



PARENT HANDBOOK

UPDATED 2014

Next Horizons is in collaboration with  
Tempe Elementary School District #3  
School of Family and Social Dynamics  
Arizona State University  
Tempe Union High School District  
Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Program

### Mission Statement

Next Horizons Child Care Development Center, LLC is a collaboration of community resources for the benefit of the children, families, and communities that are served.

**Introduction**

Next Horizons' offers childcare for children ages two weeks to kindergarten-ready age. The center is a project in collaboration with Tempe Elementary School District #3 and Arizona State University. Next Horizons is licensed by the Department of Health Services (DHS). The Department is located at 150 N. 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 400, Phoenix, AZ 85507-3244. The telephone number is 602-364-2539. All records of inspection are available from the DHS or in Next Horizons.

The center provides an infant and toddler program for young children between two weeks of age and approximately three years. The preschool program is open to children ages three through five years.

**Staffing**

The program uses a Primary Caregiver Model for infants and young toddlers. The children are assigned to a specific caregiver, who works with the family to provide care that meets the individual needs of the child within the confines of a group care setting. Staff members receive ongoing training in child development with a particular emphasis on the very young child. Children transition from the infant classroom to the toddler rooms when staff and family feel the child is ready for the new environment.

In the preschool rooms, a Lead Teacher is assisted by Assistant Lead Teachers and undergraduate college students who work as classroom assistants.

The center's professional staff work under the supervision of Next Horizons' Co-Directors – Robin West and Harveen Sethi.

**Ratios and Group Sizes**

Next Horizons follows recommendation of research and leading professional organizations for setting adult to child ratios and classroom group size. Infants are served in groups of no more than 9 with a ratio of 1 adult for every 3 infants. Toddlers are served in groups of no more than 15 with a ratio of 1 adult for every 4 children. Preschool age children are in groups of no more than 18, with a ratio of 1 adult for every 6 children.

**Employee Childcare**

Next Horizons' provides childcare to employees of the Tempe Elementary School District and Arizona State University.

**Enrollment Eligibility**

Tempe Elementary District 3 employees, Teen Parents, and students and staff of Arizona State University have priority enrollment at Next Horizons. Community (all other) families are admitted to Next Horizons only when prioritized populations do not use childcare slots.

## **Sharing Curriculum with Families**

Next Horizons is founded on the philosophy that childcare programs are an extension of home and family. In accordance with this philosophy, the center provides a family style environment that is warm and nurturing, as well as educational and stimulating. We believe that childhood needs to be a time of fun, joy, and exploration. Our goal is to partner with families to provide a safe, healthy and enriched environment for each child.

We recognize that children develop through their experiences: physically, emotionally, and socially, as well as intellectually. We strive to create an atmosphere and an environment in which the child may explore and discover the world about him/her right to those experiences. Familiarity with growth patterns enables our staff to plan a program that is developmentally appropriate for each child. We believe that children need to have an environment that allows them to learn at their own pace in a way that is challenging and leads to success. We also believe that an important function of a childcare center is to provide service, support, and assistance to parents. Next Horizons serves as an educational resource for parents and provides support to help with the everyday challenges of parenting.

The educational philosophy is based on and consistent with the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriately Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8. This statement represents the consensus of hundreds of early childhood professionals, teacher educators and scholars. It provides the framework for the adult-child interactions and for curriculum planning in the program. Copies of NAEYC's Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice are located in the office.

Developmental appropriateness, according to the NAEYC Position Statement (Bredekamp, 1987) has two dimensions:

1. **Developmental Appropriateness.** Human development research indicates that there are universal, predictable sequences of growth and change that occur in the children during the first 9 years of life. The predictable changes occur in all domains of development – physical, emotional, social, and cognitive. Knowledge of typical development of children within the age span served by the program provides a framework from which teachers prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences.
2. **Individual Appropriateness.** Each child is a unique person with an individual personality, learning style, and family background. Both the curriculum and adults' interactions with the child should be responsive to individual differences. Learning in young children is a result of interaction between child's thoughts and experiences with materials, ideas and people. These experiences should match the child's abilities, while also challenging the child's interest and understanding.

Developmentally appropriate curriculum is based on the premise that play is the primary medium through which young children develop intellectual, social, and perceptual motor competence. Structuring the environment and planning activities for self directed play is a fundamental part of the education program. Curriculum activities include pretend play, open-ended creative and sensory experiences (painting, sand and water play, modeling clay, collage activities, etc.) construction activities with blocks and manipulative toys, mathematics and language games, gardening, cooking activities, and science experiences.

The program also includes daily teacher-led “group times” during which time the children gather for creative movement activities, musical experiences, stories and games.

Next Horizons also aligns its curriculum to match Arizona Early Learning Standards.

### **Program Policies**

#### **Enrollment and Registration**

Tempe Elementary District employees, Teen Parents, and students and staff of Arizona State University have priority for enrollment at Next Horizons. Community (all other) families are admitted to Next Horizons only when the prioritized populations do not use childcare slots. Next Horizons operates a waiting list based on affiliation and sequence of application. Next Horizons enrolls children beginning at 2 weeks of age, through the kindergarten-ready age.

#### **Transition Plan**

##### ***Into The Program***

- A guided tour with one of the Co-Directors (Harveen Sethi or Robin West).
- Tour of at least two other child care facilities
- Observation of classroom and teachers
- \$125 non-refundable registration fee
- Parent Handbook

##### **Forms:**

- Enrollment Application
- Emergency Information
- Allergy Form
- Payment Contract
- Child Information Sheet
- General Consent Form
- Immunization Records (all children must provide up-to-date immunization records before attending the center.)

Additional forms may be required. All forms must be completed and returned to the center on or before the child’s first day. Parents are responsible for notifying Next Horizons staff immediately of changes in the emergency information on file at the center.

**Timeline** – Minimum of one week prior to child starting school, through the first week of school.

**Activities** – Tour, classroom visit, introductions, observations, forms and welcome.

Next Horizons provides services for special needs children on a case by case basis.

### ***Within The Program***

Next Horizons strongly believes in continuity and consistency in care giving. Once children have transitioned to the one year old room, they will typically remain with their peer group along with a primary caregiver. At least one consistent caregiver will loop up with the children into their new classroom to provide that continuity. Many of the children in our program remain with the same caregiver for five years until they move on to Kindergarten.

When considering transitions, the teachers and Director will meet to discuss each child's developmental needs. If it is agreed that a child is ready to transition to a new group, the move will take place gradually. New teachers/caregiver will visit the child in current classroom before child begins visiting their new room. The child will spend a minimum of one week visiting his/her new classroom.

Parents will be informed of when transition will be taking place. They will be introduced to new teachers and new classroom. Parents will visit new classroom and will be provided with copy of transition plan.

**Timeline** – One week before and one week after child moves to new room.

**Activities** – meeting, planning, notification and visits.

### ***Exiting the Program***

Parents are required to give a written full month notice when withdrawing their child from the program. Parents are responsible for paying tuition through the last day of enrollment. A refund is only given when tuition has been pre-paid and exceeds the month notice criteria. Teachers will discuss the transition in an age appropriate way in the classroom to help prepare the child for the change.

**Timeline** – 30 days before child's last day of enrollment

**Activities** – written notification, developmentally appropriate discussions and goodbye

### ***Into Kindergarten***

We will begin discussing Kindergarten in early September in the pre-k classroom. We will have visits from Kindergarten teachers in late fall and early spring. We will skype with teachers in Kindergarten classroom and begin building the bridge between pre-k and kindergarten. Two to three months before Kindergarten, we will ask each family the name of their child's new school so that we can begin talking to the children about their new school. At the end of the school year a Pre-K graduation ceremony will be held so that families and friends can celebrate the child's accomplishments.

**Timeline** – All year before kids are supposed to transition into Kindergarten through first few months of Kindergarten.

**Activities** – parent involvement, practice, discussions, graduation and goodbyes.

### **Tuition**

- Tuition is due on the first of each month. A late fee of \$25 may be assessed after the fifth of each month unless special arrangements have been made with the Director. Enrollment will be cancelled if an account is 30 days past due.
- **NOTE: Tuition is not a pro-rated for absences due to illness, family vacations, etc.**
- A \$25.00 fee will be charged for any returned checks.
- Next Horizons is a Quality First school and offers scholarships to qualifying families. Please ask one of the Directors for more information.
- Tuition is paid by check or money order. The center does accept cash payments.
- Tuition checks should be made payable to **Horizon Child Care Foundation** Please include your child's name on the check. Payments are to be placed in the tuition container on the desk in the main office.
- Fees are figured on an annual basis (July 1 through June 30) payable in twelve equal monthly installments.
- Each month's tuition is the same – regardless of number of days open, illness or vacations.

**A \$125.00 registration fee is due annually for all families enrolled.**

### **Schedule of Operations**

The center is open Monday through Friday 7:00 Am – 5:30 PM. The center follows the Tempe Elementary School District and the Tempe Union High School District calendars. Next Horizons is closed for all school holidays, for approximately two weeks during the winter recess, for Spring Break, and for the first week in July. The center is also closed for the three staff in-service days per year. Annual calendars are distributed to enrolled families each year and are also available in the office.

### **Arrival and Departure**

**Please park on the curb alongside the playground on Carter Rd. Do not park in the zones marked no parking (you will be ticketed). When entering or leaving our facility, please make sure you latch the gate and do not leave it open for anyone to ensure the safety of the children playing on the playground.**

**Children must be signed in and out daily.** Please write clearly the time of arrival, the time of departure and your **FULL signature in black ink.** Sign in/out books are located at the entrance to each classroom.

Persons authorized to pick up each child from Next Horizons will be listed upon enrollment on that child's emergency card. **Any persons** picking up a child at Next Horizons may be asked to present photo identification. Persons authorized, yet unfamiliar to the staff, **must** present photo identification to the staff upon arrival at the center.

On those days when someone else will pick up your child you must notify the office, your child's teacher, and your child, if age appropriate, as to who will be taking him/her home. If an emergency arises and pick-up plans change, call and notify the office.

If due to an emergency, you will be late picking up the child, you must call. A fee of \$5.00 for each five minutes will be charged for late departure. Parents are required to provide the center with a password to be said when identifying themselves over the phone if a call is made to authorize a person to pick-up their child.

**Transportation** Next Horizons does not provide transportation for childcare or any events.

### **Food Program**

Next Horizons follows a "Safe and Healthy Food" policy. Food and drinks provided by the center, as well as those brought from home and served at Next Horizons, should represent a balanced healthy nutritional routine for children. All food allergies must be reported to your child's teacher, and listed on the emergency card in the office.

### **Infants**

Parents provide all bottles, drinks and food for infants enrolled at Next Horizons. All bottles brought to the center must be pre-mixed and labeled with the child's first and last name. Parents must supply one bottle for every feeding their child will need in the day. One additional bottle must also be brought in the event your child is extra hungry, or if another bottle breaks or spills. All bottles are emptied and rinsed after each feeding. Cereal may not be mixed into the bottles. Parents will provide information to the caregivers about feeding infants. Parents must inform their child's caregiver of any changes to eating patterns, formulas or foods. Only pre-mixed formula, water, breast milk, or 100% juice, may be served. If breast milk is brought to the center, it must be clearly labeled with date. Next Horizons follows the infant feeding guidelines as they appear in the "Safe and Healthy Foods Policy".

### **Toddler and Preschool**

A morning and an afternoon snack are provided by Next Horizons each day for the toddler and preschool rooms. Menus are posted on the parent information board. Parents are required to provide lunches and beverages each day.

Next Horizons emphasizes that all lunches contain healthy and nutritious foods. Food from home should come ready to serve or ready to heat and serve: foods cut to the size appropriate to the child's age, foods in microwave safe containers (staff may not transfer foods into a second container). Parents must also supply a labeled sippy cup, or other drinking container, each day. All food must be brought in a labeled lunch box or bag.

Next Horizons reserves the right to refrain from serving foods that appear unsafe (choking hazards) or are not in accordance with our "Safe and Healthy Food Policy". Food and beverages will be refrigerated. Breakfast food may be brought from home to be served at the time posted in the classroom. The center will not re-heat leftovers. All perishable lunch items that are not eaten during lunch will be discarded.

## **FRUIT JUICE POLICY**

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that preschool children drink no more than four to six ounces of 100% fruit juice each day. If consumed in excess, children will fill up on juice and may eat less of nutritious foods during meals and snacks. Too much juice may also provide more calories than needed and expose children's teeth to too much sugar. Fruits and vegetables provide more fiber and less sugar than 100% fruit juice.

Next Horizons adheres to the following fruit juice guidelines:

- Birth through 11 months:  
Fruit juice shall not be served.
- One year and older:  
Fruit juice shall not be served more than two times per week. - Only 100% fruit juice with no added sugar shall be served. - Only 4-6 ounces shall be served at one time. - Fruit juice shall only be served with meals and snacks and not continuously throughout the day.
- Water shall be used as the first choice for thirst.
- Water shall be offered throughout the day.

Information on fruit juice (in English and Spanish) will be made available to families at least once per year.

## **Safe and Healthy Foods Policy**

### **Safe Foods**

Next Horizons staff reserves the right to not serve foods to infants or toddlers that appear unsafe (choking hazard). The following foods are examples of foods that children are most likely to gag and choke on: popcorn, round candy, meat chunks, apple chunks, hotdogs, grapes, raw carrots, nuts, hard cookies, peanut butter sandwiches.

Staff supervises mealtime and snacks and does not leave children unattended when they are eating.

## **Healthy Foods**

### **Infants**

Next Horizons follows the attached guidelines for feeding infants. If a parent asks the center to serve a food before the appropriate age according to these guidelines, the parents will be asked to supply the center with a note from the doctor authorizing that the child receive the specific food. The following are examples of this:

\*A parent comes to the center and wants the staff to serve cereal to her 1-month-old daughter. The staff asks for a note from the doctor because the guidelines specify that infants are not introduced to cereal until 4 months of age.

\*A parent brings whole milk for her 7-month-old infant to the center. Infants should remain on formula for their first full year of life, so the staff will request a note from the doctor.

In addition, we will only serve bottles that contain formula, breast milk, 100% fruit juice, water, milk, soy milk, goat's milk or other nutritious and age appropriate beverages. It is against state regulations, and Next Horizons policy, for infants to be served liquids at the center such as punch Kool-Aid, Jell-o water, etc. Any drinks of this kind will be sent home at the end of the day.

### **BREASTFEEDING POLICY**

Next Horizons is committed to providing ongoing support to breastfeeding mothers and will respect a mother's decision to continue to breastfeed her child. In keeping with this philosophy, our facility will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere that encourages mothers to initiate and continue to breastfeed, even after returning to school or work.
- Provide a designated place for mothers to breastfeed their child on site (such as a rocking chair).
- Provide a refrigerator for storage of expressed breast milk.

Information on breastfeeding (in English and Spanish) will be available to families at least once per year

### **Toddlers and preschool**

Parents provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks by following the attached food pyramid. By bringing your children lots of foods from the 5 food groups at the bottom of the pyramid, parents are providing the nutritious growing toddlers need. Foods that contain high contents of fats, oil, and sugar should be used sparingly as they provide little if any nutrition.

Please refer to snack food lists and menus for specific foods served at Next Horizons.

### **Birthdays**

For children's birthday celebrations at Next Horizons, we wish to make the occasion special and memorable for each child. We also wish to make birthday celebrations at school which complement our general philosophies and policies. Parents who wish to bring special snacks to school are invited to bring in treats in accordance with our "Safe

and Healthy Food” policy. So suggestions include: yogurt and fruit sundaes, smoothies, frozen juice pops, pancakes, or another favorite healthy food. The children in the classroom may be able to prepare the snack as part of the birthday celebration. Parents are most welcome to participate in this classroom cooking experience.

Other successful birthday celebrations at school have included a special book to read at school or a special craft activity. Parent visits are encouraged on birthdays (and everyday).

Please talk with your child’s teacher for other suggestions. And so that we can plan for the special day, please make arrangements with your child’s teacher one week prior to your child’s birthday.

### **CACFP POLICY**

We at Next Horizons are committed to the health of all of our children. CACFP supports child care facilities by making child care more affordable for many low-income families while promoting good eating habits. Eligibility for CACFP is determined by federal standards based on family income within established geographic boundaries. Our facility will check and document eligibility for CACFP.

At this time, Next Horizons does not participate in the CACFP.

If you would like additional information regarding eligible family enrollment, please contact CACFP at 1-800-352-4558.

### **FAMILY-STYLE MEALS POLICY**

Next Horizons is committed to creating a pleasant mealtime for all children and staff. We recognize that family-style meal service has many benefits in child care settings, like allowing teachers, caregivers and children to eat together and creating a relaxed environment. Also, this method is ideal to provide a conversational environment where children not only develop good social skills, but can also learn good eating habits.

Next Horizons subscribes to the recommendations below at mealtime for children one year of age and older:

- Food is placed on the table in serving bowls, plates or baskets.
- There are child-friendly serving utensils for food. Staff will participate, sit and interact with children at mealtime.
- Food is passed from one person to another. Everyone serves him/herself (or receives assistance as needed).
- Children choose what to put on their plates and how much to eat. There is adequate food on the table for all children and adults.
- Encouraging words are used and negative facial expressions, body language or verbal cues are avoided in regards to the food being served.
- Staff will talk to the children about the food and encourage them to discuss the food texture, taste, color, shape, size, quantity, number, temperature, etc.
- Staff will not use food as a reward or punishment. Staff will model family-style practices and etiquette for children.

- Staff will be prepared for spills and accidents (e.g., keep a towel and soapy water nearby).

Healthy eating handouts (in English and Spanish) will be made available for the families at least once per year.

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY**

We at Next Horizons are committed to our children's health. We encourage all children to participate in a variety of physical activity opportunities that are appropriate for their age, that are fun, and that offer variety. If children are inactive for long periods of time they can be at risk for problems associated with being overweight. In keeping with this philosophy, our facility will follow the guidelines below:

- Infants under the age of 12 months will participate in tummy time and age-appropriate activities as enjoyed by the child.
- All children over the age of one are provided at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day, including both teacher-led and free-play activities in accordance with the Empower guidelines.
- Staff will encourage moderate and vigorous levels of physical activity.
- Every child will have the opportunity to participate in outdoor physical activity.
- We encourage children to be active throughout the day exploring their environment by limiting sedentary activities to fewer than 60 minutes at a time (except during nap time).
- Screen time is not permitted for children under the age of two and limited to special occasions (parent fun night, rainy days, etc)
- No screen time during meal or snack time.
- Physical activity is never used or withheld as punishment.
- Information on screen time (in English and Spanish) will be made available to families at least once per year.

## **SUN SAFETY POLICY**

We at Next Horizons are committed to our children's health and protecting children from the sun's rays during outdoor activities. In keeping with this philosophy, our facility will:

- Ask the child's family to apply sunscreen prior to arriving at our child care facility.
- Ask the child's family to provide a hat, sunglasses, and/or long sleeve clothing for their child that staff will put on the child when outdoors.
- Check with the child's family before applying sunscreen.
- Provide shade during outdoor activities.
- Limit outdoor activities between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm, when the UV rays are at their highest level.

- Regularly check the UV Index for the intensity of the sun's rays and plan for outdoor activities accordingly.
- Be a role model for sun safe practices.
- Limit sun exposure for children under 12 months old.
- Follow guidelines in the Empower Guidebook on protecting infants, toddlers and older children from harmful sun rays (see guidebook).

Information on sun safety (in English and Spanish) will be available to families at least once per year.

## **SMOKE-FREE CAMPUS POLICY**

We at Next Horizons are committed to providing a smoke-free environment for children and staff. Due to acknowledged hazards arising from exposure to second-hand smoke and as a recognized Empower child care facility, it shall be the policy of this child care facility to provide a tobacco-free environment for staff, children and parents.

### **Policy:**

Next Horizons is a smoke-free campus. Smoking and the use of tobacco products are prohibited at all parts of the campus including the parking lot. This applies to all employees, parents, visitors, contractors, subcontractors, volunteers and other guests in the child care buildings, grounds or properties.

Next Horizons adheres to the following guidelines:

All applicants for employment will be informed of the smoke-free policy prior to the applicant accepting an offer of employment. This policy will be reviewed at New Hire Orientation and through internal communications. Employees, parents and visitors will be notified of the policy. Appropriate smoke-free campus signage will be posted. This child care facility will make tobacco cessation treatment programs available to employees, parents and visitors, utilizing the Arizona Smokers' Helpline (ASHLine) as a referral resource.

### **Illness**

Next Horizons does not have a nurse on staff. Therefore, parents are responsible for checking their child for symptoms of illness prior to arrival at the center. Staff will perform routine health checks also. A child should remain at home, or will be sent home, if he or she has any of the following symptoms of illness:

1. A **temperature of 100° F** or higher. Whenever a child has a fever he/she may not return to school until fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducers (Tylenol, Panadol, etc.)
2. **Vomiting** within the last 24 hours.
3. **Diarrhea** more than twice in the last 24 hours, or which is uncontrollable by diapers/clothing.

4. Any undiagnosed or contagious **rash**.
5. If your child is not well enough to participate in the entire program, including outdoor activities, he/she should remain at home.

In some cases the parent may be asked to provide a statement from the doctor stating that the child may return to group care.

In addition to the possibility of spreading illness, children with these symptoms within the past 24 hours are likely to be somewhat miserable. They likely will find coping with out program very difficult.

If you are uncertain about whether or not to bring your child to school, please call.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will telephone a parent to request that the child be taken home. Parents are required to supply the center with current emergency phone numbers. It is the parent's responsibility to provide new phone numbers and any other updates to the emergency card.

If your child contracts any contagious illness or disease such as measles, chicken pox, pinkeye, etc. Please contact us so we may notify other families.

Whenever your child is absent, please call the center.

**A list of illness and accidents is posted in each classroom—please check with your child's teacher for location.**

**A complete list of all reported illnesses is posted in the office on the "Parent Board".**

### **Medication**

Prescription medication will be administered to a child only under the following conditions:

1. A medication form is signed by the parent stating prescription number and name of medicine; instructions for giving medicine including the dosage amount, time of day and dates for medicine to be given.
2. The medication is accompanied by the written prescription, and is brought in the original container.

**Non-prescription medication** will be given only when accompanied by written directions from the child's doctor specifying medication to be given, dosage and times.

In order to monitor the administration of medication closely, the following procedure is used:

1. A medication form is signed by the parent stating prescription number and name of medicine; instructions for giving medicine including the dosage amount, time of day and dates for medicine to be given.

2. The medication is accompanied by the written prescription, and is brought in the original container labeled with child's full name.

All medicines are kept in a locked container in the school office. Refrigerated medication is kept in a locked box in the office refrigerator. Posted in the office and classrooms is a list of designated staff persons who may administer medication. Medication forms are kept on the designated clipboard until the medication is finished, then they are filed in the child's records.

Medication may not be left at the center overnight. The center may discard any medication left at the center.

### **ORAL HEALTH POLICY**

We at Next Horizons are committed to protecting the health and safety of our students and staff in regards to tooth decay, which is an infectious disease and a serious problem among young children in Arizona. Our facility recognizes that we play an important role in preventing tooth decay and in educating children, their families and staff on tooth decay prevention. In keeping with this philosophy, our facility will:

- Provide oral health education once a month OR implement a tooth brushing program.
- Guide our staff members on steps they can take to prevent tooth decay according to the age appropriate guidelines in the Empower Guidebook.

Information on tooth decay prevention (in English and Spanish) will be made available to families at least once per year

### **Accidents and Injuries**

Accidents and injuries are reported to parents on "ouch reports". The report is completed in duplicate by the staff member(s) who witnessed the accident, and is placed in the parent folder in the child's room. The second copy is filed in the child's records. Parents receiving an ouch report are encouraged to check with their child's teacher for more details about the incident.

### **Emergency Medical Plan**

In case of a serious injury or sudden illness the child is isolated from other children and first aid is administered as needed. The 911 system is called when necessary along with the child's parent, or emergency contact. The child's health record is pulled and checked for any allergies. An emergency medical plan is posted in each room. A list of staff currently holding **CPR** and First Aid cards is also posted in each room. Next Horizons exceeds the requirement for the Department of Health and Services which states that at least one staff member must be on the premises at all times who has current **CPR** and First Aid training and certification. Typically all lead and assistant teachers, as well as the Director, have current cards.

### **Self Toileting**

In keeping with Next Horizons' philosophy of respect for individual difference in development, the center supports each child's unique timetable for achieving independence in toileting. We encourage families and staff to watch for a combination of the following indicators as signs of a child's readiness for self-toileting:

- 1) She/he is over the excitement of learning to walk and is ready to sit down. In other words the very young toddler seems overwhelmed just with the discovery of walking! The child is on the move most of the time and is not interested in activities that involve sitting for an extended period.
- 2) He/she will understand words and concepts such as "this is where we go to the bathroom" (or other similar words) and can let adults know when they have to use the toilet. Most children get very busy with other activities while at the center. A child who is ready for toilet training, is able to stop what they are doing and let someone know they need to toilet or will do so on their own.
- 3) She/he has enough bowel and bladder control to be dry for long periods of time and is aware of the urge to go to the bathroom. Bowel and bladder control comes with maturation of the large and fine muscles (parts of muscle and neurological maturation.) Several areas of the body need to coordinate before self-toileting is possible. This is a part of each child's unique development and varies from child to child.
- 4) He/she must have the physical readiness coupled with the desire in order to proceed successfully with self-toileting. Parents and caregivers work together before beginning toilet training at the center.

### **Guidance/Discipline Policies**

The purpose of discipline is to help children learn ways of behaving that are acceptable to themselves and others. With young children this usually means setting limits for their safety, the safety of others, and the safety of property.

### **Infant and Toddler Program**

Infants and toddlers need to be reassured that the people who care for them will guide and protect them. In the process of exploring their environment (as well as other children nearby!) very young children may attempt to pull another child's hair, poke at them, or even bite them. These behaviors will be handled on an individual basis and will require a variety of responses from staff depending on the situation. It is important that children learn what they do affects others. This aids in the development of empathy. Comforting, intervening, and redirecting all have their place in guiding very young children. Staff members are trained to understand when behavior is developmental and when it is out of the ordinary. Staff and parents will work together to find solutions which work for all concerned. Communication with all parents and staff, as well as the children involved is fundamental to guiding children. Staff and parents are encouraged to initiate communication about any concerns. Together, we can develop effective and appropriate strategies to help children in our care.

## **Preschool Program**

Teachers facilitate the development of self-control in children by using positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to a more acceptable activity, and setting clear limits. Adults show respect for the child at all times by accepting and validating the child's feelings even if the behavior is not acceptable. Teachers and caregivers work to find a way for the child to feel good about himself/herself and to accomplish what he/she wants to do in an appropriate manner.

## **Child Assessment Procedures**

Assessment of child growth and development is an ongoing process that takes place throughout the school year. The CDC Act Early developmental checklist will be filled out for each child ages birth to three. The Teaching Strategies Gold assessment tool will be used for children ages 3-5. These tools will be used when parent or a teacher has a concern about a child's growth or development. Teacher will collect data throughout the year as evidence for the assessment tools. Methods of evidence are anecdotal notes, pictures, checklists and examples of the child's work.

Parent teacher conferences will be offered semi-annually or as needed.

Children not meeting developmental milestones will be referred by either of the co-directors for further evaluation through AZEIP or the local school district.

## **Screening and Referral Policy**

A developmental checklist will be completed by teachers once in the fall and once in the spring for each child. Results will be discussed with families and will be used to set individual goals and guide lesson planning.

Vision, hearing and dental screenings will be conducted once a year by the BASICS program and by the Tooth Doctor for kids program.

Concerns with children's developmental growth will be discussed with parents and referred to AZEIP or local school district.

## **Field Trips**

### **Infant and Toddler**

Although infants and toddlers do not take field trips off campus, we will take walks or stroller rides around the school campus. A permission slip is kept in your child's file allowing us to take them around the campus.

## **Preschool Program**

Field trips are a part of the preschool curriculum. We are fortunate to have resources on Evans/Compadre school campus that allows us to take walking field trips. These field trips are planned according to the interest and development level of the children.

During enrollment, parents are given the opportunity to sign a permission slip allowing their children to take part in our field trips on the Evans/Compadre campus. In addition, each time a trip is planned, the parent will be notified in writing as to the location of the trip. This notification will be at least 24 hours before the trip occurs. Parents are welcome and encouraged to join us on any field trip.

For each event, the children will wear a name tag with the child's family name and Next Horizon's name and phone number. The teachers will carry the signed permission slips, the class attendance list, a first aid kit, and the children's emergency cards.

### **Labeling**

Next Horizons requires that all bottles, pacifiers, diaper bags, eating utensils, cups, food containers, lunch boxes, backpacks, car seats and extra clothing be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name. If your child has a special blanket or stuffed animal it also must be labeled. Please note that daily washing causes labels to wear off, and they should be checked frequently. Labeling helps eliminate any potential mix-ups in food service, and with identifying belongings at the end of the day.

### **Diaper Bags**

Parents of infants and toddlers are asked to bring a labeled diaper bag or another similar bag to hold children's belongings. On a daily basis, bags should contain 10 diapers, wipes, and an extra set of clean clothes. Diaper bags may also contain extra non-perishable food, labeled pacifiers, or a favorite toy. **Diaper bags may not contain anything that could be potentially dangerous to children. This includes but is not limited to make-up, medications, matches or lighters, markers, pens and keys.** In the event that staff may find potentially harmful items, they are required by law to remove them from the diaper bag and place them in a locked box or cabinet.

### **Toys**

Next Horizons provides a rich learning and play environment. We ask that toys from home remain at home or in the car. Special exceptions will be made for children who require a special "cuddly" or blanket for rest time, or have an emotional need for that item during the day. Any toys brought to the center must be stored in the child's diaper bag or cubbies until they are picked up. NH is not responsible for any toys brought to the center. **NO TOY WEAPONS OF ANY KIND ARE ALLOWED AT THE CENTER.** A particular classroom may have a special sharing day for toys from home. Your child's teacher will keep you informed of these special events.

### **Clothing**

Please send your child in play clothes. Creative arts activities using paint, glue, markers,

and messy play are important parts of early childhood curriculum and are available daily. Although we do use aprons and paint shirts during messy activities, paint inevitably finds its way onto children's clothes. Even the water-bases, "washable" materials used at Next Horizons stain some fabrics. We want the children to feel free to explore and create without being overly concerned about keeping clean.

Clothes should allow for the freedom of movement and allow children to manage themselves for toileting. For toddlers and preschoolers, shoes must be worn or brought each day. Shoes should provide traction needed for climbing, biking, running, and jumping. Closed-toed shoes are recommended as they provide the best protection for feet and toes during activities such as biking and climbing.

Note: the infant and toddler rooms use a bleach solution to disinfect the changing tables. The changing tables are dried before using them, however clothes do occasionally get bleached.

### **Parent Involvement**

We encourage families to become actively involved in the center. We welcome family visits during any part of the day. Parents are invited to read stories, share talents, prepare a snack, play in the sand, or simply visit and observe.

Next Horizons schedules many family events each year for family participation. Activities include annual events such as Open House and Family Picnics. Parents and children are invited to attend these events. Please watch for calendar and postings for these special events.

All parents are encouraged to participate in Parents of Next Horizons (PONH). PONH meetings are held monthly. The organization provides support and guidance to the Next Horizons program. PONH also provides a platform for parents to participate in special events, to get to know other NH parents, and to participate in their child's educational and care experience.

Next Horizons provides "Parent Education Nights" during the school year at Next Horizons. Parents are invited to attend these informational sessions, which typically cover topics such as: guidance and discipline, school readiness, sibling rivalry, and nutrition for children. Childcare is provided at no cost.

Parents are invited to volunteer their skills or services to our program as well. The center benefits greatly from volunteers to rock babies, read stories, garden or help with repairs.

### **Communication**

An important part of our program is parent/teacher communication. Verbally and in person, information is exchanged daily at drop-off and pick-up times. Teacher/caregivers will share information about your child's day or answer any questions.

Due to the length of the center's hours, some Next Horizons staff may not be present at both arrival and departure times. Please communicate to staff present in the classroom or call the NH office anytime to speak with a specific staff member or the director.

### **Teacher/Parent Written Communications**

- **Infants**

Infant caregivers and parents of infants communicate daily through the use of daily record sheets. Everyday, upon arrival, parents must fill out a daily update sheet. These are given to the teacher, and help staff to care for each child during the day.

Teacher/caregivers fill out a daily record sheet during the day. This record includes information about diapering, food and drinks consumed, sleeping times, and updates on mood or well-being of each child. At the end of the day, parents take home a copy of this daily record sheet.

Each primary caregiver for infants prepares and posts weekly developmental and activity plan. These provide information and record keeping on progressions and events of each infant enrolled. Parents are encouraged to read these posted notices for information on their child.

- **Diapers/Toileting Records**

A diaper changing record is posted in each room where children are wearing diapers. Teachers/caregivers record all diaper changes and toileting activity for children not yet independent in the bathroom. This record is available for all parents to look at each day.

- **Preschool**

Written communication with parents includes notes and postings on Parent Boards. Preschool teachers/caregivers keep notes of naps, and diapering (when appropriate). These notes are available daily for parents. Preschool lesson and activity plans are posted weekly on the Parent Board inside each room. Parents are encouraged to review these plans for information.

- **For all children enrolled at Next Horizons**

Each family has a "Parent Folder" in their child's classroom. Please check your folder daily for classroom information and messages from the office. In addition, please check the parent boards in your child's room for information.

### ***Parent-teacher conference schedule***

Each semester the teachers/caregivers complete a developmental summary for the parents. The summary is completed once in the fall and once in the spring or twice in a calendar school year. This summary gives parents a record of development that has been observed at the center during that particular semester. Parents are encouraged to schedule a time to meet individually with their child's teacher/caregiver each semester. Please watch for Parent/Teacher conferences or request a meeting as often as you would like.

**Parent Education**

Next Horizons plans several Parent Nights specifically for NH parents. Announcements of coming events will be posted on the bulletin boards and in the newsletters. It is our hope that each parent will find a way to become involved and to participate in the programs offered at the center.

**Liability**

Next Horizons Child and Family Development Center is in accordance with the State Statute #ARS-621 regarding liability insurance. Questions concerning center policies should be directed to the director.

### **Acknowledgement of Parent Handbook**

In order to insure that all families have had access to and have read the Parent Handbook, please complete the form below, remove it from the Handbook and return it to the office as soon as possible. We want for parents to be informed and familiar with center policies prior to enrollment or as soon after enrollment as possible.

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I have read the Next Horizons Child and Family Development Center Handbook and understand the policies and programs described in the handbook. I agree to abide by these policies while my child/children are enrolled in the center.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**