

PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK
DISCOVERY STAGE PRESCHOOL AND CHILD CARE, INC.
Located inside St. Louis School
13125 County Road G
Caledonia, WI 53108

Discovery Stage is privately owned. All staff members meet State education requirements in accordance with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. Upon request, parents will be given a tour of Discovery Stage. Parents may spend time observing. All information will be given at time of touring.

There shall be no discrimination of children enrolling in Discovery Stage. Children will be accepted if they are able to function in our setting and do not require special equipment or specially trained teachers to meet their needs. A licensed physician's referral indicating the child's ability to adapt to the program must accompany the child's application. Final decisions on acceptance of special children will be made by the Directors. Children with development problems will be referred to the school district in which they reside or to the Birth to Three Program. Children may be serviced here or transported by the facility providing special education. Teachers will cooperate with special education teachers.

COMMUNICATION: Discovery Stage has an Open Door Policy. Parents are encouraged to visit the school and share their child's enthusiasm in daily activities. Special programs will be planned that will invite parents and grandparents to participate. Parents are invited to contribute to the daily program by making arrangements with the teacher to do one or more of the following:

- Bring in items of interest, especially of different cultures
- To teach songs or read stories
- To teach or demonstrate crafts

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled two times per year for children over 2-1/2. A monthly Newsletter and calendar provides information to our families. Parent Information Boards have lesson plans, lunch and snack menus and goals/objectives. Individual daily notes are sent home for children under 2-1/2. A parent may always request a conference or call during the day to check on their child.

Children may only attend on scheduled days and times. A child's time in the school may not exceed 10 hours per day.

Discovery Stage does not provide transportation.

A Director/Acting Director is present at all times to address your concerns and answer your questions.

DISCHARGE/TERMINATION POLICY:

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to discontinue a child's enrollment. This decision is based on the best interest of the child concerned, other children in the class and well being of everyone in the Center. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before a final decision is made (i.e. redirecting behaviors, providing choices, separating children who are not getting along or other interventions such as asking parents or family members to provide in-classroom support and guidance).

Discharge/termination of enrollment may be a result of the following.

- Abuse of other children, staff or property by child or parent
- Continued violation of Discovery Stage policies by child or parent
- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by child or parent
- The Center's inability to meet the child's needs or the parents' expectations
- Non-payment of fees

This is a partial list and management reserves the right to end the enrollment of a child at any time. Whenever possible, prior notification of one week will be provided to the parent in the event of enrollment termination.

FEE PAYMENTS AND REFUNDS:

REGISTRATION: A non-refundable registration fee must be paid at time of enrollment. All registration forms, immunization and health records must be on file **PRIOR** to admission.

FEE: See Parent Obligation Page

PAYMENT PROCEDURES: All day care and preschool fees must be paid bi-monthly or monthly in advance of scheduled times. All fees are due **as specified on the monthly billing statement**. All payments received later than these dates will be charged an additional \$5.00 per day late paying fee.

A late fee of \$2.00 per minute per child will be charged when children remain in the Center past 5:30 p.m.

VACATION POLICY: Vacation days without charge are permitted based on **full day/full year** attendance only. There are no vacation days granted for anyone attending less than a FULL day. Absences will be charged for preschool and hourly attendance. Vacation days may only be used when the child is absent for vacation provided a two week notice is given. They may not be used if the child attends. All holidays are charged days, unless you are eligible for vacation time. Vacation days are acquired with full-time attendance. On a monthly basis, your bill will reflect vacation time as earned.

<u>Days Attending</u>	<u>Max Earned Days/Year</u>	<u>No. of Days Earned</u>
5 full days/wk.	12	1 after ea. 1 month
4 full days/wk.	8	1 after ea. 1.5 months
3 full days/wk.	6	1 after 2 months
2 full days/wk.	4	1 after 3 months
1 full day/wk.	2	1 after 6 months

All schedule changes must be approved **IN ADVANCE** through the office. Based on availability, the change will be granted or denied. Please do not assume that additional time can be added. If your scheduled time is decreased, upon your request, the available time will be filled by someone on our waiting list. Please do not assume that you can automatically return to your former schedule. This must be discussed with an Administrator. If your schedule changes to add days per week, additional vacation days will be added accordingly. If you schedule changes to decrease time, vacation days will be subtracted.

FINAL WITHDRAWAL: Two week notice must be given prior to withdrawal, or regular scheduled time will be charged.

HEALTH CARE

All children attending Discovery Stage must be immunized in accordance with the State mandated guidelines.

Discovery Stage requires each child to have a Child Health Report on file that is dated either 6 months prior to admission or within 3 months after. This report is signed and dated by a Health Care Professional. This report must be renewed every 6 months up to age 2. After age 2 it is required every 2 years.

A record of the child’s updated immunizations must be on file in the Center on the first day of attendance. Parents must list known allergies. They will be posted in the classroom and in the kitchen.

Illness will be handled in the following manner: Parents will be called when their child is running a temperature, having flu-like symptoms, infected eyes, an unexplained rash, lethargic, not eating or drinking, or when the child is having difficulty breathing. Children will be isolated from the other children within view of a teacher.

Parents will be expected to pick up their child within an hour. An emergency card must be completed and updated whenever telephone numbers change. If a child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, the information regarding this disease will be posted. Health Departments must be notified. Reinstatement is upon a doctor's or health department's recommendation. If medications need to be given, an authorization must be completed by the parent. All medications and injuries are documented in a Center Medical Log. When a child is injured at Discovery Stage, parents will be notified by phone or note, depending on the severity of the injury. Discovery Stage may wash and bandage a superficial wound. Discovery Stage is required by law to report all suspected cases of child abuse to Protective Services.

NUTRITION

Children attending a full-day program will be provided a lunch and two snacks, provided they are able to eat what is on the posted menu. If they are unable to eat that which is on the posted menu due to food allergies, parents must provide alternate food. Parents may be asked to bring snack items to be shared. Parents will be provided with a monthly lunch menu. The Center serves 2% milk. The State mandates whole milk for children under 2. This milk must be provided by parents for children under 2 years. If parents want their child under 2 years to be given 2% milk, this must be specifically stated on child's Intake form.

If a child chooses to bring a cold lunch from home or Discovery Stage requests a cold lunch be brought in, it must meet the State nutritional guidelines and there will be no reduction in fees. The 2% milk will be provided.

Discovery Stage does not provide breakfast. Children arriving prior to 7:30 a.m. may bring in a breakfast from home. Children arriving after 7:30 a.m. should be fed at home. All breakfast items will be cleaned by 7:30 a.m.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY

Discovery Stage provides a program which facilitates the child's expression of his/her ideas and help him/her to expand his/her own self-initiated activities. Individuality and originality will be encouraged, thereby developing a positive self-concept, as well as, accepting and respecting the "uniqueness" of others. Classroom experiences will be designed to make the child aware of his identity as a member of a peer group and as a member of the community.

Frequently and whenever necessary, laps, hugs, and positive, verbal expressions will be provided as reassuring signs of acceptance throughout the day. Each child will be called by name and respected. Discovery Stage believes this to be a very important part of a child's development.

Each child will participate in activities that will be based on a specific, planned unit of discovery. These units will encompass colors, numbers, shapes, sizes, and letter recognition. The activities will be age appropriate, stimulating and creative. These units will stress the developmental skills of cutting, pasting, coloring, tracing, painting, and following simple instructions. The program will be rounded out with field trips (over age 3), and special guests.

Learning areas will be set up in the Center, where children can discover numerous environmental experiences at their own pace, as well as, teacher directed. They will learn about plants, animals, and the numerous wonders of science. A dramatic play area will be provided for cooperative play. Puppets will be used with children for dramatization, language development and the encouragement of originality.

Exposure to music, dance, food, and customs from a wide variety of cultures will be an integral part of the program. Music and rhythm instruments will enhance the learning of songs.

Free play periods will be part of each day. When properly guided and supervised, play can provide the preschool child with most of the learning experiences appropriate to his/her age. Also, the social experiences that come about naturally during play activities are an important part of the child's learning. Cognitive skills for more effective communication and interaction are developed as children are making choices and solving problems individually and in a group.

Equipment, posters, books, etc. that illustrate differences among children and human beings will be used in our program. Children will be encouraged to accept differences through the use of ethnic dolls, and puppets, mirrors and learning about other countries.

FIELD TRIPS: A bus is chartered for field trips. Parents are notified in advance of such trips. A permission form must be completed and submitted before the noted deadline. Parents are welcome to chaperone, unless otherwise stated on permission form. Children under 3 years will not be taken on field trips.

CHILD GUIDANCE

DISCIPLINE POLICY: No physical punishment will be used at Discovery Stage. Positive reinforcement will be used. Children will be "caught being good". When necessary, re-direction or substitution will be used. If a child continually disrupts the program or is exceptionally aggressive to other children, a conference with parents will be called. At this conference, consequences of poor choice behavior will be mutually agreed upon. If this does not work, it may be necessary to recommend a new environment for their child. Some children need more one-on-one attention. Recommendations will also be made for parents to attend Parenting Classes. "Time Out", 3-5 minutes, will be used when children are over 3 years old and only when absolutely necessary. Children will be asked to participate in problem-solving and developing safe classroom rules. Many reminders are given to children and explanations given when behavior is unacceptable.

CONTINGENCY PLAN

EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY:

Fire drills are practiced monthly. Evacuation plans for fire and tornado are posted in each room.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE SIGN IN AND SIGN OUT

A parent or guardian is required to accompany the children to and from Discovery Stage. A list of approved pick-up adults must be on file. Adult chaperones will be asked to show identification, if the staff is unfamiliar with the adult.

The SIGN IN / SIGN OUT book is located at the entrance of Discovery Stage. This book must be signed and filled out each day when children arrive and again when they leave.

INFANT/TODDLER INFORMATION

Your child is very important to us. Each child will be given as much individual attention as possible. We believe that we can, not only physically care for your child, but can also provide a stimulating environment. Our professional staff offers a curriculum that is appropriate to the age of each child 6 weeks to 2 1/2 years.

Daily communication with parents is necessary to meet the individual needs of each child. The following lists policies and reminders for parents enrolling children in the Infant/Toddler child care program. For additional information, refer to the School Fees page and Day Care Information.

AGE – IN INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAM: Children will be accepted at 6 weeks of age.

The ratio, as indicated by the State, is:

Infants:	6 weeks to 1 year:	4 children to 1 teacher / Infant Room
Toddlers:	1 to 2 years:	4 children to 1 teacher / Toddler Room
	Age 2 to 2 1/2 years:	6 children to 1 teacher / Toddler Room

INTAKE FORMS: Each child under two must have on file, a current statement from the parent about their specific patterns of eating, sleeping, toileting, communication, and comforting. This form is called an Intake Form and must be completed before a child is left in our care. It shall be reviewed and updated every 6 weeks, to coordinate care in the Center and home.

DAILY ACTIVITIES: In the Infant Room each child shall be allowed to form and follow the child's own pattern of sleeping and eating. In the Toddler Rooms, the children rest after lunch in the afternoon. Emphasis in activities shall be given to play as a learning and growth experience. Each infant and toddler shall receive physical contact; such as being held, rocked, talked to, sung to, and taken on walks inside and outside the Center. Routines, such as at bedtime or while feeding and/or diapering a child, shall be used as opportunities for language development and other learning experiences. While a non-walking child is awake, the child shall have the opportunity during each day for freedom of movement, such as creeping and crawling in a safe, clean, open, and warm uncluttered area. For the infant under one year old, "tummy time", during wake time, will be permitted and supervised.

Infants and toddlers shall be encouraged to play with a wide variety of safe toys and objects. Infants and toddlers shall be taken outdoors for part of each day, except during inclement weather or when a physician has ordered otherwise.

Food and formula brought from home shall be labeled with the child's name and refrigerated, if required. Open containers must be taken home each day and/or discarded within 24 hours. The contents of unfinished bottles must be discarded. Breast milk will be warmed in a cup of warm water. Formula will be warmed in the microwave. Caution is used to check temperature before feeding. Bottles will never be propped. If a child is unable to hold their bottle, they will be held.

Clothing in ample amounts must be provided by parents. Children will be changed promptly. Disposable diapers or cloth diapers with disposable liners and disposable wipes must be provided by parents. Soiled cloth diapers will be sent home for laundering. OSHA mandates that staff is not permitted to rinse soiled clothing. Diapering tables are washed and disinfected after each use. Staff wash hands before and after diapering and before feeding each child. If salves, lotions, or powders are used, permission must be in writing and posted by changing tables. Parents must provide such supplies. Toilet training will not begin until after age two, as mandated by State Law. After two this will be discussed and planned with parents before beginning.

Guidelines for toilet training are available upon request.

NAPTIME/SIDS/ATTENDANCE: Infants to age one will sleep in cribs. Discovery Stage will provide the sheets and launder them weekly and when necessary. Children over one year may be able to nap on a cot or sleeping bag. Sleeping bags must be provided for toddlers. Infants under 12 months of age shall be placed on their backs in a crib to sleep. In order for an infant to be placed in a position other than their back to sleep, a physician's orders signed and dated must be on file. Babies will sleep in a crib on a firm, tight-fitting mattress and there will be no soft blankets or comforters under the baby. Pillows, quilts, comforters, stuffed toys and other soft items will not be placed in the crib. If a blanket is used, the infant will be placed at the foot of the crib, with a thin blanket tucked around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as the infant's chest. Infants' heads shall remain uncovered during sleep.

EXTRA REMINDERS: All clothing and blankets, personal toys, bottles, etc. must be labeled and provided by parents. Extra clothes can be kept in a labeled diaper bag or plastic bin. A daily report of diapering, feeding, and activities is available at time of pick-up. This written report is especially important because staff may not necessarily work longer than 8 hours and your child may be dropped off and picked up before or after their scheduled time. Messages that are important for the staff shall be left in writing, in order to insure efficiency. Parents may visit children at any time during the day. When visiting, please enter and leave quietly so as not to disturb other children. Please understand that the teacher's priorities are the children, during your visit. She will do her best to use your visit time and your drop-off and/or pick-up times to receive information to better care for your child. However, those times may be interrupted, so please write down reminders on the daily report form.

All accidents occurring at home that may have caused a bump or bruise should be reported to a staff member upon arrival.