Parent Handbook
BioKids Philosophy

BioKids provides a nurturing, play-based environment where each child’s individuality is honored. Children are encouraged to explore, experience and discover, thus making meaningful connections about the world around them. Our classrooms provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum in an environment where each child can feel safe, challenged and valued as they learn and grow physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively. We expect and encourage children to respect each other and the world in which we live. Parent participation is encouraged; BioKids is a cooperative program enabling families to become active members of the BioKids community.

Program Overview and Curriculum

BioKids has two classrooms: the Infant / Toddler Room for children from age 6 weeks to 24 months, and our Preschool Room for children between the ages of 2 and 5. Families experience an unusual continuity of care at BioKids; children are in one classroom, with the same peers and teaching staff, for a relatively long period of time. The most dramatic group transition a child makes at BioKids is when moving from the Infant/Toddler Room to the Preschool Room. We are sensitive to the needs of the child and their family when this transition occurs; it is done gradually, with great care and an understanding of the needs of the child and their family.

Mixed age groups, sometimes called “family” groupings, afford children a daily opportunity to interact and learn with children of different ages and a wide range of abilities. The overarching focus of our curriculum is that it is developmentally appropriate; our activities and expectations are appropriate for each age level as well as each individual child. BioKids follows a play-based curriculum model that incorporates child initiated with teacher-directed learning.

Both classrooms are set up with learning centers: art, library, dramatic play (pretend), block / rug play, texture / sensory table, table toys / puzzles, and, for the older group, writing and science centers. We believe children learn through play, active exploration, and social interaction. During free or open play, children are able to choose activities that interest and appeal to them as they participate in hands-on activities that promote discovery, creativity, and learning. Believing that mastery encourages competence and confidence, we provide repeated exposure in a variety of different types of activities. We understand that children are most attentive to the activities they choose, and often remember best what they have discovered themselves. In addition, we assure an environment that is very nurturing and supportive.

Children learn through process-oriented activities, not product-oriented activities. The “process over product” philosophy means that you will see products and creations that are truly unique to each child; you will not see children participating in projects that have one limited outcome, with every child’s work looking exactly the same. We also provide children the opportunity to work together to produce “community pieces” in which each child can contribute to a group project.

Every day in the Preschool Room, children are offered a variety of familiar activities with a splash of something new and exciting. Written curriculum plans are based on knowledge of child development and assessment of individual needs and interests; they are informed by our use of “The Creative Curriculum” framework. The teachers are skilled in using the classroom materials in ways that are appropriate for two-year-olds as well as the five-year-olds and, of course, in-between. The teachers also individualize activities to meet the particular needs of each child related to small and large motor skills, literacy, art, math and socialization. A weekly, or bi-weekly theme is integrated into each learning center. Weekly plans and a calendar highlighting daily activities are posted on the parent information board inside the classroom. The weekly calendar is also sent home.

In the Infant/Toddler Room, the curriculum revolves around daily care routines for our youngest members: hellos and goodbyes, feeding and mealtime, diapering, sleep and naptime. Being dressed or changed is as much
part of the curriculum for the infant as working on a puzzle, looking at a book, stacking blocks, or counting is for an older child. Infant caregivers sing, read, talk, and play with infants throughout the day. The most important thing we can help a baby learn is to trust us and know that they will be safe in our care and in the environment we have created. Of course we offer lots of toys and books in this room as well and children have lots of opportunity during the day to explore their environment and chose what they would area they would like to explore.

Toys and other materials in both rooms are selected with great care. They are developmentally appropriate, safe, and have learning/educational value relative to cognitive, physical, social/emotional domains of Early Childhood Education. The materials help us meet the curriculum goals and objectives stated below.

**Curriculum Goals and Objectives**

Our goal is to provide appropriate learning opportunities for children in cognitive, physical, social/emotional domains. Our daily activities are designed to meet the following objectives for children:

**Cognitive development**
- Acquiring early language and literacy skills, including pre-reading and early writing skills for older children, and fine tuning these skills in school age children
- Learning numeracy (pre-math) and science concepts
- Increasing curiosity about the world through observation, exploration, and experimentation
- Enhancing language skills and self-expression through music, movement, and interactive dialogue between peers and adults
- Promoting experimentation, inquiry, observation, and exploration through play

**Physical Development**
- Developing large and small muscle skills
- Improving eye-hand coordination and perceptual skills
- Increasing body awareness and self-help skills
- Exploring and participating in rhythm and movement activities

**Social/Emotional**
- Getting along in groups
- Learning responsible behavior (e.g. sharing, cooperation, turn-taking)
- Respecting ethnic, cultural, ability and age differences
- Expressing feelings appropriately
- Gaining positive self-image
- Developing independence, self-regulation, initiative, and trust

**Assessment**

Our goal is to provide a nurturing, play-based environment where each child’s individuality is honored. To that end, children are assessed in a way that is natural and fits seamlessly into the classroom. They are observed in terms of cognitive, physical, social/emotional and communicative development. Teachers perform informal, ongoing assessment of each child through observation, work sampling and developmental scales. Assessments help identify children’s interests (i.e., farm animals, camping) as well as developmental and cognitive needs (i.e., small motor skills, shape recognition). Assessments are used in program planning to assure optimum developmental growth of each child.
Parent/Teacher Conferences are held each Spring. Parents are encouraged to continue the children’s learning activities at home with stories, outings, songs, and helping around the house to teach important skills. Teachers are available at any time to meet with parents to discuss any issue related to their child’s development. Scheduled meetings are preferred so a substitute teacher can be available to maintain teacher:child ratios in the classroom. The Director is also available to meet with parents, as is the University of Utah Child Care Coordinator, should a parent have any concerns regarding their child’s development. If a more formal developmental screening and/or diagnostic assessment is appropriate, we will assist you in finding those services.

General Information

BIOKIDS GOVERNING BOARD
BioKids is governed by the BioKids Steering Committee. The committee is made up of:
1. BioKids parent representatives
2. BioKids Director
3. Director, University of Utah Center for Child Care and Family Resources
4. Steering Committee past Chair

The Chair and one other member of the Steering Committee are parent representatives affiliated with the Department of Biology; the Chair should be a faculty member in the Department of Biology. The Steering Committee meets monthly or as needed and has the following responsibilities:
1. Oversee BioKids budget
2. Make decisions related to BioKids philosophy, long range planning, and general direction
3. Set tuition rates
4. Set staff salaries within the range provided by the University of Utah Human Resources Department
5. Hire the Director
6. Supervise the Director
7. Assist the Director in fund raising activities
8. Determine extent of parent co-op obligation

PROGRAM STANDARDS, IMPROVEMENT AND EVALUATION
BioKids provides a developmentally appropriate, positive learning environment to maximize each child’s natural qualities of curiosity and creativity. In addition to being licensed by the Utah Department of Health, BioKids has been structured according to the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Our high standards include, but are not limited to:
• Low staff:student ratios
• Trained professional teachers and caregivers
• Developmentally Appropriate Practice in curriculum and teacher-child interactions
• Positive Guidance - Discipline that gently guides children toward self-governing behavior, rather than punishment. Children are taught positive negotiating skills.
• Attention to individual development in all areas: self-esteem, cognition, socialization, creativity, responsibility, independence, and fine and gross motor development.
• Multiple opportunities for parent involvement and participation.

We are constantly assessing, evaluating and working to improve the BioKids program. Staff members routinely attend workshops and seminars and bring new ideas back to BioKids for discussion and possible implementation. Parents are asked to evaluate the program annually. In addition, our Infant/Toddler classroom is observed by consultants from The Children’s Center as part of our involvement with the Utah Department of Workforce Services, Office of Child Care.

CO-OP PROGRAM
BioKids is a parent co-operative program. We require parents to “work” for the program for a specific number of hours each month: families with one child enrolled in the program work for 4 hours a month, families with 2 children work for 6 hours a month. This type of parent participation enables us to accomplish important tasks such as providing children with clean linen and playdough weekly, groceries for lunches and snacks, and helping to maintain a clean classroom environment. Upon enrollment, families are provided with a list of co-op opportunities; additional co-op jobs are available so please check with the Director. Families are expected to pay $10 for each un-worked hour of co-op time; payments can be included in tuition checks with a notation to the director regarding the payment. Some families routinely opt out of co-op hours by adding $40 ($60) to their monthly tuition payment. If a family is in arrears in excess of 3 months, the Co-op hours will be billed for that time period.

DIVERSITY
We welcome every opportunity to expand the children's view of our world as a place rich in many cultures, races, religions, and customs. BioKids is open to all families, regardless of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and University of Utah affiliation. We will work with families to provide an inclusive preschool environment for all children. Diversity extends to family structure as well, and we are committed to the philosophy of treating all family situations equally and without bias. BioKids is a non-denominational program; therefore, religious holidays are covered as broadly as possible. We encourage you to share your family’s traditions with our children and staff. We make every attempt to be aware of and respectful towards all traditions.

SOCIETAL VALUES
The theme of non-violence, gender equality, and respect for our earth are continuous and permanent philosophies of our school. These themes are practiced in the following way:

- We do not allow toy guns or weapon play of any kind at our school. We have a firm “No shooting at BioKids” rule.
- We speak of "Firefighters," and "Police Officers," rather than their traditional male counterparts; and we present professions such as Nurses, Doctors, and Scientists without gender bias.
- We have many earth awareness activities, such as gardening and recycling projects.
- All references in this handbook and all BioKids written material that refers to “parent” is intended for any parent or legal guardian or person legally responsible for the care and well being of the child.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE / DISCIPLINE
Positive Guidance is a philosophy that guides children toward self-governing behavior; we feel it is a more positive method of classroom management than punishment. Positive guidance demonstrates respect for children, helping them understand and grow; it is directed toward helping children develop self-control and the ability to make better decisions. We maintain a policy of treating each child with respect thus facilitating the development of self-esteem. We accomplish this by accepting and comforting children, regardless of the child's behavior - speaking in non-threatening tones, responding quickly, communicating at eye level and paying attention to individual needs.

Teachers use discipline techniques such as:
- Guiding children by setting clear consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior; or, in the case of older children, helping them to set their own limits.
- Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities.
- Redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity.
- Listening when children talk about feelings and frustrations.
- Patiently reminding children of the rules and their rationale as needed.
- Guiding children to resolve conflicts and modeling skills that help children to solve their own problems. Children are taught positive negotiating skills through modeling and demonstration, rather than simply directing them to “use their words.”

BioKids does not allow any measures or circumstances which could be perceived as physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when guiding and/or disciplining children. The appropriate use of restraint for safety reasons is permissible.
GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN, PARENTS, AND TEACHERS

General:
1. The safety of the children is our first concern. This includes both physical and emotional safety.
2. Children learn most from adult conduct. Be a good role model; children are always watching and listening, even when you don’t think they are.
3. It is important to be consistent when enforcing limits and to follow through with consequences.
4. Remind children of limits before beginning an activity. They need to know what is expected.
5. When enforcing limits and consequences, be careful to disapprove of the action, not the child.
6. Please leave toys at home. We cannot assume responsibility for their safekeeping, and they often become the objects of discontent in the classroom. The exception would be when a child first enters the program and may need a transitional object to ease separation.

Outside:
1. Climbing should be done on the climbing equipment and not the fence.
2. Sticks and other pointed objects found are not to be used in active play.
3. Children are not to crash trucks into other objects or people.
4. Slides are not for climbing up. Children should go down the slide feet first, never head first.
5. Toys should not be carried up the climbing equipment, but left on the ground.
6. If you pick your child up from the play yard, be sure to sign the child out and close the gate.

Inside:
1. Teachers, parents, and children should sit on the chairs or the floor rather than on tables or shelves.
2. Always remember to walk when inside. Running, chasing, or roughhousing should be directed outside.
3. Use a reasonably quiet voice when inside.
4. Children are responsible for picking up and putting away the toys they have been using. We expect children to do this during the course of the day, with coaching, and prior to going home as well. We provide labeled containers and designated space on shelves to make clean-up routines more logical for children. Please help your child put their toys away at pick-up time.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT
Preschool and Infant/Toddler Room Lead Teachers have been trained in early childhood education/child development, and demonstrate the appropriate personal characteristics for working with children. Assistant teachers have various amounts of experience and education related to working with children. All staff must demonstrate a high level of comfort with children and be at least 18 years of age. Each staff member is observed and evaluated frequently.

Staff members are required to participate in an annual minimum of 20 hours of continuing education by attending conferences, seminars, workshops, and staff meetings as well as through various forms of media. The training is in many aspects of early childhood education and child development. Additionally, all staff members receive CPR, First Aid, and Food Handler’s certification.

SEPARATION ANXIETY
The decision to place your child in preschool or childcare is not an easy one, and we understand that it can be as difficult for parents to separate from children as for children to be left by their parents. We support you as parents and promise to enrich your child’s life with a caring and meaningful program. There is no single, correct way for parents and children to separate. Rather, it is a dance that must be learned. Sometimes it takes trying out different steps and sometimes the steps come easily. Whatever your situation, we will help you find the steps that work for you and your child. It is not unusual for issues related to separation to arise several weeks after the start of school. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you have in this area with your child’s teacher or the director.

BITING, SCRATCHING, PUSHING, ETC.
Young children have a natural tendency to bite, push, scratch and/or hit, especially between the ages of 18 months and three-and-a-half. Often a child is merely trying to initiate a social contact with another child. Almost every child seems to bite or push before moving on to more appropriate ways for communicating
frustration and anger; the chances that your child will either bite or be bitten are high in a group care setting. While we maintain a watchful eye, these and other aggressive behaviors happen in an instant. If your child is either the biter or the recipient, try to stay calm and understand that biting is a form of communication for a small child. It is normal behavior and usually subsides if people don't overreact (while the behavior was not originally intended to be an attention-getter, that can become the secondary motivation). We comfort the hurt child and help all children develop more acceptable ways of communicating. Please see the Family Grievance and Dismissal portion of this handbook for more information about difficult behaviors.

**Policies and Procedures**

**ACCIDENT REPORTS**
When a child is injured at school, staff are required to complete an accident report. The report includes a description of what happened to the child and what action was taken to comfort the child. We ask that parents sign the report and return it to the teacher. It is then added to the child’s file. If a parent would like a copy of the report for their own records, we would be happy to provide one.

**AIR QUALITY**
We check the following website in the morning - usually around 10:00. Often the predicted air quality is orange or red, but the current air quality **is not as severe as the prediction**. Conditions tend to worsen during the day, so we check the website later in the day and if current conditions are red we do not go outside. Generally the U is above the worst of the inversion. If conditions are orange we may or may not go outside, depending on the AQI number; if it is 140 or above we will not go outside. Please remember that our indoor air is not filtered and when we do go outside it is rare that a child is exerting themselves (i.e. running) the entire hour we are on the playground.

http://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.showlocal&CityID=221

**BIRTHDAYS / Special Treats to Share in the Preschool Room**
A child’s birthday is a special day and a cause for celebration. You are welcome to provide UNCUT FRUIT or a **STORE BOUGHT** item in it’s original packaging for your child to share at snack time. Please do not bring in sweet treats. The following are appropriate birthday snacks: fresh berries, pitted dates, raisin boxes, yogurt tubes, cheeses, 100% juice popsicles, summer fruit from the Farmer’s Market or your backyard tree. You may also want to consider a non-food item like stickers or glow sticks to share with the class as a way of celebrating your child’s birthday without food. We have a tradition of having the birthday child present a book to BioKids in honor of his/her birthday. It is a wonderful way to add to our library and your child enjoys presenting and unwrapping the gift at group Circle Time. If you are in a quandary as to what book to get, the teachers can make a suggestion.

**CLOTHING**
1. Please label all items of clothing.
2. Send children to school with clothes you won't mind getting dirty (play clothes). One sign of a quality child-centered program is messy play.
3. Children must wear closed toe sandals and shoes – please, no flip-flops.
4. Children go outdoors if the temperature is above 25 and it is not storming. Please assure the comfort of your child by providing warm clothing during winter months (coat, hat, mittens, snow pants and boots – all labeled).

**COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**
BioKids has established relationships with several organizations in the community to help us meet the needs of the families in our program. These include The Children’s Center, Utah Association for the Education of Young Children, University of Utah Child Care Director’s Coalition, Child Care Resource & Referral, the Utah
Department of Workforce Services, the Jewish Community Center, and the McGillis School as well as several other elementary programs in the vicinity of BioKids.

**COMPUTERS IN THE CLASSROOM**

BioKids does not have computers for child use in either classroom. Occasionally a staff lap-top may be used for educational purposes such as listening to owl sounds, etc.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Fire drills are conducted every month. Disaster (earthquake / tornado) drills are conducted twice a year. Staff members are trained in emergency preparedness, and are consistently updated. Emergency contact numbers for each child are kept in our Emergency Notebook; the notebook is taken on every emergency drill, along with the sign-in sheet so we know just who is in attendance. In case of a true emergency evacuation away from our location, the emergency information will be taken along, and parent will be notified immediately via the campus alert system (cell phone, text message, email). *In the event of an emergency we will relocate to east side of the Marriott Dance Center, just south of our playground. You can meet our group there.* Our EAP (Emergency Assembly Point) is in Visitor Parking Lot #6, on the east side of the Marriott Center for Dance. *We will only leave that area if instructed to do so by University Emergency personnel.*

If your child has a medical emergency that requires immediate medical attention they will be transported via ambulance to Primary Children’s Hospital.

**FIELD TRIPS**

Occasionally we take the children on fieldtrips to the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, or on a walk around campus to see the library, gardens, fountains, etc. We never use public or private transportation for field trips; we do not visit locations that are not within walking distance of BioKids. We always let parents know about field trips ahead of time via email and/or monthly newsletters. We will ask parents to give written permission prior to each specified trip. When we do go away from BioKids, we take a cell phone, emergency phone numbers and an emergency kit.

**FOOD, FORMULA AND BREAST MILK**

For children who are old enough to eat “table food” (at least one year of age), BioKids provides lunch and two snacks, one in the morning and one after rest time in the afternoon. Lunch consists of a protein or main course, frozen vegetables and fresh fruit. A nutritionist reviews our menus twice a year. We make every effort to include whole grain bread, tortillas and crackers into our menu. We serve Winder Dairy milk with lunch and water with snacks. We provide whole milk for children ages 12-24 months; older children are given 2% milk. We do not serve juice of any kind at BioKids.

Sometimes parents prefer to supply their child’s food, and sometimes an older child may like to bring their own lunch. Please visit the following website to ensure that foods brought from home meet the US Department of Agriculture’s CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) guidelines:

http://nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/HTMLVersion/Chapter_4.html

Food brought from home into either classroom must be dated and be labeled with the child’s name. This includes powered formula and infant cereal, breast milk, food brought in to meet special/preferred dietary requirements and the occasional lunch a preschool student may want to bring. We will not serve solids to a child younger than 6 months of age without a note from a physician/health care provider. Families enrolling in the Infant/Toddler Room will receive additional information related to feeding in that room. As noted in the “Birthday” section above, celebratory treats need to be whole fruit or in original store packaging.
HAND WASHING
All staff and children are required to wash their hands upon entering our classroom. When you and your child arrive at school, please assist your child with toileting and hand washing. We require children and staff to wash hands after wiping noses, visiting or helping with the restroom, before and after snack and lunch, upon coming into the room from the play yard, and before as well as after using the water table.

HOME VISITS
Part of our orientation for children under the age of two includes a home visit. Two staff members spend about an hour visiting with a child and their family at the child’s home. This provides the opportunity for adult conversation free of classroom distractions. No cooking, no cleaning required or even requested, just an opportunity to sit and discuss a child’s schedule, preferences, feeding, napping, etc.

HOURS / HOLIDAYS
BioKids is open from 8:00AM-6:00 PM, Monday – Friday. You are welcome to enter the room a few minutes prior to 8:00, but we ask that you do not leave your child until 8:00 when the teacher on duty has completed their prep work and is ready to assume responsibility for your child. BioKids is a year-round program; we do not observe semester breaks. We are closed on all University of Utah holidays and most Federal holidays.

ILLNESS
Upon enrollment, families are given a copy of the BioKids Illness Policy. This policy is also available on our website and is posted in each classroom. We are NOT licensed to care for sick children. Staff do a quick visual health assessment of each child as they arrive in the morning.

Children with the following conditions may not attend school:
- Fever above 101…………….for any reason, including teething
- Vomiting…………………..Children may return to school 24 hours after last episode
- Diarrhea…………………..Children may return to school 24 hours after last episode
- Unexplained rash…………..Provide a doctor’s note indicating condition is not contagious
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)……Drops need to be administered for 24 hours before returning
- Flu or onset-of-cold symptoms
- Any other condition that does not allow them to participate in classroom activities; or, requires one on one attention and care.
- Contagious illness……………..Parents are required to notify BioKids staff if a child has strep throat, chicken pox, flu, lice, conjunctivitis, etc.

Staff members are required to turn away children brought to school with any of the above conditions. If children become sick at school, the child will be removed from the group and parents or designated adult will be contacted to pick children up within 30 minutes. The child may be isolated in the Director’s office; if that is not possible they will be separated from the larger group of children.

In consideration of other families and the BioKids staff, please do not send your child to school after administering medication to alleviate fever, diarrhea, flu, or onset-of-cold symptoms. It is virtually impossible to keep children from spreading germs through coughing, sneezing, touching, etc. Remember: your child is disappointed when a teacher is not at school due to illness.

IMMUNIZATIONS
In order to comply with licensing requirements and insure a healthy environment for your child, all children must be fully immunized for their age level before entering BioKids; additional immunizations must be noted in each child’s file. We are required to review immunizations and submit a report to the Utah State Health Department every November. If the director accesses the USIIS (Utah Statewide Immunization Information System) on-line immunization record and finds that your child is overdue for an immunization, you will be required to provide evidence of an appointment to obtain the missing vaccine (unless you have previously provided a religious, medical or personal exemption form). If your child is exempt from an immunization and an occurrence of that specific vaccine-preventable disease appears in either one of our classrooms, your child will be excluded from BioKids until local health authorities deem it is safe for your child to return without
running an above average risk of contracting / or spreading the disease. Failure to properly immunize your child will result in immediate program dismissal and a one week written notice will be given by the Director (see page 15 for more information about this policy).

**LATE PICK UP**
Two things occur when you are late: your child begins to feel worried and uncomfortable; the staff becomes anxious as they are ready to end their work-day and begin attending to personal business. The staff has chosen a late policy that we feel is fair.

Our Late Fees are:

- $5.00 The first five minutes
- $10.00 The second five minutes
- $15.00 The third five minutes, and so on.

The policy will go into effect as soon as your child is enrolled in our program. Late pick-ups are paid directly to staff to compensate for staying after their regular hours. If we have not heard from you by 6:10 p.m. we will call you. If we are unable to reach you, we will call your emergency contact person and ask them to pick up your child. If being late is a persistent problem for a family, we will schedule a problem solving conference with you. BioKids closes at 6:00, according to the clock in the older group classroom.

**LENDING LIBRARY**
The BioKids Director maintains a lending library for parents and staff. A wide range of topics are included in the selections: pregnancy, parenting, nutrition and feeding, sleeping, age-appropriate activities for children, behavioral issues, brain development and much, much more.

**MEDICATIONS**
If your child will need to take antibiotics or other medication during the day, be sure to complete the medication form. We are not permitted to administer medication without the paperwork. Medications must be given to the teacher and in the original container, labeled with: child's first and last name, name of prescribing clinician, name and strength of medication, expiration date, storage and dosage information. If a situation arises during the day, such as pain from teething, and you would like your child to receive medication, you will need to bring the medication to BioKids and complete the medication form. Permission to administer medication needs to be written and not verbal.

As sunscreen is labeled “keep out of the reach of children” it is considered a medication and upon enrolling in BioKids you are asked to sign a permission form specific to the use of sunscreen.

**NAP TIME**
Babies, of course, are on their own schedule; they nap and eat as they need to. They are always put on their BACK to sleep. Generally when children get to be about 12-14 months old their naps taper off and they have a rather long one in the middle of the day. Switching a child from a few naps to one is a gradual process, one that is done with consultation between the Infant/Toddler staff and parents. The older children in the Infant/Toddler Room typically nap between noon and three. Generally, once a child takes one nap a day they are transitioned from the sleeping unit to a mat on the floor.

Children in the Preschool Room typically rest or nap from 1:00 – 2:30 or 3:00, depending on the child. They are spread throughout the room on mats; parents provide a sheet and a blanket (both are laundered weekly by parent volunteers). When children awake while others are still sleeping they are encouraged to do a quiet activity, such as a puzzle or looking at books, on their rest mats.

**NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION**
We will do everything possible to make the transition to BioKids a smooth one for your child and your family and, in collaboration with you, will individualize a transition schedule. Parents are encouraged to visit the classroom prior to their child’s enrollment; we prefer to ease a child into our program rather than requiring them to make an abrupt change in their schedule, caretakers and environment.
OPEN DOOR POLICY
Our classrooms are always open for parent participation and observation. Parental input is very important and is always welcomed. Understanding parents’ feelings, attitudes, questions, and concerns is vital to the effectiveness of our program. Our goal is to work together to find solutions that are satisfying to all stakeholders, not just in times of stress, but on an ongoing basis. We encourage each parent to share suggestions, comments, inquiries, and concerns with the teachers and/or director. If you have an expertise you would like to share with our classrooms, please know that we are open to suggestions regarding classroom visitors/community helpers, curriculum and professional education. If you have a concern you would like to discuss with a teacher at length, it is best to make an appointment so that the teacher is not distracted from, and taken away from, supervising and interacting with children during your conversation. If you would like to speak with the director, you can either stop by in person, phone or e-mail to discuss a concern, or you may set up a meeting.

PARENT – TEACHER CONFERENCES
Parent/teacher conferences are held in the spring. Conferences include a discussion of the child’s strengths and goals, with the input from teacher(s) and parents, and a review of individual assessments your child’s teacher has completed. Conferences provide opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss shared goals and ways of partnering to help the child as they move along their unique developmental continuum. Parents are encouraged to continue learning activities at home with stories, songs, outings, etc. Feel free to ask your child’s teacher to give you a phone call or set up a time to meet at any time of the year if you have concerns regarding any aspect of your child’s experience at BioKids.

PARKING
There is designated parking for BioKids families located just east of the building. Please use these spaces when dropping off and picking up your child. If you believe your pick up or drop off will take longer than 15 minutes, you will need to pay for visitor parking using one of the pre-pay kiosks. Warning: IF you park near the cardboard recycling bin, in the very northwest corner of the parking lot, please turn on your flashers – or you may receive a citation.

PERMISSION TO RELEASE A CHILD
If someone other than a parent, guardian, or designee specified on your child’s Admission Agreement form will be responsible for picking your child up from school,
• A Release Authorization Form MUST be completed before staff can release your child to that person.
• Release Authorization needs to be written and not verbal; NO child will be released to someone other than their own parent, guardian or designee without written permission.
• We are required to ask person(s) with whom we are unfamiliar for identification prior to releasing your child. Tell them to bring their drivers license or photo identification.
• If there are issues related to custody and a child is not permitted by the court to go with a parent, we must have a copy of those instructions in your child’s file. Without such documentation we cannot deny a parent access to a child.

SHOES OFF
Please remove your shoes before entering the Infant/Toddler Room. The floor is washed daily and we like to keep it as clean as possible for the young children that sit, play, crawl, lie, etc. on it. We ask that toddlers have a pair of shoes that remain in their cubby and are reserved for wear in the Infant/Toddler Classroom.

SIGNING YOUR CHILD IN AND OUT
It is critically important that parents sign children in upon arrival and sign them out when they are picked up. For general safety and in the case of emergencies we must have an accurate list of all children in our care at any given time. It is the parent’s responsibility to document the arrival and departure of their child(ren) to and from BioKids on a daily basis.

SLEEPING INFANTS
If an infant is asleep upon arrival at BioKids, or falls asleep in our care, in equipment that is not designed for infant sleep (i.e., car seat, swing, bouncy seat, exer-saucer, stroller), the infant will be moved and placed on their back in their designated crib. A doctor’s note will be required if your child is to sleep using a wedge. Children
under the age of 1 year will not be allowed to have pillows, quilts, stuffed toys or other soft items in their crib. We suggest a sleep sack and a lightweight swaddling blanket be left in the classroom for your child’s daily sleeping needs.

**SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT**
Smoking is not allowed at any time in our classrooms or on our playgrounds.

**SPECIAL SERVICES**
If you feel your child is in need of special services related to health, assessment, mental health or education, please do not hesitate to ask us for assistance in locating programs that may be able to help you. IFPs and IEPs and other individualized plans for children with special needs will be addressed on an individualized, as needed basis.

**SUNSCREEN**
Preschool children spend at least two hours outside every day during the summer, an hour in the morning and again in the afternoon. Since it takes us about 30-45 minutes to apply sunscreen (akin to getting snow gear on in the winter) we ask that you apply sunscreen to your child each morning; in the afternoons we will re-apply prior to going outside. In the Infant/Toddler Room, we also encourage you to apply sunscreen prior to arriving each morning. In both classrooms we use a generic brand sunscreen; if you prefer something specific, please bring in a tube / bottle marked with your child’s name and we will be happy to apply it. As noted on the Sunscreen Permission Form that you completed upon enrolling in BioKids, we apply sunscreen between April 1 and September 30.

**TOILETING**
Children do not need to be out of diapers prior to enrolling in the mixed-age Preschool Room. When the parents and staff feel a child is ready, they can work together to create a supportive, positive approach to toileting. Older children are encouraged to use the restroom whenever they need to. Children are reminded to use the bathroom before and after playing outside as well as before and after napping.

**TELEVISION**
Watching television or other media is not part of BioKids normal programming. There is a television in the Preschool Room library area; it is used if extreme weather prohibits outdoor play for several days when, on the third such day, the children may watch a yoga DVD/video or G rated DVD/video. Movies are typically shown at staff sponsored PJ Nights that occur during non-school hours.

**TRANSITION FROM INFANT/TODDLER ROOM TO PRESCHOOL ROOM**
Children typically transition from the Infant/Toddler Room to the Preschool Room between 24 – 30 months of age. The transition is tailored to meet the needs of the individual; each child requires varying degrees of support from familiar Infant/Toddler staff. Transition plans are discussed with parents well in advance.

**WEATHER AND AIR QUALITY**
We go outside twice a day, before lunch and after afternoon snack. Even if it is very cold out, we try to go out briefly. Be sure to send clothing appropriate for the weather. Winter gear (boots, snow pants, hats and gloves) must be labeled. We apply sunscreen in the afternoon; please apply to your child in the morning prior to coming to school during late spring – summer months.

If the air quality is questionable, we check the Air Quality Index (AQI) at [http://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.showlocal&CityID=221](http://www.airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=airnow.showlocal&CityID=221) When the AQI is between 101 and 150, the state recommends that we make accommodations for those termed “sensitive.” A sensitive student is defined as having “significant or poorly controlled asthma, cystic fibrosis, chronic lung disease, congenital heart disease (requiring medications or having permanent effects), or compromised immune systems.” If your child fits into this category, please consult with your health care provider and mutually decide whether or not to inform us that an AQI of 101-150 necessitates your child being kept indoors. We are happy to accommodate this request. If the AQI is 151 or higher, we will not go outdoors.
**Daily Schedule**

*Infants and Toddlers*

Infants set their own eating and sleeping schedules, according to their individual rhythms and needs. When an older mobile infant, a toddler, is ready to have one nap a day they have a more recognizable schedule, listed below.

8:00  Greetings and free play, spontaneous small group activities (reading, singing)
9:30 – 10:00  Snack
10:00  Diaper changing
10:45  Get ready and go outside
11:00 - 11:30  Outside
11:30 – 12:00  Return to room, wash hands, lunch
12:00  Diaper changing, getting ready for nap
2:00  Diaper changing and quiet activities upon waking
3:00  Snack
3:30  Outside time and/or free play depending on weather
4:00  Diaper changing, continued free play, art / music
6:00  Good-bye

Diapers are checked/changed every two hours, or earlier if needed.

A typical day for the Preschool Classroom:

8:00 – 10:15  Free choice/open play, sack offered at 9:45
10:15 – 10:30  Clean up the toys, get ready to go outside
10:30 – 11:30  Outside
11:30 - 12:00  Wash hands, library time, large group circle time
12:15 – 12:40  Lunch
12:40 – 1:00  Get ready for rest time
1:00 – 3:00  Rest
3:00 - 3:30  Wake up, snack
3:45 – 4:30  Outside
4:30 – 6:00  Wash hands, free play, clean-up toys

The schedule has seasonal variations. In the summer, the mid-day playtime might be shortened due to heat, but the one at the end of the day might be lengthened. Likewise, in the winter, sometimes it is just too cold to stay outside for 45 minutes. In the winter it takes more than 15 minutes to get the toys put away and get everyone suited up for playing in the snow.

**Family Grievance and Dismissal**

BioKids’ administrators and staff are committed to maintaining an open door, open-forum approach to problem solving and conflict resolutions. If a family has a concern regarding the behavior of a student, the concern should be discussed with the director; it is unethical for a teacher to engage in a conversation with a parent about
any child other than the child of the conversing parent. If a family has a concern regarding a teacher, the concern should be discussed with the director. If a family has a concern regarding the behavior of the director, they should speak directly to the director. If they feel their concerns still have not adequately been addressed, they should present their grievance in writing to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will respond in writing to the parent and schedule a meeting, if necessary.

COMMUNITY CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT
A community classroom, or group care setting, is unique and very different from individualized child care in your home. When families enroll in group-care, they become part of a community that shares an educational philosophy, a classroom and staff, and, sometimes, tough situations. Please be assured that we will be as patient with your child and their challenging behavioral issues as we are with every other child in the classroom.

BITING
Biting is a common problem in childcare settings and it deserves specific attention. The chance that your child will bite another child or be bitten is fairly high. In 1996, NAEYC estimated that 1 out of every 10 children ages 12-36 months engaged in biting behaviors. Biting is, in fact, part of normal development for some children. Children who bite are not more likely to become bullies and children who are bitten are not more likely to become victims.

In children over 15 months of age, biting is often a result of frustration; it is most common in pre-verbal children and typically disappears altogether in children age 3 and over. Biting is a form of communication: usually a child is trying to say “play with me” or “NO!” It is very important that parents do not engage in playful or pretend biting with their child. Very young children are not able to distinguish between pretend play and socially appropriate behavior: often their mode of initiating play with another child is to bite, imitating pretend biting their parents have done with them. It is also very important that if a parent is bitten by their child, the parent make it clear to the child that biting is not OK. “Stop that – you hurt me. Biting hurts! No bite!”

Parents will be informed on a daily basis if their child has been bitten or has bitten another child. Every effort is made to support children who are bitten as well as families of children who bite. If a child bites once, parents will be notified and if there is a recurrence within the school week (M-F), staff and parents will meet to create an action plan. Such plans are developed as needed, and on an individual basis; an 18 month-old child bites for different reasons than a 4 year old. The plan will include an incident log as well as home and school strategies for dealing with the behavior.

DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS
As with biting, it is important that children, especially those with older siblings, do not engage in pushing or hitting at home. This can be difficult to enforce at home, some older children love to rough-house with younger siblings. Problems arise because the younger child cannot differentiate between this sibling-play and what is acceptable in a classroom/social setting.

Children who bite and children who exhibit other difficult behaviors (see below) may remain in our program, as long as the safety and environment of the rest of the children are not threatened. However, if a behavior become persistent and requires “one on one” supervision in order to safeguard the other children, or a child so disrupts the classroom activities that the teachers are unable to provide an appropriate environment to meet the needs of the other children, an action plan may consist of very specific expectations that, if not met, will result in a child’s dismissal from BioKids. As with biting, action plans are developed on an individual basis as needed to address the needs of the individual with the difficult behavior.

Persistent, difficult behaviors will be handled in the following way:

1. Documentation/Incident log: The staff will log the child’s behavior. The log will be dated and initialed by staff members.
2. Parent/Teacher/Director meeting: If a problem behavior is resulting in a child needing “one-on-one” supervision, a conference will be held with the child’s primary teacher, parent(s), and the director. At the meeting, parents and teachers will set guidelines for handling and preventing the problem behavior
at school and at home. Teachers will identify elicitors of the behavior and work proactively to prevent it. Parents will be expected to participate in helping to abate the behavior. This may include seeking intervention from the Children’s Center or from a child and family therapist.

3. Parent/Director/Steering Committee meeting: If the problem is not resolved, the next step will be to schedule a meeting between the child’s parent(s), the director, and the University of Utah Child Care Coordinator or another representative of the Steering Committee. Options for addressing the problem will be discussed and a timeline set for the successful resolution or reduction of the behavior.

4. Dismissal from the program: If the behavior persists beyond the agreed upon timeline, the child will be dismissed from the program.

PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL AND/OR DISMISSAL

We admit students of any race, color, religion, or ethnic origin.

BioKids requires a 30-day written notice for any child’s withdrawal from the program. Any remaining balance and/or co-op hours will be billed and payment will be expected.

BioKids has the right to terminate a contract with a family if any of the following behaviors occur on a consistent basis, and cannot be addressed with the steps outlined above:

- Biting
- Self–infliction of pain
- Violent temper tantrums
- Deliberate attempts to hurt other children or a teacher
- Inappropriate language
- Destroying property
- Inappropriate sexual behavior
- Any behavioral disorder that the staff is not capable of handling
- Incomplete or inadequate immunizations for their age

Should the removal of a child from the classroom be necessary in order to insure the safety and/or health of the other children or insure the quality of the environment, enrollment may be terminated upon a one-week written notice from the Director and any remaining balance will be refunded to the family.

BioKids’ Confidentiality Agreement

Because BioKids is a parent co-operative program, strongly promoting parent participation, it is our goal to make the program as family-friendly as possible.

It is understood that as a parent, you will most likely be spending time with your child at BioKids. It is essential that you honor family and staff privacy. All information about families and staff, including life circumstances is to be kept confidential. No personally identifying information is to be discussed outside of the program.

The information you provide BioKids regarding your child will be accessed by the Director and Teaching Staff; student files are maintained in a locked drawer in the BioKids office and their content will not be shared with any other person or agency without written parental permission. Parents can access their child’s file through the Director. Developmental assessments are made for each child by the Teaching Staff as well as by Student Interns from the Department of Family and Consumer Studies. These assessments are shared with parents privately, at Parent-Teacher Conferences or other times that may arise during the year. Information in your child’s file not be released to anyone or any entity other than a BioKids staff without your written permission.