



HUMBOLDT EDUCARE PRESCHOOL

Parent Handbook

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Lic # 125407077

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Humboldt Educare was started as a non-profit corporation in 1979 for the purpose of combining preschool with quality care. We have remained the ONLY private, non-profit childcare program in Humboldt County for over 40 years! Our program is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., in an attempt to provide flexibility for working parents. We offer varying schedule options, including: a morning session (7:30-1:00), an afternoon session (1:00-5:30), a three-quarters day (7:30-3:00), and a full day (7:30-5:30). In an attempt to best meet the needs of Humboldt County parents, Humboldt Educare is open to discuss varieties within this framework. Families are billed for services at the start of every month, are given 10 days from receipt to pay, and are free to discuss changes to schedules at the start of the following month.

Our school is licensed for 30 children, ages 2-5 years, (or entrance into 1st grade) and fully potty trained. Our staff is made up of qualified teachers and assistant teachers from a variety of different backgrounds. We feel that our program provides children with valuable social experience balanced with curriculum that makes learning fun.

Humboldt Educare creates an enriched and nurturing environment where children are able to interact with their peers and explore learning materials. Our curriculum supports the child's natural curiosity. Through the day we maintain a balance between times when the teachers structure activities, and when children may choose their own. Daily activities foster intellectual, physical, social and emotional growth.

Humboldt Educare is currently sharing a building, (our 3rd location in 40 years), with another Early Childhood program, Arcata Head Start, (operated by North Coast Children's Services), located at 75 Frank Martin Ct., (off of Erikson Way) in Arcata, but are actively looking for our "own" site!

PHILOSOPHY

Humboldt Educare believes that children construct knowledge through the actions of play and that children learn best when they want to learn. If children have the freedom to choose the activities in which they will participate, their imaginations and independence are nurtured. The desire to learn is fostered by a rich, challenging, and consistent environment by understanding and flexible adults.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide young children with a play-based learning experience to enhance natural curiosity to promote a love of learning and in a nurturing, accessible, and safe environment.

STAFFING

Humboldt Educare is licensed by the Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing. All of our staff are cleared by the Department of Justice, have a clear TB test, and are immunized according to most recent guidelines. These licensing requirements further mandate that all adults working directly with children to have completed some college level coursework in Child Development. We are fortunate to be close to Humboldt State

University and have fostered a good working relationship with them, oftentimes hiring our staff from their Child Development program. We work hard to go above and beyond the 1:12 required ratio, knowing that this helps in the fostering of relationships, quality of interactions, and overall supervisory responsibilities.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

EXPECTATIONS:

Parents/Guardians may expect that:

- ~ Their child will be cared for in a warm and positive environment that is safe and supportive.
- ~ They may visit the program at any time.
- ~ They may meet with the Director about any concerns related to their child's behavior or progress within the program.
- ~ They will be informed of the programs daily activities and special activities in a way best suited to their families needs, (email, social media, website, daily dry-erase board, regular newsletters, phone calls) and are eager to hear what works for you!
- ~ Community Care Licensing has the right to inspect the facility at any given time with or without notice and notification of every visit will be posted.

Educare expects that Parents/Guardians will:

At Drop-off:

- 1) Let a teacher know that your child is here, so the staff can greet them.
- 2) Sign in and out each day on the sign in sheet with your full signature.
- 3) Share any special information we might need for the day or new events that your child may be experiencing at home, (including changes in eating, sleeping etc).

Regularly:

- ~ Pay fees on time as explained in the Fees and Payments Policy.
- ~ Keep the child's records up to date as explained in the Admission Policy.
- ~ Pick up children on time, (dictated by your contracted schedule).
- ~ Contact Educare when your child is not attending.
- ~ Give two-weeks notice before withdrawing your child from the program.
- ~ Follow the no-smoking law on the school premise.
- ~ Follow guidelines on child safety and car seat laws.
- ~ Check the Parent Information Board to stay informed of up-coming events.

Children may expect:

- ~ To have stimulating, developmentally appropriate experiences.
- ~ To have ample opportunity to use program equipment, materials and facilities.
- ~ To receive individualized treatment from all program personnel.
- ~ To receive nurturing, interactive care from staff on a daily basis.

Educare Staff will expect that the children will:

- ~ Practice interacting and forming relationships with others.
- ~ Practice taking care of equipment and materials.
- ~ Practice becoming responsible for their own actions.
- ~ Practice treating others with kindness and respect.

ADMISSION POLICY & REQUIREMENTS

We are looking forward to getting to know you and your child! The following information will help you to become better acquainted with us.

Potty Training: In order for children to enroll at Humboldt Educare they must be well into the process of potty training. This means that your child must be consistently communicating about needing to use the bathroom and willing to go when reminded. Educare staff will offer verbal assistance with the steps of toileting and wiping. Staff will also offer verbal help with changing and will physically help with buttons and more complex clothes as needed. Each case will be viewed on an individual basis.

Staff implement regular potty breaks as needed through out the day in addition to the scheduled in bathroom break in the middle of the day with lunch and rest. Please remember to bring in a change of clothes to keep in child's bathroom pocket just in case – accidents do happen!

Enrollment Process

We require that you bring your child to the school for a visit so that you, your child and the staff can decide whether it is the right place for him/her. If you decide to enroll your child, the visit will help your child become familiar with the staff, the children, and the program, and should ease his/her first day.

To enroll your child, you must complete the following forms:

- 1) Identification and Emergency Information Form
- 2) Pre-Admission Health Report
- 3) Authorization for Medical Treatment
- 4) Parents' Rights
- 5) Personal Rights
- 6) Physician's Report
- 7) Immunization Card
- 8) Admission Agreement
- 9) Permissions Sheet
- 10) Financial Agreement

Any information contained in your child's file is confidential and will not be used for any purpose without your written consent. Please update your information with the Director immediately if anything changes such as address, phone number, or those authorized to pick up your child.

FEES & PAYMENT POLICIES

In order to meet the care requirements of all our families, we attempt to meet individual scheduling needs, but this may not always be possible. Schedule changes must be made two weeks in advance with the Director. Because your schedule is like a reservation, staffing costs are already incurred and bills are charged for the month in advance. Therefore **we charge for enrollment not attendance**. Families are allowed one week of vacation per calendar year. For ease of billing, it is best to notify Program the month prior to the vacation so invoices can be accurate. This time has to be used in a one-week segment. We are not able to credit one day at a time.

Humboldt Educare is open *an average of 21.75 days per month*. We average all our open days so that your monthly bill stays the same even when we are closed for a holiday or in-service day. Families will receive an annual calendar in January with the following years' closure dates to ease in family planning. As of July 1, 2017, our rates are as follows: ***Monthly bills include a \$10 materials fee and \$10 snack fee separate from tuition***

Half day (7:30-1:00 or 1:00-5:30)

2 days/week- \$208.80

3 days/week- \$313.20

5 days/week - \$522.00

Three-quarters day (7:30-3:00)

2 days/week- \$278.40

3 days/week- \$417.60

5 daysweek- \$696.00

Full day (7:30-5:30)

2 days/week- \$334.95

3 days/week- \$502.43

5 days/week - \$837.38

Tuition is billed in the first week of the month, and payment is due within ten days. If your bill is not paid by the following billing cycle, ***you will be charged a \$30 late fee***. If your bill is two months overdue, your child may be dropped from Educare and you will be responsible for all overdue tuition. If your bill goes to collection, you will be responsible for all collection fees.

Any additional fees will be itemized on your invoice.

Throughout the year, the program purchases materials and supplies to support individualized learning, keep experiences fresh and reflective of the children's ever changing interests, etc. While some of your tuition pays for this, it only pays for a small percentage of the overall costs. **Your monthly tuition covers teacher pay and operating expenses.**

The school closes at 5:30 p.m. If your child is here past 5:35, you will be billed an extra \$30.00 as a late fee. If your child is continuously picked-up late, your services may be terminated.

Educare will not issue refunds to families whose services are terminated due to misconduct by the child or parent.

Registration & Enrollment for Parents using an Outside Agency for Payment

If you are a family using an outside agency such as Changing Tides for payment please be aware of the following stipulations:

- Vouchers (attendance sheets) must be signed on a daily basis.
- On your child's last day of the month you must sign the back of your attendance sheet.
- If your child misses a day you must sign the attendance sheet for the day and put the reason such as illness (cold, flu, etc) or doctors appointment.
- Failure to give two-week notice before withdrawal from the program may make you liable for fees not covered by Changing Tides or any other agency.
- Parents/Guardians will be responsible for ANY fees not covered by their voucher program.

SCHEDULE

Our daily schedule is posted and is updated regularly as part of our working arrangement with Northcoast Children's Services, our use of shared spaces, the weather/season, children's interests and developmental readiness, etc. Please take a moment to look over the current Daily Schedule and direct any questions you might have to the Director.

ATTENDANCE & PICK-UP POLICIES

Sign-in/out

Each day your child must be dropped off and picked up by an adult. The adult must sign your child in with a FULL signature.

When your child is picked up, he/she must be signed-out out with a FULL signature by someone approved by you over the age of 18. Remember only those named on your child's Identification Information form will be able to pick them up from school. Educare will not release children to adults who do not have parent/guardian permission. Please include a permission note or call ahead of pick-up, if you want a different person to pick your child up that day. **Please call us if your child will be absent.**

Children will only be released to someone other than their parent/guardian if the parent or guardian has notified the school first. The person picking up must be on the authorized pick-up list or the parent/guardian may tell the school the pick-up person's full name. Educare will ask to see identification from new people picking up your child if you are not present. In the event of an emergency, the staff may contact persons identified on the child's emergency card to take the child from the program. For this reason it is very important that you keep your child's emergency information up to date. In the event of an emergency, all efforts will be made to contact the parents/guardians. If that fails we will try to reach the people listed in the Emergency Contact section of your paperwork.

COURT ORDERS & CUSTODY AGREEMENTS

Unless the program has a restraining order covering a parent, both parents will be allowed to take their child(ren) from the facility.

If pursuant to a court order, one parent has been given the legal right to child custody or visitation, which determines who is to pick up a child, or if one parent has been restrained by court order from visiting/ordered to stay away from a child Educare requires the following:

1. A certified copy of the current court order, which states the rights or restraints ordered.
2. If a later order supersedes the first, it will not be honored until the program has a copy of the most recent order.
3. The law requires that we follow valid court orders and only certified orders are deemed valid.

HOURS OF OPERATION/CLOSURES

Humboldt Educare will operate 5 days a week from 7:30am – 5:30pm. Humboldt Educare will be closed some national holidays, but remain open throughout the summer. You will receive a calendar at the start of year highlighting all **PLANNED CLOSURES**. It may be necessary to close due to unforeseen circumstances, (lack of power, gas leak, no running water, etc.). Every effort will be made to provide as much notice regarding these closures as possible. No refund will be given for emergency closures.

If a teacher is sick, Educare will still operate for children and families. Outbreaks and multiple ill teachers may effect the day to day operations, but every effort will be taken to notify families of this potentiality and continue to operate whenever possible and safe to do so. The Director will also be available to be on the floor as necessary to ensure child/staff ratio is maintained in accordance with State Licensing Regulations and to ensure children may attend their regular schedule.

NUTRITION/MEAL POLICY

Humboldt Educare provides a nutritious snack program that is served mid-morning and mid-afternoon. You need to send a cold lunch with your child if they are scheduled until 1pm. **Please include a drink and appropriate utensils in the lunch.** Please let us know of any food related concerns, sensitivities or issues so we can work with you to make sure your child receives the best care possible.

Our field is now aware of the importance of drinking water and staying hydrated and

this role this plays in the ability of one to self-regulate and to stay well. We have drinking fountains in both the outdoor classroom and the small side of the indoor classroom. However, it is a good idea to keep your child's cubby stocked with a water bottle that is easily and regularly accessible.

Children are encouraged to brush their teeth during their day at Educare. Humboldt Educare provides a toothbrush and toothpaste.

Sharing food as part of celebrations and as a way to broaden children's experiences is a wonderful idea. Please see the Director for ideas on ways to do this!

HEALTH & SAFETY

HEALTH POLICY

The overriding guidance of any Health Policy is to insure the safety and well-being of every member of our community. Group childcare is unique and requires constant vigilance. Staff and parents should plan to check in daily at drop-off and pick-up to exchange any information regarding health and wellness, (slept well, refused breakfast, sister home sick, etc), to help insure this vigilance. Group care requires that children be able to fully participate in the program.

We understand and recognize that preschool age children are particularly susceptible to viruses, bacterial infections, and other contagious diseases in the classroom. At Humboldt Educare, the children are in frequent contact with each other through play, projects, meals, and rest. As a result, we must ask you to use careful judgment when bringing your child to school if he/she is ill. Children may not come to school if they have any of the following:

- 1) Fever of 100 or higher
- 2) Vomiting
- 3) Diarrhea
- 4) A contagious disease, e.g., Chicken Pox, Strep Throat
- 5) Profuse green or yellow mucus coming from the nose
- 6) Any condition that prevents the child from participating in the school program
- 7) LICE

It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to notify Humboldt Educare within 24 hours of a diagnosed contagious disease, even if the child stays home. **Some contagious diseases will prompt Exposure Notices.**

At this time, Humboldt Educare is not free to dispense medication to any enrolled child. We are working closely with Community Care Licensing to create an approved Medication Storage and Dispensing Plan. We will keep you updated. In the meantime, please feel free to talk with your Director to brainstorm ways to meet your child's needs

Children who have been ill may return to Educare when they can participate in the program with ease. Children who have prescribed medication must wait 24 hours after beginning this medication prior to returning to school. Children with broken bones must have a note from a physician verifying that it is safe for the child to participate in the Humboldt Educare Program, and that the physician is aware that the program involves up to 29 other children.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Personal Beliefs Exemptions are no longer acceptable in California. Please see shotsforschool.org/laws/sb277faq, for more information. Medical exemptions may still be allowed. Please see your Director if you have questions.

If any child in the program contracts a disease for which immunizations are available, all children without that immunization shall be excluded from the program for a period of time, depending on the disease. This period of time will be determined after consultation with appropriate medical authorities, and no refund will be issued.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

Please keep your emergency numbers updated. In the forms you fill out for Humboldt Educare, list your child's physician and hospital. These forms also include our Consent to Treat form.

Although accidents or other emergencies rarely occur, if an emergency occurs, the following steps will be taken in this order:

- 1) We will attempt to phone the parent(s).
- 2) If neither parent can be reached, we will call the emergency number listed.
- 3) If we cannot reach this person, we will call the child's physician.
- 4) If the physician cannot be reached or cannot refer us to an associate, we will have the child taken to Mad River Community Hospital, unless you have specified a different hospital.

Any hit to the head, will initiate a call to you. For this reason, and all of the above, **PLEASE KEEP YOUR EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION CURRENT.**

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Safety procedures for fire and earthquakes are on the bulletin board in the classroom by the door. We have periodic emergency and evacuation drills, and all Humboldt Educare staff are CPR and First Aid certified.

BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE POLICIES

To maintain a positive classroom environment, Humboldt Educare utilizes the following limited "rules", and all behavior is monitored and modeled after them;

At Humboldt Educare, We are Kind and We are Safe.

We view teachers as facilitators for social interactions, and encourage children to attempt to solve their own problems. We often give them hints or techniques to help deal with a situation.

As children grow in this skill, we allow the children to do as much of the problem solving as they can by themselves or with little prompting from teachers. In the event that a child's behavior becomes so extreme that s/he threatens the safety of the staff or other children, the following actions will be taken:

1. A meeting between the parent(s) and head teaching staff will take place in order to find a positive solution to the problem. This may include a discussion of alternative methods of interacting with the child and/or a referral to community agencies to assist the family. A method for future evaluation will be agreed upon as well as the setting of a deadline for expected improved behavior.
2. If disruptive behavior continues, the parent(s) will be called to remove the child from the center for the remainder of the day.
3. If a resolution does not occur by the agreed upon date, termination of services may be the result.

These measures are designed to promote a positive learning experience and a safe and secure environment for everyone at Humboldt Educare. Through following these steps, we as a staff feel that not only does the child who is working through particular behaviors benefit from the process, but so do the rest of the children. Our group setting allows for children of many different ages and developmental levels to share experiences and gain knowledge from one another.

DISMISSAL POLICY

Educare's staff strives to be a partner with parents to solve behavior issues in the classroom. Physical or emotional abuse of another child or a teacher, which is determined to be excessive or repetitious by the staff and director, will be grounds for dismissal. The steps listed above in the Behavior and Discipline Policies may be taken in an attempt to solve the issue.

Parents' non-support or non-adherence to Educare's policies will be cause for dismissal.

Humboldt Educare reserves the right to terminate services for any cause.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Termination of Services

Children will be dropped from the program for any one of the following reasons:

- 1) Failure to pay fees.
- 2) Failure to complete enrollment forms previously requested in writing.
- 3) Failure to sign child in/out.
- 4) Repeated late pick up of child.
- 5) Child's behavior endangers safety of other children. (See behavior expectations.)

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

All staff working with children are mandated by the State of California to report any *suspected child abuse or neglect*. Reports, by law, are made without prior notification to parents, to the Child Protective Services Division of the local Department of Social Services. In order to be partners with parents, we ask that you tell us the cause of visible bruises, injuries, etc. that have been incurred at home and we, in turn, will notify you of the circumstances surrounding any injury incurred at school. A copy of the Injury Report will be

in placed in your sign-in page.

REST/NAP TIME

Community Care Licensing requires that we identify and provide for a regular “rest time”. Currently, we provide time for children who need to sleep to fall asleep between 1-2 pm. During this time, all other children are guided and supported in quiet, more restful activities. We recognize that not all children take naps, those who do, may not nap daily, and as they mature, will need less regular naps. It is expected that the Program and enrolled families will revisit this need regularly. Humboldt Educare will have on hand enough nap materials and space for any child to nap who needs to or wishes it.

CLOTHES

Your child will need to have a change of clothing, which will stay at school. Please make sure all clothes, and jackets are marked with your child's name. At times, school projects become very messy--that's a big part of the fun! Please send your child to school in play clothes that can get dirty, are appropriate for the weather, and good shoes to romp in. We have a closed-toed shoe policy for outside play. If your child wishes to wear sandals, please send a pair of socks and shoes for outside time. Please leave high-heeled shoes at home. Rainy weather will see us jumping in puddles regularly, and while we have a supply of rain boots on hand, a change of shoes and socks, (or more than one change depending on your child), is encouraged to have on hand, as well.

What do we DO all Day?

Educare’s staff currently utilizes a mainly emergent curriculum style, meaning that we like to follow the interests we see emerging in the children’s free playtime. Our program provides an opportunity for a child to develop skills in all developmental areas--physical, social, and emotional as well as intellectual. Language arts (speaking, reading, writing), mathematics, sciences, the arts, and social studies are taught through games, stories, art and songs. We use as many materials as we can to make learning an active, exciting process. There are typically several ways that we share the day to day “doings” of our children with you, but encourage you to ask questions, visit our social media pages, website and Parent Board regularly.

Our program encourages parents and children to share with the school, their family traditions and interests. We strongly believe that children should see their lives and families represented and reflected in their child care and school setting. Families are strongly encouraged to share photos, food, expertise and passion from their homes with ours.

We also strongly believe that children should be seen in their community and that the community should be welcomed into our program. We work hard to utilize volunteers to enhance the interactions and experiences our children participate in and also take both walking field trips and other field trips when appropriate transportation can be secured.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As a Non-profit business, Humboldt Educare cannot operate without a fully

functioning and committed Board of Directors. Our Board of Directors is made up of 3 to 9 members and governs Humboldt Educare. Board members should include current and past parents, and involved and concerned community members. Board members commit to a three-year term and receive a 10% discount off of Humboldt Educare fees. The President receives a 20% discount. Parents and community representatives on the board meet regularly to discuss childcare issues and the overall operation of Humboldt Educare. If you are interested in becoming a board member, talk to the Director.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Toys From Home

It can be tempting to bring toys and supplies from home, especially when items have particular significance to children. Although not always, these toys can be lost, broken or damaged and also present an additional supervision challenge for staff. Please talk with your Director about ways to share these significant items and experiences with your child's program.

Art

Please check your child's file for his/her artwork. Currently this box is maintained right outside the classroom door.

Photos and Family Phone List

Educare has a website and Facebook page where we showcase some of the cool things children and teachers do. Educare has a photo release that you can sign if you are ok with or you can decline if you do not want a photo of your child published. ***Like us on Facebook to stay connected!***

We can also issue a phone/address list by request for invitation to birthdays etc. If you do not want your information listed please let us know.

Birthdays

If your child wishes to invite classmates to his/her birthday, we request that you send invitations through the mail or put them in the sign-in book. This avoids hurt feelings at school. You can obtain a Parent List containing children's names and addresses from the Director.

Developmental Screening

Beginning in 2020, Humboldt Educare will begin implementing a voluntary Developmental Screening tool. The ASQ system is a set of questionnaires about children's development. It has been used for more than 20 years to make sure children are developing well. A screening provides a quick look at how children are doing in important areas such as communication, physical development, social competence and problem solving, all vital to success in school and beyond. Research tells us that the earlier supports are given when needed, the more successful interventions are. ***Please let us know if you would like to participate in this program.***

Communication is vital to operating a quality program.

Throughout your time with us, you can expect to receive many emails, printed information and the occasional phone call. We LOVE to talk about what we do and what the CHILDEN are doing, and imagine you do too. Please work with us to stay connected. Update your email, phone and mailing address as soon as changes are made. Feel free to ask to meet with the Director for more personalized discussions, and know that we are all in this together! We look forward to making lasting memories and growing curious and excited learners!

(Any and all policies are subject to change) Updated 1/2020

Please Return This Sheet:

I _____ *(parent's name),*

parent/guardian of

_____ *(child's name),*

have received and read the Humboldt Educare Parent Handbook. I agree to follow all the policies and agreements.

Signature _____ *Date* _____