our discipline/guidance/termination policy complies with federal, state, and civil rights laws.

Health & Wellness

Illness Policy (10.B.08.g)

Our center operates for well children and staff only. Children should be fully able to participate in all activities, including outdoor play, so please dress them accordingly.

Children with symptoms of communicable diseases remain with a staff member until the parent or designated representative arrives for the child. We make every effort to reach the parents when a child is ill, but after 30 minutes we will contact the emergency contact indicated on their form.

We will ask that children with these conditions not come to school, or that a parent takes the child home if symptoms start while at school:

- an infectious illness judged contagious by our nurse or any physician.
- flu-like illness with vomiting or diarrhea. The child must be clear of these symptoms for 24 hours before returning to the Preschool
- a bad cold or cough, especially if nasal drainage is discolored, severely runny nose, especially with colored discharge. sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- a Fever of 100-100.9° F orally, if combined with another sign of illness. If a fever occurs during school, you will be called to pick-up your child.
- a skin rash that has not been identified by a phone call or in writing from a physician who has seen the rash
- diarrhea and/or vomiting two or more times in a 24 hour period.
- evidence of head lice or other parasites
- rapid or difficult breathing
- a pink or running eye, conjunctivitis, physician must authorize child's return to the program
- infected skin patches evidence of infection
- excessive fatigue
- a moist or open cold sore. (they must be dry)
- confirmed diagnosis of Coxsackie rash, fever and sore throat.

Please keep your child home if you detect any of the above symptoms, for your child's protection as well as that of other children and our staff. Your child will not be accepted into the program if the staff detect any of the above symptoms.

Children may be readmitted:

- with a physician's statement that the child is free from communicable diseases, including lice, and that returning poses no risk to the child or others. OR
- If visibly free from communicable disease,
- Your child's temperature has been normal for 24 hours without the aid of Tylenol or other fever reducing medication
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea have not occurred for 24 hours.
- The child participates normally in all activities including going outside.
- Coxsackie: when all symptoms are gone.

Before your child can return to our Preschool we require physician authorization in cases of viral infections and any illness which has a suspicion of being contagious.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will isolate the child from the group and have him rest quietly. You will be contacted immediately. Staff expect a parent or an emergency contact person to come pick up the child within an hour.

Outdoor play is a daily part of our program. If a child is well enough to come to Preschool, we expect that he/she will be able to take part in the full program, including outdoor play.

Minor Accidents/First Aid (10.B.08.g -- 10.D.09d)

We seek to provide a safe environment for all children at all times. Part of being a child involves the occasional scrape, bump or bruise. We are prepared for any occurrence and our staff are trained in Infant/Child CPR and First Aid for the Child Care Provider, as well as in Administration of Medications and EpiPen administration. We also have the required first aid supplies.

- If a minor injury occurs, the teacher will give you a copy of our incident record.
- If an injury occurs with bleeding too, you will receive a phone call as well as a copy of the record.
- If it is a serious injury or accident, you will receive a phone call and an Incident Report will be filled out. This is to be signed by all parents of children involved. Copies are given to the parent/s, kept in the Child's File, and one is also given to the Sterling House Executive Director.

Administration of Medication Procedure 5.A.11

Sterling House Preschool will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child or a specific condition for any child in our program for whom a plan has been made and approved by trained Sterling House Preschool staff.

Because administration of medication poses an extra burden for staff, and having medication in the facility is a safety hazard, medication administration in child care will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside child care hours cannot be made. The second dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction. Parents or legal guardians may administer medication to their own child during the child care day.

Sterling House Preschool trained staff will administer medication only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent, the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that meets the safety check requirements. Sterling House Preschool must have on file the written or faxed instructions of a licensed clinician to administer the specific medication. 5.A.11a

1. For prescription medications, parents or legal guardians will provide caregivers with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication; the date the prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription, as well as the pharmacy's name and phone number to call if there are any questions about administering the medication; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage and disposal

instructions. For over-the-counter medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the medication in an unopened manufacturers box and as a child-resistant container. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names; specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer; and the name, address, phone number of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child. 5.A.11a,d

2. Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the staff in writing on the Administration of Medication Permission Form. This requirement applies both to prescription and over-the-counter medications.
3. A physician may state that a certain medication may be given for a recurring problem, emergency situation, or chronic condition. The instructions should include the child's name; the name of the medication; the dose of the medication; how often the medication may be given; the conditions for use; and any precautions to follow. Example: children may use sunscreen to prevent sunburn; children who have asthma may need an inhaler before vigorous active play; a child with a known serious allergic reaction to a specific substance who develops symptoms after exposure to that substance may receive epi-pen from a trained staff member. A child may only receive medication with the permission of the child's parent or legal guardian and be given by a Sterling House Preschool staff person who has been trained in Epi-Pen Administration. 5.A.11b
4. Medication will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child-resistant, closed container that is inaccessible to children and prevents spillage.
5. Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which states that the medication may be used when ever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.
6. A Medication Administration Log (MAR) will be maintained by the trained staff to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount. The time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of medication. Spills, reactions and refusal to take medication will be noted on this log. 5.A.11.c
7. Medication errors will be controlled by checking the following 5 items each time medication is given:
 1. Right child
 2. right medication

3. right dose
4. right time
5. right route of administration

When a medication error occurs, the child's physician or the Regional Poison Control center and the child's parents will be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record in Sterling House Preschool. 5.A.11c

Flu Vaccination Requirement

In accordance with the The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) requirements, children at Sterling House Preschool are required to show proof of immunity to influenza (i.e. "the flu") before he/she can attend the licensed facility. **By January 1st children aged 6-59 months attending Sterling House Preschool must receive the flu vaccine between September 1 and December 31 of the preceding year.**

Safety Procedures & Emergency Plans

Medical

In case of a medical emergency, a qualified staff member will attend to do first aid as needed. Another staff member will notify the family of the child. Attempts will be made to consult with the

child's physician/dentist. If neither is available, the program's medical consultants will be contacted.

For extreme emergencies, 911 will be called. An ambulance will take the child and a staff member to the nearest hospital. The child's emergency permission form will be brought with them. A staff member will notify the family or alternate pick-up person to meet the child at the emergency room.

Additional staff will be called in if necessary to maintain required ratios. In the event a child becomes ill while at the Center, parents will be notified and the child will be moved to a designated area where the child will be made comfortable. A staff person will remain with the child at all times.

Fire

In the event of a fire, evacuation from the building will be through the closest fire exit at the back of the classroom. Staff are responsible for supervising the children under their care and leading them to the fire exit. Immediately, the group will walk to the gazebo, or the garden, safely away from the building, and sit at the picnic tables to take attendance.

Director or person in charge will be responsible for taking the attendance clipboard, portable first aid kit, cell phone and emergency contact files, and medications with them.

Should it not be possible to return to the building, staff will walk the children to the Baldwin Center or Christ Church. Parents will be notified to come and pick up their child.

Weather

On snow days, or during other hazardous weather emergencies, the program will follow the Stratford Public School closing, delay or early dismissal schedule.

Parents will be notified by phone call and using the SeaSaw app to pick up their children due to early closing. Ratios will be maintained at all times and two staff will remain on the premises with the children until all are picked up.

In the event of other serious weather emergencies, such as tornadoes or hurricanes, staff and children will remain indoors away from windows and doors. First aid staff will be on hand to administer first aid (all staff are certified in FA/CPR), as needed, until emergency personnel can arrive.

Parents will be notified after the immediate danger has passed.

Evacuation

In the event that the facility must evacuate, the children will walk to the Baldwin Center and sit in the lobby. We will bring the Emergency Contact forms to call parents and have the children picked up.

If we need to go further away, we walk to the Christ Church and we will use their Fellowship Hall to contain the children until parents can pick them up. If it is a serious evacuation situation we will put the children in the SH Passenger van and any staff cars on the premises to go wherever the Fire Department deems is appropriate. You will be notified where that location is.

Advanced contact has been made with the town's Civil Preparedness Unit, adding the Center to their list for emergencies.

Parents will also be notified to pick up their children.

Ratios will be maintained at all times and two staff will remain with the children until all children are picked up.

Building Security and Access - 10B.19

Security Threats

If a stranger, or parent, comes to the back of the building showing any threatening behavior, one teacher will lock the classroom door keeping all children in the classroom. They will gather the children on the meeting rug and the third will contact the front office. The police will be called if deemed necessary.

Utility Failure

If the power goes out due to any reason the children will be gathered to a meeting in the Blocks area. Director/teacher will go to the Main Office to see what has happened. The main office will determine if the problem is long or short term. Parents will be contacted if it is a long term problem and the children will be sent home.

Toxic Substances

All potentially toxic materials such as pesticides, toxic cleaning materials, aerosol cans, and poisons will be used according to manufacturer's instructions and under the provisions of the facility's Maintenance personnel. These materials are to be stored in the Maintenance Closet and be inaccessible to children.

In no instance will these materials be used so that children are exposed to any hazard. Examples include: no spraying of pesticides while children are present or onto surfaces touched by children; using caution when painting or renovations to minimize the children's exposure to paint fumes and lead.

Maintenance of Facility

Any facility painting or tiling is to be done during the summer break before and after the school year when there are no children in the facility.

If there is any work that needs to be done for emergency purposes during the school year, it will be done after hours when the children are gone. Building is also well ventilated.

Wet floors are mopped and the 'WET FLOOR' sign is placed near it to warn passers-by!

Mats are kept at the back entrance door to wipe feet on so there will be prevent slipping in the hallway.

Carpets are to lay down flat and not curl up on the edges! When the carpet begins to curl up use appropriate tape to be sure the edges don't curl up.

When the edges get frayed and torn, carpet is to be repaired or replaced.

Electrical Outlets

All unused electrical outlets are to be covered with protective covers. This is to be observed continually. After using an outlet, be sure to replace the cover.

Smoking, Prohibited Substances, and Guns

The indoor and outdoor environments are designated as non-smoking areas. The use of tobacco in

any form, alcohol, or illegal drugs is prohibited on the facility premises. Signs to this effect will be kept posted around the facility.

Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

All child care providers and staff will maintain sobriety while providing child care. Caregivers, staff, or other adults who are inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances will be required to leave the premises immediately.

No guns or other lethal weapons will be in a center. The only exception will be a parent who is a police officer or an officer who comes to visit the program and meet the children.

Family - Preschool Communication

Classroom Concerns 10B.20

We encourage open, honest dialogue as we work together to support the healthy development of your child. Whenever you have a concern, please remember to:

- Talk to the teachers whenever possible with any concerns you may have. Don't let your concerns build. Our teachers are professionals who are dedicated to working together for the wellbeing of your child.

- Realize that if you have a concern with a teacher, the teachers or Director will need to investigate further and talk with the staff about your concerns in order to deal with the issue in a straightforward manner. If you feel the need to talk to the Executive Director, she will gladly meet with you.
- Sometimes we cannot make the changes you may request due to certain restrictions, but we ALWAYS want to hear your suggestions. We will always consider them and respond to you in a timely manner.
- A meeting/conference with your child's teacher can be scheduled at any time during the school year. Please speak directly to the teachers to schedule a date and time.
- We view this relationship as a partnership. We will engage with you in a professional, respectful manner and we invite you to do the same. If a family member becomes disrespectful, verbally or physically angry, or disruptive to the preschool environment, we will discuss potential disenrollment of your child.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences will be held twice a year at scheduled appointments during the Fall and Spring. This is to help you understand your child's development from the beginning of the school year, to the end of the year.

Staff Suspected of Abuse

It is the policy of this organization (Sterling House Community Center) to prohibit abuse and neglect of any child by a member of our staff. In cases involving any allegations that a staff member is suspected of abuse or neglect the following action will take place:

1. The incident will be investigated by the director of the Preschool in collaboration with the Director of Youth Development.
2. DCF/OEC will be notified
3. If there is reasonable cause to suspect that the staff member is being abusive or neglectful, the staff member will be suspended immediately and a plan of action will be devised for that staff member.
4. If allegations are confirmed, the staff member's employment will be terminated. All aspects of the incident will be documented and kept in a confidential file. If DCF feels the claim is unsubstantiated; the staff does not pose a risk to the health, safety and welfare of the children and the staff member's name is not included in the central registry, then the staff member's employment may be continued.

ALL STAFF ARE PROTECTED BY LAW FROM DISCRIMINATION OR RETALIATION FOR REPORTING ABUSE OR NEGLECT, IF THEY MAKE A REPORT IN GOOD FAITH.

Tuition and Payment Information 10.B.08.i

Monthly tuition payments are due on the 1st of each month. Tuition will be processed through our online registration platform via autodraft. A valid credit card must be on file. There is no reduction for part-time attendance. Payment is due regardless of absences due to illness, vacation, or snow cancellations.

To view your balance, log into your Sterling House account account via our online portal (<https://operations.daxko.com/Online/5330/ProgramsV2/Home.mvc>). Click on “account” and then “My Balance.” Please see the office staff for assistance in viewing your payment schedule.

Payments not made by the 10th of the month will result in a **\$50 late fee added to your account.**

If payment is not made by the 25th of the month, the Director of Youth Development will meet with the family with a letter notifying them that their child is in jeopardy of being withdrawn from the program.

Payments that are not made within 30 days of the due date will result in your child being withdrawn from the program for non-payment.

If your family is having financial difficulty, please discuss these circumstances with the Director of Youth Development and the Office Manager to see if accommodations to the payment plan can be made (including weekly installments).

CT Care4Kids Program

To help with the overall cost of care for each child we strongly recommend all families apply for the Care 4 Kids Program (C4K) and remain on the program if accepted. A family's eligibility is based on the parents/guardians: working and receiving income at or below the State Median Income published. For a full list of eligibility, please visit <https://www.ctcare4kids.com/>.

Once accepted in C4K, the family fee determined by C4K will be the monthly tuition accepted by SHCC. Families who are accepted into the program may see a reduction in their child's monthly tuition fee. ***The family is responsible for the difference between the monthly tuition rate and the C4K's program payment.*** Therefore, the credit card on your account will be auto drafted with the difference owed back to Sterling House. C4K requires re-determination every twelve months, or as C4K requests. If C4K fails to pay or pays a reduced amount to the program, then the family is responsible for the tuition balance. All billables are due by June 30, 2024 for continuation in future programs.

SHCC Tax ID

You are responsible for retaining your receipts for income tax purposes. Keep your receipts in a safe place. SHCC Tax ID #06-0665192

Withdrawal Policy

Families must give the Preschool program a minimum of **one month's written notice** if you intend to withdraw your child from school. To make a withdrawal, please email Amy Kapitan (akapitan@sterlinghousecc.org), Michael Rosati (mrosati@sterlinghousecc.org) and Donna Kelly (dkelly@sterlinghousecc.org) stating your reason for withdrawing.

Tuition will continue to be due for this notice period, and partial months of attendance must be

paid in full. There are **no refunds** granted if you choose to withdraw your child from the program or if they are dismissed by a director.

Please note: we do not permit a “Temporary Withdrawal” from the Preschool Program.

Sterling House Preschool Handbook Acknowledgement

The handbook is designed to prepare you and your family on the preschool journey at Sterling House. Please read thoroughly, including policy information. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

I have received, reviewed, and acknowledged the Preschool Family Handbook.

Child's Name

Parent/Legal Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

Sterling House reserves the right to add or revise any of the policies in this handbook throughout the year, with proper notification to families.