

INTERLAKE CHILD CARE & LEARNING CENTER

FAMILY HANDBOOK



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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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Introduction; History & Philosophy	3
Non-Discrimination Policy; Anti-Bias Statement	4
ADA Policy; Center Hours/Holidays; Weather Closures; Child Care Subsidy Program	5
Tuition; Changing Schedules; Leaving Interlake; Termination of Care; Late Pick-Up; Enrollment	6
Staff-to-Child Ratio & Classroom Capacities; Staff Qualifications & Ongoing Training	7
Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting; Organizational Structure; Personal Conduct	8
Negotiating & Resolving Difficulties; Our Classroom Programs; Curriculum	9
The Food Program; Behavior Guidance/ Discipline Policy	10
Child Observations, Assessments & Conferences; Outside Consultants	11
Attendance & Absence Tips; Diapering; Potty Training/Toileting; Your Child's Clothing	12
Personal Possessions; Walks/Field Trips; Napping;	13
Transitions; Parent Participation; Private Child Care Arrangements;	14
Fundraising & Donations; Illness; Policy & Procedure for Excluding Ill Children	15
Health & Safety Policies; Medication; Fire Drills/Earthquake/Disaster Policy	16
Pesticide Policy & Public Health Policy, "Keep Me Home If ... When Your Child Is Sick	17
Additional Resources & Signature Page	18 & 19

Interlake's Educational Philosophy Statement:

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



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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. This booklet serves as a guide to center wide policies, procedures and requirements. In addition, you will receive a guide to your child's classroom (whether infant, toddler or preschool), 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.

Further pertinent information will be passed along to you with the package of enrollment forms during your registration appointment. Interlake has an "Open Door" policy. This means that parents/guardians have access to all of our classrooms during business hours, 7:30 am – 6:00 pm. We ask visitors to be sensitive to how their presence may affect children. Very young children (and others, too) may be fearful of strangers, and older children may become rowdy with a new "audience", so we ask visitors to be as undistruptive as possible to our classrooms. Also, our administrators, teachers and support staff are happy to answer any questions you may have. Please ask if you have questions!

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. 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 three classrooms. Interlake is a non-profit program governed by a Board of Directors composed of current and former parents, community members and staff. We are accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC offers a national, voluntary accreditation system that helps early childhood programs meet high professional standards. NAEYC accreditation is an extra process of reflection and documentation, above and beyond licensing requirements, that supports us in providing a higher level of quality in the care and learning children receive. You can learn more about NAEYC and the accreditation process by visiting their website at www.naeyc.org.

INTERLAKE'S PHILOSOPHY IN THE PROVERBIAL NUTSHELL:

1. RESPECT FOR CHILDREN

a. 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, and allowing for protection of their physical and psychological safety.

b. 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.

c. Children come to us, regardless of age, as unique, thinking, feeling human beings. They are not "empty vessels" for us to fill, nor are they "clay" for us to mold or manipulate as we wish. 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.

d. Children of any age deserve to have their basic needs for comfort, rest, food, security, or any other physical or psychological needs met without having to earn it. Our job is to listen carefully for the verbal or non-verbal expressions of these needs, and to meet them in a way that clearly communicates to the child, "You are lovable, and you are important to me."

2. EXPERIENTIALLY-BASED LEARNING

a. Interlake's 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.

b. Children need to be in control of their own learning (as do adults). We can offer many kinds of experiences, but need to follow the lead of the children, and build on the interests, developments, and talents they express.

3. *EXTENDED FAMILY MODEL*

Interlake makes no attempt to duplicate family-home life. Rather, we work in partnership to create a community and a continuity of care between home and school. This is partly because it would be impossible for a child care center to even approximate that model, and we feel the model of an extended family provides a better way to support children and their families. Our enrollment packet includes a Personal Care form to include information which helps the teachers and staff understand each child's individual development, interests and needs. This form is updated annually to ensure the child's information stays current.

As staff members, it is our task to establish a positive personal relationship with each child in our room and their parent or guardian. 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), and minimizes the stress to children when there is a substitute teacher in the room because they know each of the other teachers well. It also gives children the opportunity to establish relationships with teachers of different personality and teaching styles, and so, strengthens a child's ability to establish relationships in general. What makes Interlake unique is the sense of familiarity, depth of connection and the efforts that staff make to involve families and get to know who you are as a parent and as a person. We become part of your family and you become a part of ours. Parents and family members (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) are encouraged to participate in our curriculum, be it teaching children a home language other than English, sharing a favorite family tradition (age-appropriate) during special story times, playing musical instruments, leading songs and chants, or chaperoning field trips. There are many ways for families to be involved in our program! Feel free to share your ideas.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY: Interlake Child Care and Learning Center does not discriminate in enrollment or hiring practices. This includes discrimination based on race, creed, color, national origin, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, marital status, citizenship, status as a veteran, or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a disabled person.

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

ADA (Americans with Disabilities) POLICY: Our center strives to serve all children, including those with special needs. We will use 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. Teachers receive specialized training regarding a variety of disabilities; however, parents and guardians are primary educators in teaching teachers how to best respond to your child's needs (for typically developing children, too). 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 health care provider to address any health concerns that the teachers or staff need instruction on.

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

We are closed for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day & Day After Thanksgiving
- Christmas & the day before or after Christmas

We are also closed the following days: One Friday in June for teacher training, one Friday in July for our annual staff retreat; and the Friday before or Tuesday following the Labor Day weekend, to clean and reorganize our classrooms in preparation for the start of our school year. In addition, to support teacher education, we close early (3:45) four times per year to provide in-service training for our staff. We provide families with a copy of our annual calendar each year, and you can also find the calendar on our website, www.interlakechildcare.com.

SNOW & WEATHER CLOSURES: Interlake follows the Seattle Public Schools' (SPS) Ice & Snow Emergency Schedule. If SPS close, start late, or close early so will Interlake. If Seattle Public Schools are on break, the Executive Director will make the decision regarding closures or late openings related to adverse weather conditions. Should Interlake be closed, open late, or close early, the information will be posted on the doors and the website, and the outgoing message will be changed to reflect that day's schedule. 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 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. If a flood occurs overnight, parents will be notified as soon as possible of the closure for the following day. Information regarding the closure due to flooding will be posted on the doors and website. The outgoing phone message will be changed to reflect the affected day's schedule by 6:00 am.

Should there be a power outage during the school day that lasts more than 30 minutes, we will close the center. Parents will be called to pick up their children for the day. If the power outage happens overnight and the center is still experiencing an outage at 6:00 am, we will post the closure on the outside doors of the building and note the closure on the outgoing voicemail and the website.

The ED notifies families using our website and updates the outgoing message (if we have electrical power) if Interlake will be closed or delayed that day. If you call and there is no updated message on the voice mail that means that we will be open for our usual hours that day.

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PROGRAM: Interlake participates in the City of Seattle's child care subsidy program. This program provides tuition support for low-income, working families. Please talk with our Office Administrator to get more information regarding eligibility requirements or to enroll in this program. 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.

PAYING TUITION & CHANGING YOUR CHILD'S SCHEDULE: Tuition payments are due on the first day of the month. Unless prior arrangements have been made, payment received after the first working day of the month is subject to a late fee of \$10 for the first day and \$5 per day thereafter.

If you want to change your child's schedule, we require 30 days written notice to our Enrollment Coordinator, although more notice gives us more time to accommodate schedule changes. Whenever possible, we accommodate requests from current families before offering any space that is opening up to families on our wait list.

LEAVING INTERLAKE: Interlake requests 60 days notice (to allow more time to fill your child's vacant space), and **requires 30 days written notification to the Interlake administration prior to withdrawing your child.** This will ensure that you may apply your deposit against your child's final month of attendance or donate it to Interlake. This deposit is fully refundable if Interlake receives a **30-day-notice in writing** before the child leaves the center. If notice is **not** given, the deposit will **not** be refunded. We do not prorate the last month's tuition if your child leaves mid-month. The last month's tuition is due in full.

TERMINATION OF CARE: Interlake's philosophy and style of care is not necessarily for every family or every child. Our program is limited by space, resources and financial capacity. Parents may give notice of their intention to leave Interlake at any time. Interlake may ask a family to leave our program. Conditions for which care may be terminated include, but are not limited to:

- Non-payment
- Habitual pick-up of children after the center's closing hour
- Hostile or deliberate mistreatment of teachers and staff
- And 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. Interlake is in touch with community resources and we're committed to assisting families whenever possible in locating other care options.

LATE PICK-UP CHARGE: We close at 6:00, and teachers have many closing tasks to accomplish to ready the classrooms for the next day while still ending their shift on time. It's helpful to call the center if you're running late when arriving to pick-up your child. Many of our staff attend classes, have other jobs, as well as family obligations. We ask that parents be considerate and arrive in a timely way, so that children are ready to leave the center by 6:00. There is a \$1.00 charge for every minute past 6:00. Translation...at 6:05, the teacher on duty is owed \$5.00, at 6:06, the teacher is owed \$6.00, etc. Please pay this charge to the teacher who is caring for your child at the time of pick-up, or make payment arrangements with the teacher. And ... please consider that while adults can typically shift gears and leave quickly, children often have more difficulty dropping what they're doing immediately. Knowing your child's disposition and preferences and leaving a little extra time for your child to make the transition from their school day can make the difference between leaving smoothly and happily and leaving with tears and/or loud protesting.

PRIOR TO YOUR CHILD'S FIRST DAY AT INTERLAKE: 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, we require time for your child to visit and bond with our teachers and staff and become familiar with their peers, their environment and the routines that will make up their day. These transition visits are shorter, often include a parent/guardian at first, and act as a get-to-know-you period for your child, her/his new teachers, and for the family. In addition, we need to have the following:

ENROLLMENT FORMS

The first step in enrollment is completing the following forms:

- Personal Care Information
- Registration Form
- Immunization Form (please update this form as your child receives further immunizations)
- Emergency Contact Information (updated annually and as changes are necessary)
- Emergency Card, Releases and Authorization (walk form; updated annually and as changes are necessary)
- Payment Agreement
- Health History Form (last physical exam date must be updated regularly)
- Parent Participation Packet
- Family Collage Page
- Sunscreen Authorization (not needed if child is under 6 months of age)
- Diaper Cream Authorization (if needed)
- Photo permission form

These forms give us important information regarding your child's background, special needs, and health, as well as where you can be reached in case of an emergency and who is permitted to pick up your child. The State of Washington requires that all children enrolled in child care centers have a completed immunization form on file at the time of enrollment that is updated as necessary. You will also be asked to fill out household size and income statements for the USDA food program reimbursement. The food program is available to all children enrolled in the center. **Please remember to update your contact information when changes occur, especially phone numbers of parents/guardians.**

STAFF-TO-CHILD RATIOS & CLASSROOM CAPACITIES: Interlake is licensed to serve a maximum of 48 children per day. Our infant program serves children approximately 2 to 16 months. Our toddler program serves children approximately 15 to 30 months. Our preschool program serves children approximately 30 months to 5 years. It is our goal to maintain NAEYC group ratios whenever possible. We always ensure state licensing ratios of 1:4 in the infant room, 1:7 in the toddler room, and 1:10 in the preschool room.

Most babies are at least 3 months upon enrollment, although Interlake accepts babies as young as 2 months. We are licensed for eight babies in our Infant Room. We have 3 teachers who care for between 6-8 infants, with a maximum ratio of 1 teacher with up-to-four infants. We are licensed for twelve toddlers. There are 4 teachers who maintain between a 1:4 to 1:6 ratio depending on the age of the children. Our preschool program serves up to 28 children daily with 6 teachers and a ratio of 1:6 or 1:9 depending on the age of the children.

We move children from the Infant to Toddler classroom and from the Toddler to the Preschool classroom when they are developmentally ready to make the transition and we have the space available to move them.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS & ONGOING TRAINING: At Interlake, we do not have lead teachers or assistant teachers; all of our teachers are hired in a lead teacher capacity. We hire staff based largely on their professional experience relevant to the early childhood profession. Particular attention is also paid to their philosophy of working with children. Teachers and staff continue to further their professional development and hone their skills through classes and training. Interlake supports professional development and as a subscriber to North Seattle Community College and sponsors an on-site Parent Educator/Staff Trainer. We also send teachers and staff to workshops, conferences and advocacy activities through Child Care Resources (CCR) and other professional development organizations. Many of our teachers and support staff are enrolled in college classes at any given time. In addition, Interlake pays 100% of tuition and fees for job related courses, conferences and workshops. Ongoing training is encouraged and supported. All staff are required to complete 10 hours of training each year. Interlake provides trainings several times a year through our in-services and our annual retreat. 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 has a weekly planning time during their regular schedule, giving them the opportunity to prepare curriculum and activities.

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), the 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.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING: 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 and so is an accusation of abuse. It can destroy a family, ruin a career and even put someone behind bars. Under Washington State law and licensing requirements (WAC 170-295-7060), 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 or by another staff member, she/he **MUST** make a report to Child Protective Services (CPS). It is up to a CPS case worker 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: A 501(c) 3 non-profit organization, Interlake is governed by a Board of Directors composed of current and former parents, and members outside of the Interlake community as well as a Staff Representative and the Executive Director. The Executive Director and Mentor Coordinator oversee the day-to-day operations of the center and the classrooms. The Mentor Coordinator's role is to ensure high quality programming for young children, including teacher supervision. In addition, he/she is responsible for overseeing curriculum in all three programs, maintaining strong family/program relationships and interpreting Interlake's mission in daily practices. The Board's responsibilities include: hiring and conducting performance reviews of the Executive Director; preparing the annual budget and setting 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 Program Coordinator supports the Executive Director and Mentor Coordinator in their staffing duties, helps to ensure high quality programming and curriculum, communicates daily and special events/information to families, and organizes community building events. The Enrollment Coordinator and the Office Administrator round out the administrative team. Each classroom also has a Mentor Teacher who leads, guides and supports that room's teaching team and takes the lead in bringing classroom projects to completion.

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, 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 in the classroom. Senior administrative staff (such as the Executive Director, Mentor Coordinator, and Program Coordinator) 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 may jeopardize child care arrangements of parents.

NEGOTIATING AND RESOLVING DIFFICULTIES: When parents or family members have questions or concerns regarding our programming or other practices, the first step is discussing classroom practices with the

teachers involved. We're happy to schedule a 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 our Office Administrator. 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.

OUR CLASSROOM PROGRAMS:

- **Infant Program** – Our primary role is establishing trusting relationships with the children and families 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 infant to walking “waddlers” (pre-toddlers), our teachers change-up the activities to support children's physical, social and cognitive development. These activities include regular visits to the toddler room in what we call our waddler program. One of the infant teachers accompanies the waddlers into the toddler room to provide more challenging activities and involves the youngest group of toddlers. We welcome moms who breastfeed. In the Infant Room, there is a cozy rocking chair in the sleep area, which provides a quiet(er) respite for this important practice. Our Toddler Room is more active, but we can arrange a comfy spot for breastfeeding if desired.
- **Toddler Program** – Children develop autonomy when adults give them opportunities to do things successfully on their own. We help children become autonomous 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. In addition to the regular activities of art, sensory, reading/storytelling, science, etc., we offer a weekly dance class and a Spanish language class (both have a summer hiatus) beginning in the toddler room and continuing into the preschool program. As toddlers reach approximately 2 ½ years old, their activities include regular visits to the Preschool Room as “Pre-Preschoolers”, where they explore the preschool classroom with a toddler teacher and have the opportunity for more challenging activities.
- **Preschool Program** – Children continue to develop their sense of autonomy while deepening their bonds with their peers. Dance and Spanish are also continued into the Preschool program. Children are very much encouraged to experiment, explore and pursue their own interests. Children grow in their abilities to compare and contrast their own experiences 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 complex social/emotional experiences that help children learn about and investigate their world. When children transition to another early childhood program or school, our teachers are able to provide consultation to their new teachers at parents' request. The child's primary teacher can also complete an assessment or evaluation for their new school, upon the parent's written request (can be a written or emailed notice).

CURRICULUM: Please see your classroom manual for more specific 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-bias 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.

We use an emergent curriculum framework, which focuses on observing children's interests and skills and creating a curriculum that responds to where the children are. Curriculum is planned, but is also what happens in the classroom as the children interact with each other and the activities.

We hold 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 play provides children opportunities to “practice” 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.

THE FOOD PROGRAM: Our Food Program Coordinator supports all classrooms through meal planning, cooking, and educating staff and children on nutrition and portion control. Menus are posted weekly in each classroom, outside the kitchen, on the office door, and on our website. Our vegetarian program uses organic milk and organic baby food. Toddlers and preschoolers are served breakfast, lunch and two afternoon snacks, prepared on site and from scratch. We emphasize fresh fruits and vegetables (frequently organic) as well as whole grains; and largely avoid the use of sugar, high sodium and processed 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 and strawberries for breakfast, black-bean blue cheese burgers with coleslaw and applesauce for lunch, and “school-made” scones or “fruit smoothies” for snack. We serve organic milk and water is available at all times.

We use family style dining in our preschool 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 toddler and preschool classrooms, recycling and composting are modeled and encouraged through curriculum and at mealtimes. With increasing independence, toddlers and preschoolers learn which parts of the meal are placed in recycling 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.
If you choose to provide a special treat for your child’s birthday celebration, or for some other occasion, please make sure it conforms to our food program practices (e.g. 100% fruit juice popsicles). Our cook and teachers will be glad to provide you with suggestions of appropriate treats.

ALL FOOD THAT COMES INTO THE CLASSROOM MUST BE NUT-FREE!!

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

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE/DISCIPLINE POLICY: By “discipline,” we mean guiding children’s behavior to help them gain control of themselves and to interact with others in a responsible manner. Indeed, this is the heart of our program: helping kids acquire the social and emotional self-management skills that are foundational for success as human beings. 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, humiliation and withdrawal of emotional support are never used. Corporal punishment is never used at Interlake by anyone, including parents, family members and guardians. We do not use time-outs in our classrooms. If a child is physically out of control, 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.

The child can return to their group when they’ve taken control of their bodies, can follow their teacher’s words and can be safe and kind with their friends. Reasons for rules and norms are always provided, alternatives and consequences are spelled out, and children learn over time how to help other children as well as themselves in following procedures for resolving disputes. Children will often test boundaries that teachers establish...this is how they learn if we say what we mean and mean what we say. We ask parents and family members to help us by being consistent with children in reinforcing typical classroom norms such as using kind words to express themselves, walking inside, running outside, cleaning up before going home, being gentle with each other’s bodies, etc.

HOW WE LET YOU KNOW HOW YOUR CHILD IS DOING: We want to keep you informed as to what and how your child is doing at Interlake. In all three classrooms, teachers are glad to talk with you as circumstances permit (i.e. when doing so doesn’t interfere with their primary responsibility of caring for the kids). Parents of infants and toddlers receive written daily reports, whereas families of preschoolers receive a weekly written report describing the week’s curriculum. Each child has a portfolio in which teachers put observations and anecdotal material, photos, representative artwork, etc.

You will receive additional written feedback during the time your child is enrolled in each classroom, as well as when your child moves from one classroom to the next. We will schedule a conference with you at least annually, usually as children are transitioning from one classroom to another. In addition, you may request a conference anytime you want to discuss questions or concerns that you may have, or gain more information about your child’s life at Interlake and their developmental progress.

CHILD OBSERVATIONS, ASSESSMENTS & 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, 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. Our program uses The Creative Curriculum Developmental Assessment in each classroom. This research-based assessment tool kit aids teachers in gathering data relevant to physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and language development, as well as special abilities and interests of infants, toddlers and preschoolers. During parent/teacher conferences, parents/guardians share information about their child and together, teachers and parents collaborate on developing curriculum and providing practice for building specific skills. The completed conference form (Individual Child’s Focus Report) is signed by the parent and the child’s teacher at the end of the conference. The family takes a copy of the Focus Report with them and a copy remains in the child’s file. Assessment portfolios are confidential and stored in each child’s file in a locked cabinet. Parents can access and review the assessment tool upon request. Assessments and other sensitive child and family information remain confidential.

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 170-295-4130). He/she also observes in other classrooms and is available to consult with parents and staff that have questions, concerns or are interested in community resource 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 Learning Plan (ILP), or in other ways collaborate to meet the needs of the child and family. We also contract with North Seattle Community College for a Parent Educator who is available for on-site training and consultation for families and staff concerning issues related to child development and other child-family related topics. Additional resources may be found on page 18.

ROUTINES:

Attendance and absence tips: You are legally responsible each day for signing your child in upon arrival and out upon departure. Sign-in sheets are located on clipboards in each classroom. Please sign-in using your full name and time of arrival and departure.

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, then indicate this on the sign in sheet, as well as on your child's daily report in the infant and toddler room or on the parent-teacher log book in the preschool room. If someone other than a parent/guardian is picking up your child, staff must ask for verification of identity 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 same day of care, and knowing whether your child will be gone helps us in responding to those requests.

We ask that parents and children wash their hands upon arrival to help keep "outside" germs out. Handwashing 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: You may supply us with cloth and/or disposable diapers. 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 the Center 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. We will work closely with you in helping train your child to use the toilet when and as it becomes appropriate. Children's interest in using the "potty" begins in the home. While our teachers are very interested in the parent's guidance, we follow the child's lead particularly when it comes to bodily functions. Children can be less motivated in learning how to use the toilet than their parents. Children should be competently and confidently using the toilet at home prior to our teachers managing this experience. Children in the toddler and preschool programs are offered to "try the potty" at regular times of day. If they decline (sometimes it's a blunt refusal), we let them know that their diaper will be changed and that they can try later.

Your child's clothing: Please provide your child with at least two complete changes of clothes. Children at Interlake spend time both indoors and outside. Toddlers and preschoolers, especially, have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of sometimes-messy activities. **Please label your child's clothes with a permanent marking pen in order to avoid items becoming lost or going home with someone else.** Weather

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

Personal possessions: Toys that children bring from home can be hard to share and are easily damaged or lost. Please don't bring them, with the exception of special items (e.g. a favorite blanket, a much loved stuffed animal) to make naptime more comfortable. Books and music are items that can be shared with groups and can be a welcome part of our curriculum and program planning, but **please LABEL, LABEL, LABEL any items from home, including shoes, boots, hats, and coats. Thanks for your help in tracking your child's personal items.** Please ... no toy weapons or toys that exemplify war, fighting or other potentially aggressive behavior.

Walks/field trips: One way we build a cohesive community is by giving children experiences outside of our doors. Infants and toddlers have carts to get out and about, exploring the neighborhood close by the Center. Walks are nearly a daily occurrence in our preschool program. 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.). In addition to community-based exploration, more extensive field trips are an important enhancement of our program. The preschoolers may go to the Zoo, the Pacific Science Center, and experience other fun Seattle activities; we also visit a Pumpkin Farm in the fall. Families are notified at least 24 hours in advance of any field trip. *Field trips can only happen with parent volunteers* (we keep child-to-adult ratios very low during out-of-neighborhood adventures). Teachers bring the classroom "grab-n-go" bags containing water and first aid supplies whenever they leave the premises with children.

We must have your written permission before your child participates in a field trip. If we are using public or private transportation, we will have you review and sign the agreement prior to the field trip. Commercial transportation used by Interlake requires their drivers pass a Criminal History Background check. Certain field trips may require an additional fee. Typically, we use Metro bus lines or other means of public transportation for field trips within the Seattle area.

On occasion, we may ask parents or staff to drive. Private drivers will have a separate agreement for the occasions where private transportation is necessary. The purpose of this form is to assure that vehicles used are legally safe and in good condition and that drivers are also legally safe drivers for our children.

Napping: To lower the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Washington Administrative Code (WAC 170-295-4100) requires that infants under one year old are laid on their back in an assigned crib. In our Infant program all children are laid to rest on their backs; if they roll over on their own, teachers let them be and do not wake or roll them back on to their backs. 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 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. Washington Administrative Code (WAC 170-295-4110) requires that any 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. Nap mats and nap sheets are provided by Interlake. Nap sheets are used by only one child at a time and are laundered weekly or more often as necessary. Nap mats are cleaned and sanitized weekly, unless needed more often. Families are asked to bring a nap blanket and any lovey or special friend that a child may need to comfortably rest at school. We require parents to take home nap blankets weekly for laundering.

We are required by licensing to provide a rest period (WAC 170-295-2050). 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 on their mats, such as reading, drawing, coloring, or story tapes.

Transitions: Most of our classroom transitions tend to happen in the summer and early fall, as spaces are made available through the graduation of preschoolers to Kindergarten. Transitions occur for children when are of age for the next classroom, when they are developmentally ready, and when there is space available.

Prior to children moving into a new classroom we conduct transition visits, which generally occur the month preceding the actual transition date. Visits start out brief, and become longer and include more activities in the new classroom each week. This helps children to get to know and become comfortable with their new teachers, peers, and classroom. These visits help to create smooth transitions, as children are ready for their new classroom and new routines by the time they move over.

Because our classrooms are multi-age, most children get the experience of being a younger child and an older child in each classroom. This provides for great learning opportunities, as younger children are given a “sneak peek” into the next stages of development and challenge activities, and older children become mentors and leaders in their classroom.

PARENT PARTICIPATION: Our non-profit program welcomes, and can only thrive, with help from parent 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 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 parent participation requirement of one hour per parent per month, and there are many ways you can complete your hours! The ways families get involved are varied and creative. One big 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 comprised of current parents and other family members/community members. Five parent committees – Community Building, Facilities, Fundraising, Diversity, and Technology – coordinate most parent involvement. 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! Many close parent 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 parents find a niche they enjoy here at Interlake, and go beyond the parent participation requirement of one hour per month per parent. Parents and other family members are encouraged to participate in evaluating our operations by completing an annual parent/family survey. Parents on active military service are exempt from performing Parent Participation Hours.

PRIVATE CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS WITH OFF-DUTY TEACHERS & 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 & Learning Center. From time to time, Interlake teachers and staff provide different types of services, such as off-hours child care, housesitting, pet care, etc. *Interlake is not responsible for private after hours 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 parents 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.

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 end-of-the-year Staff Bonus Campaign. We've 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. Many of our graduate families have donated their tuition deposit as they make their departure. Upon request, we're happy to write a receipt for tax purposes.

ILLNESS: Our job is to protect, as far as we can, the health and safety of children and our staff. Our illness exclusion is based on child care licensing and public health requirements. We post notices when cases of communicable diseases occur, as well report them to the local health department and our licensor. If exclusion due to contagious illness is necessary, parents and guardians will be called to pick-up children as soon as possible. Children must be absent from child care 24 hours after symptoms cease. They can return when they're symptom-free without fever reducers (i.e. Tylenol, etc.). If your child is staying home sick, please call to let us know their symptoms, as we may need to post a health notice. We also just like to know how your child is doing!

Virginia Mason Hospital's TLC (Tender Loving Care) program provides child care for mildly ill children over the age of 12 months. The phone number for TLC is (206) 583-6521.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR EXCLUDING ILL CHILDREN:

Children with any of the following symptoms are not permitted to remain in care:

1. Fever of at least 100 ° F as read under arm (ancillary temp.), accompanied by one or more of the following:
 - diarrhea or vomiting
 - earache
 - headache
 - signs of irritability or confusion
 - sore throat
 - rash
 - fatigue or discomfort that limits participation in daily activities

No rectal or ear temperatures are taken. Digital thermometers are used.

2. Vomiting: 2 or more occasions within the past 24 hours.
3. Diarrhea: 3 or more watery stools within the past 24 hours, or any bloody stool.
4. Rash, especially with fever or itching.

5. Eye discharge or conjunctivitis (pinkeye) until clear of drainage or until 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
6. Sick appearance, not feeling well, and/or not able to keep up with program activities.
7. Open or oozing sores, unless properly covered and 24 hours has passed since starting antibiotic treatment, if antibiotic treatment is necessary.
8. Lice or scabies:
 - Head lice: until no nits are present.
 - Scabies: until after treatment is begun.

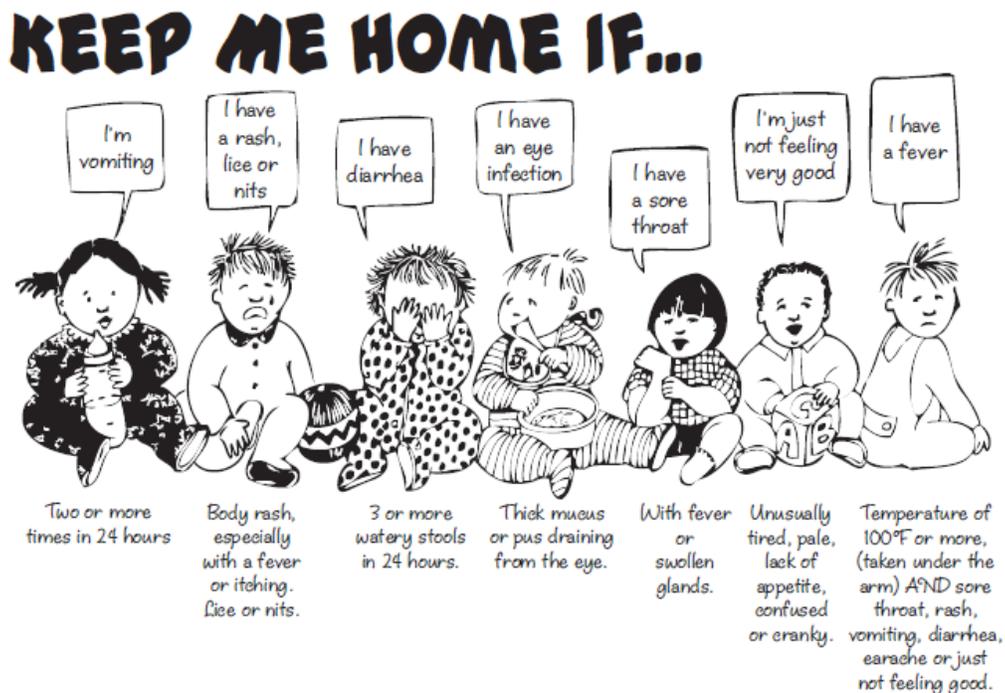
HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES: Staff are required to have first aid, CPR, HIV/AIDS, and Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP) training. In case of minor injury or accident, staff will administer basic first aid. In case of serious injury, staff will call 911 and then immediately contact the parents. If the child needs to be transported to a hospital, a staff member will accompany the child until the parents are 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 parent pocket in your child's classroom for you to take home, and the copy is placed 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.

MEDICATION: For all medication administered by Interlake staff, prior written consent of the child's parent/legal guardian must be on file. The consent (The Medication Authorization Form) includes 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. Parents/legal guardians fill out the Medication Authorization to give written consent for staff to administer, and staff document on the back of the form when they administer any medication. Medications are always stored out of reach of children. Staff are responsible for storing and retrieving medication from the various locations throughout the center. Medications are stored in the main cabinet in the infant room, on top of the refrigerator in the toddler room and in the First Aid cabinet in the upstairs Preschool room for preschoolers. Medicine that needs refrigeration is stored in a separate box in each refrigerator in the infant and toddler refrigerator and in the kitchen refrigerator for preschoolers. Parents are notified if a child's medication isn't administered. Parents/guardians will need to fill out the Individual Child Health Care Plan for children with allergies, asthma, or other ongoing health concerns, including the need for any rescue medications or breathing treatments (albuterol). Parents are required to take all unused and expired medication out of the building.

FIRE DRILLS/EARTHQUAKE/DISASTER POLICY: 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 and serviced annually. Staff have been trained in how to use fire extinguishers. 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.

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 (toddlers and preschoolers) and staff. Infant room parents are required to have an earthquake kit on hand for their babies at Interlake. Infant kits should include formula, bottles, diapers and extra clothing for 3 days. For toddlers and preschoolers 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.



WHEN YOUR CHILD IS SICK:

1. HAVE PLANS FOR BACK UP CHILD CARE.
2. TELL YOUR CAREGIVER WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOUR CHILD, EVEN IF YOUR CHILD STAYS HOME.

Public Health
Seattle & King County

WELCOME TO INTERLAKE!

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.org), email, Facebook, and the parent pockets located in each classroom.

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.

Additional Resources

Child Care Resources: 206.329.1011/childcare.org

Child care information and support for families and professionals

Seattle Milk Fund: 206.526.7944/seattlemilkfund.org

A non-profit organization that provides temporary emergency assistance, educational aid, and child care grants in the Seattle area.

City of Seattle – Child Care Subsidy Program: 206.386.1050

FamilyWorks Food Bank and Resource Center: 206.694.6727/familyworksseattle.org

Wallingford area food bank and family resource center

Program for Early Parent Support (PEPS): 206.547.8570/peps.org

Office of the Education Ombudsman www.waparentslearn.org 1.800.737.0617. 1.866.297.2597 OEO is committed to strengthening school and family partnerships

Thrive by Five: 206.621.5555/thrivebyfivewa.org

Experimental Education Unit, University of Washington: 206.543.4011/haringcenter.washington.edu/eeu

Poison Control: 800.222.1222

Children’s Hospital: 206.987.2000/seattlechildrens.org

Seattle King County Public Health Department: 206.296.4755

Please sign and date this form and return it to the office so that we can document your file with this agreement.

INTERLAKE CHILD CARE & LEARNING CENTER

**4927 Greenlake Way N.
Seattle, WA 98103-6734
(206) 632-6479
FAX #: 547-8465
admin@interlakechildcare.org**

I acknowledge that I have received and read the **INTERLAKE CHILD CARE & LEARNING CENTER FAMILY HANDBOOK** and understand its provisions.

Signed _____

Dated _____