

Room-2-Bloom Early Learning
Handbook

Presented by the
Octorara Area Senior High School
Career Technology Child Care Education Program

Room-2-Bloom Early Learning

Mission and Purpose

The mission of a child development laboratory is to provide high school students with the opportunity to observe and interact with pre-school children in a model setting that utilizes exemplary practices. In addition, these experiences offer high school students a model from which they can learn and discuss real-life concepts related to child development.

High school students that are preparing for a career as a teacher or child care provider elect to take the Child Care Education course as a part of Octorara Area Sr. High School's Career Technology Program. The course description in the Octorara Area Sr. High School program of studies booklet, under the Family and Consumer Science (FACS) department, is as follows:

This 3-credit course is for students who want to "major" in this Career & Technical Education program while in high school. The program will meet 2 to 3 hours per day for three years. This is an extensive program of study for students interested in working with younger children in the future. Students will learn professionalism in the classroom, health and safety regulations, elements of setting up a classroom environment, classroom management techniques, development of lesson plans and curriculum, observation and assessment techniques, conducting learning activities and experiences, community and family communication, crime and violence prevention, and a clinical experience in early childhood education programs. The senior year may culminate in an internship or co-op placement where students can use the skills they have learned in a work setting. Students completing the program will be given the appropriate NOCTI test. Students who score at the advanced level on the NOCTI will be awarded the *PA Skills Certificate*. Students will also have the opportunity to earn free college credit when completing the program through the Statewide Articulation program.

In the classroom, the teacher and students plan and carry out activities for children, ages three to five, that encourage physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. As facilitators, the teacher and students will provide a framework for a caring learning environment. Activities in literacy, language, art, science, dramatic play, music, movement, and mathematics are examples of learning areas that are covered in the curriculum.

In order to maintain a caring community of learners and a safe environment, the teacher and students of the Room-2-Bloom Early Learning program will respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each child and respect and support the families and children of our program. All participants in the program will interact with children based on current knowledge of child development and education, recognizing that children are active learners. The teacher and students will continue to learn, grow and contribute to the field of child development and be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from others. In addition guaranteeing to maintain confidentiality and high standards of conduct, Room-2-Bloom Early Learning staff and students will advocate for children and families.

Enrollment

An application for admission to the program is available by e-mailing Miss Pitts at tpitts@octorara.org, or contacting the high school office at 610-593-8253. The application includes the following requirements:

- Student information
- Parent/guardian information
- Custody information: any document issued by the court, such as a “no contact order” or “joint custody order,” should be on file with the FACS teacher
- Health information:
 - Immunization record
 - Physician’s report of child’s physical examination within 12 months of attendance
 - Allergy Action Form – *if applicable*
 - List of current medications – *if applicable*
 - Asthma Action Plan Form – *if applicable*
 - Emergency and Release Information (will be on file with the FACS teacher, school nurse, and high school office)
- Financial and Procedural Agreement – Parental consent is given through a signed statement accepting the philosophy and procedures of the program, including laboratory fees, late charges and penalties, admissions, and consent to photographing, videotaping, and assessment of children for educational and program planning purposes.
- Special Care Plan Form for Special Needs children – *if applicable*

Schedule

- The Room-2-Bloom Early Learning program will follow the high school’s four-day cycle schedule. Hours and days are subject to change according to changes in the high school schedule. A tentative schedule will be provided at the time of application.
- Duration:
 - Select Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the school year

Emergency/Inclement Weather

If the Octorara Area School District calls for a 2-hour delay or a school closing, the program will not run that day. If the Octorara Area School District calls for an early dismissal, you will be contacted to pick up your child immediately. Your home/cell phone number will be added to the school district’s call list for closures, delays, emergencies, etc.

Laboratory Fees and Tax Information

A \$50 registration fee is due as soon as possible to reserve your child's space in the program. This fee is a part of the overall cost of the program. The total fee works out to be a total of \$10 per day depending on the length of the Fall and/or Spring session. The fee covers the costs of materials, supplies, equipment and snacks. This fee qualifies as a childcare tax credit. The FACS teacher will provide parents/guardians with a receipt for payments made and the Octorara Area School District's tax identification number. OASD reserves the right to cancel any class if there are insufficient registrations. The fee will be refunded if the class is full or if there is insufficient enrollment.

Pick-up and Drop-off Procedures

Children must be closely attended to upon arrival and departure. They shall hold the hand of a caregiver as they exit a vehicle until they arrive at a protected play space. They shall also hold the hand of a caregiver until seated in the departing vehicle. All children shall be properly restrained in the vehicle upon arrival and before departure.

All children shall only be delivered by and released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual designated in the application. Special instruction forms are available to be filled out, if circumstances are subject to change for a specific day and/or week.

In an emergency, a child may be released to an individual upon the oral designation of the parent, only if the identity of the individual can be verified by the FACS teacher.

Field Trips

Field trips are arranged with parental involvement. Field trip participants must be transported according to Department of Transportation requirements, including necessary safety seats or seat belt restraints.

Field trips will only be taken to locations where adequate supervision can be provided and pre-school safety has been taken into consideration.

Each child must have a signed parental permission form. These forms, along with emergency contact information and a first aid kit, will be available at all times during a field trip.

Clothing

Students should wear comfortable, washable clothing suitable for active play. In accordance with the weather, clothing should also be appropriate for indoor and/or outdoor play. Shoes should be secure.

Snacks

The teacher and students will provide a healthy snack each day. Please notify the FACS teacher about any food allergies or preferences; this information should be provided on the application form.

High School Student Supervision

Only students enrolled in Octorara Area Sr. High School's Family and Consumer Science classes, primarily the Career Technology Child Care Education Program, will be permitted to interact with the children in the classroom. These enrolled students will receive training and relevant information before being permitted to interact with preschool children. High school students will be carefully supervised by the FACS teacher, during all interactions with pre-school children.

Discipline

High school students shall be trained in specific guidance techniques including:

- Providing clear and simple limits
- Maintaining age-appropriate expectations for young children
- Creating a caring atmosphere
- Keeping children productively involved
- Modeling appropriate behaviors
- Positively redirecting inappropriate behaviors toward desired outcomes
- Giving children choices between two acceptable alternatives
- Encouraging children to work together to solve problems and make cooperative decisions
- Encouraging children to use their words to solve problems
- Providing logical and appropriate consequences for children's actions
- Removing children from a situation until they are calm and able to discuss the problem

The FACS teacher will monitor interactions between high school students and preschool children to reinforce appropriate guidance techniques. Corrective intervention shall be employed as needed. The FACS teacher will intervene in any unusual circumstance. If a child exhibits continuous disruptive behavior, the FACS teacher will complete an incident form detailing the event. This form requires a parent/guardian signature. Repeated negative behaviors may result in suspension or dismissal from the program. Negative behaviors may include but are not limited to uncooperative behavior, hitting, biting, fighting, obscenity and/or possession of a dangerous instrument. Parents are required to sign the discipline policy, when filling out the application.

Hygiene

All children enrolled in the program must be toilet trained. In the event, of an occasional accident, a change of clothes must be provided by the parents/guardians that will be stored in the classroom for the duration of the session.

A toilet and sink will be accessible to all children, high school students and teachers. Children will be assisted during toileting by the FACS teacher. Hands must be washed with soap after toileting and before eating. Paper towels will be used as towels and washcloths and discarded after one use. Tables and food preparation surfaces will be sanitized before and after snack time. Paper cups, plates, and napkins will be used for eating and drinking and discarded after one use.

Illness

Children benefit from routine and consistency. If your child is accepted into the program, please encourage regular attendance. However, a child should not attend the program if the following symptoms have occurred within the last 24 hours...

- Temperature over 100 degrees
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Severe coughing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Pink eye
- Chicken pox that are not scabbed
- Head lice, including visible nits
- Visible impetigo
- Open and/or weeping sores
- Any other communicable disease

If a child becomes ill after arriving at school, a parent/guardian or emergency contact person will be called to pick up the child immediately. The child will be isolated from other children until picked up. Families will be notified in writing or by telephone when children have been exposed to a communicable disease. Families should immediately notify the FACS teacher, if the child becomes ill with a communicable disease.

Accidental Injury

If a child is injured at school, a parent/guardian will be called, and first aid will be administered either by the FACS teacher or when available, the school nurse. If a child needs immediate medical attention, the FACS teacher will call 911, then, the parent/guardian or the child's physician will be called. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be phoned. The FACS teacher or school administrator will accompany the child to the hospital, bringing records and parent permission forms.

Child Abuse

Teachers of the Octorara Area School District are mandatory reporters of child abuse to the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. Public school reporting procedures must be followed, and strict confidentiality will be maintained. The safety of the children is insured through supervision of the enrolled high school students by the FACS teacher or the adult teacher's assistants/aides.

General Safety

A first-aid kit will be readily accessible to the FACS teacher at all times and will contain the following:

- Anti-bacterial hand sanitizer
- Adhesive bandages
- Sterile gauze pads
- Tweezers
- Tape
- Scissors
- Disposable gloves

The FACS teacher will have access to a telephone in order to facilitate direct contact between parents/guardians and the classroom.

Indoor Safety

Play equipment used by children will be clean, in good repair, and free from rough edges, sharp corners, pinch and crush points, splinters and exposed bolts. Play equipment will be age appropriate. Protective receptacle covers will be placed in electrical outlets accessible to children. Cleaning materials and other toxic materials will be kept in a container or area that is locked or inaccessible to children and away from food, food preparation areas, and childcare spaces.

Outdoor Safety

Outdoor play space will be protected from unsafe areas or conditions. If unsafe areas or conditions exist, a physical barrier will be employed. Barriers may be permanent or portable, but will be in use when children are present. Outdoor space will be safe for large muscle activity, including riding, climbing, jumping, and running. A water play table or a container used for water play that contains unfiltered water will be emptied and cleaned daily.

Fire, Bomb Threat, or Other Emergency Procedures... in accordance with local district policy

Evacuation procedures are posted in each classroom. In the event of real emergency or drill, these procedures are to be followed.

Shelter-in-Place Procedures

In the event of a chemical, biological, or national emergency, “Shelter-in-Place” guidelines would be followed. In the event of such an emergency, children outdoors would be brought inside the building without delay. Windows would be shut, and entry doors to the school would be locked to get a better seal. The FACS teacher would immediately take attendance to be certain all children are present.

For the safety of everyone, the school would be kept in “lock-down” status. This condition would mean that staff and children would not be permitted to leave the facility until an official “all-clear” message is given. While being separated from a child in an emergency can be extremely unsettling, having parents come to the school to pick up their child could expose themselves, their child, and others in the program to hazardous conditions. It is expected that parents cooperate with these guidelines.

These guidelines have been adapted from the Pennsylvania Department of Education Family and Consumer Sciences Child Development Laboratory Procedures and Guidelines – Bureau of Career and Technical Education.

Questions?

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