Program Philosophy

In addition to enriching a child’s life experiences and helping to establish a positive attitude about learning, a successful childcare program strives to meet the basic needs of the young child. While every child is clearly unique, we feel that all children share some fundamental needs that should guide the objectives of early childhood professionals:

1. **I NEED TO LEARN TO LOVE AND RESPECT MYSELF.**
   Each child is an individual and has a unique perspective of life based upon past experiences, innate predispositions and his/her own personal system of processing information and feelings from the world around him/her. A good program offers many opportunities for children to succeed and build a healthy self-esteem and to express their individuality.

2. **I NEED A SAFE AND INTERESTING PLACE IN WHICH TO LEARN AND GROW.**
   Children are naturally curious and have a need to explore their environment as well as discover their own uniqueness. An effective program provides a variety of stimulating activities with a balance of structure and free choice from all the basic developmental areas within a safe and well-defined environment.

3. **I NEED SOMEONE TO TRUST AND A ROUTINE TO COUNT ON.**
   An orderly environment, a predictable routine and most importantly, reliable loving caregivers help children to establish a trusting relationship with their world, which is necessary for the development of autonomy and independence.

4. **I NEED TO FEEL THAT I BELONG AND TO LEARN TO GET ALONG WITH OTHERS.**
   Every child has a need to belong and associate with people with whom they share their lives. Socially acceptable behaviors and positive relationships with others are learned through a mutual respect for oneself and the diverse character of other individuals and cultures, through positive role modeling and by social experimentation.
Discipline at Shining Stars

We feel that discipline with young children should be preventative, positive and private.

Using preventative discipline, teachers clearly define the limits and expectations in each area. When children test limits, they are firmly, but gently reminded of the rules. Continued testing may result in a consequence directly related to the misbehavior. For example, if a child is consistently disruptive during structured group time, he/she may be asked to leave the group for a short time and asked to rejoin it when they have better self-control. Generally, children have a strong desire to be a part of the group and this desire is a definite incentive for positive behavior.

We feel that if children are praised positively for appropriate behaviors, they will internalize what those who care for them value. We believe that if a child’s behavior needs to be corrected, they should be approached in a quiet, private manner that maintains their integrity and self-esteem. At no time is a child to be humiliated or degraded as a consequence of misbehavior. Discipline will at no time be associated with rest, food or toileting.

We feel that support and encouragement from the child’s family is an essential ingredient in establishing effective, positive discipline at school. Consistent communication and cooperation is very important. Parents will be notified if a child has a chronic or serious discipline problem. Some discipline problems are due to changes at home, such as divorce, moving to a new home or a new baby brother or sister. Open communication between parents and teachers about such changes can help us to better understand a child’s motivations and to help him/her deal with feelings in a constructive way.

If a child’s behavior threatens the safety of him/herself or others in the school, and if behavior does not change with reasonable positive discipline techniques, suspension and/or dismissal may be necessary. The amount of notice given to a parent for dismissal will be determined by the extent of the effect of the child’s behavior on the program.