

**Safari Childcare®**  
we help them prepare for the jungle out there!®

# MANIFESTO



[www.safarichildcare.com](http://www.safarichildcare.com)

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# Safari Childcare's Mission Statement



Our mission statement represents the guiding principles we incorporate in our daily efforts to serve our: children, parents, staff, and community.

We continuously strive to reflect upon our vision of quality in the hopes that our: children, parents, and staff will experience the following...

## **For Our Children**

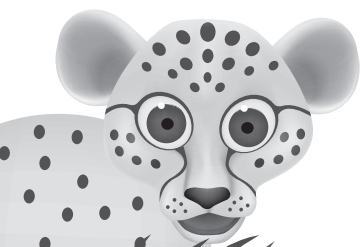
- To be nurtured, respected and treated with the utmost care and compassion.
- To benefit from learning environments which foster the achievement of developmental milestones including: Cognitive, Physical, Social, and Emotional growth.
- To ultimately be prepared for the upcoming challenges of elementary school through our comprehensive curriculum and child assessments.

## **For Our Parents**

- To feel comfortable communicating with teachers and directors and to enjoy taking an active role in their child's care and development.
- To have the peace of mind and confidence they are continually making a quality decision for their child(ren).
- To believe in our ongoing commitment to develop a teaching team that is trustworthy and skilled.

## **For Ourselves**

- To be viewed as a company who prides ourselves in making a difference in the lives of the families we serve.
- To feel the gratification that comes from the acknowledgement from our peers and community that our accomplishments are special and something to be proud of.
- To pursue our work in an environment that is honest, fair, collaborative, and challenging in order to experience the unique internal rewards that come from participating in the positive development of our children.



# Our Child Development & Early Education Philosophies

## Introduction

We recognize children are learning constantly; it is the nature of growth. Our duty as caregivers and educators is to provide experiences which support and enhance this natural process. To identify ways to foster healthy development, we subscribe to the philosophies of the pioneers in the study of child development, namely Jean Piaget and Erik Erikson. Below, is a brief summary of those philosophies, followed by how we incorporate them into our program.

## Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development

- **Who is Jean Piaget?**

Jean Piaget (1896-1980), the most renowned of cognitive theorists, held that there are four major stages of cognitive development: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational. Each stage includes specific ways of thinking based upon the child's age. The first two stages directly impact Safari Childcare's curriculum and assessments.

- **Sensorimotor (0 to 2 yrs):**

Infants think through their senses and motor abilities. They understand objects to the extent that they can perform actions on them. During the early months, caregivers will allow every opportunity for infants to develop awareness about how they interact with the world around them.

An environment with colors, music, sounds, textures, reflective surfaces, and smiling adult faces playing pat-a-cake and peek-a-boo all provide experiences which take advantage of the sensorimotor stage of development. When the infant learns that the rattle he dropped still exists even though it's out of sight (object permanence), and the toddler begins to remember experiences (mental representation) and even pretend, then the child is closer to reaching the pre-operational stage.

- **Preoperational (2 to 6 yrs):**

Preschool children begin to think symbolically as they use language and pretend; however, their thinking is not always logical or consistent. The preoperational stage of development offers a valuable guideline for introducing concepts to preschoolers. According to Piaget, children's thought processes are different from adults. Children must engage in many direct experiences which challenge their thinking in order to move onto the next cognitive level of development.

**Thought patterns unique to the pre-operational stage include:**

- The inability to conserve: Children think that a row of four pennies spread apart to span three feet contains more pennies than the row of four closely-space pennies spanning 6".
- Animism is the idea held by preschoolers that everything is alive, just like they are. When a child thinks they hurt a stuffed animal they dropped, or thinks that the sun went to bed at nighttime, this pre-operational characteristic is evident.



- **Literalness:** When a parent scolds a child, saying “watch your tongue,” the literal thought would prompt a child to actually stick out his tongue and try to look at it. Pre-operational children also blend intuitive and scientific fact, sometimes explaining things with a combination of fantasy and misapplied information.
- **Class inclusion errors:** Most preschoolers can sort things by category, but cannot grasp the idea that something can belong to two categories simultaneously.
- If we keep in mind the unique characteristics of children’s pre-operational thought patterns, we can respond at their developmental level. By providing classroom experiences that challenge children to naturally revise their thinking, rather than correcting, arguing, or forcing cognitive growth, we are giving children exactly what they need to reach the next cognitive level.
- **Concrete Operational (7 to 11 yrs):**  
School-age children can begin to think logically and consistently, but only about logical and concrete features of their world. They can only think about actual physical objects, they cannot handle abstract reasoning. This stage is also characterized by a loss of egocentric thinking.  
  
During this stage, the child has the ability to master most types of conservation experiments, and begins to understand reversibility.  
  
The concrete operational stage is also characterized by the child’s ability to coordinate two dimensions of an object simultaneously, arrange structures in sequence, and transpose differences between items in a series.
- **Formal Operational (12 yrs+):**  
Adolescents are able to think hypothetically and abstractly. The formal operational stage is the fourth and final stage in Piaget’s theory. It begins at approximately 12 years of age, although according to Piaget, some people may never reach this stage of cognitive development.  
  
The ability to formulate hypotheses and systematically test them to arrive at an answer to a problem, the ability to think abstractly and to understand the form or structure of a mathematical problem, and the ability to reason contrary to fact. (They can deal with the statement “what would happen if snow were black”). Formal logical systems can also be acquired, and those in this stage can handle proportions, algebraic manipulation, and other purely abstract processes. If  $a + b = x$  then  $x = a + b$ .

## **Erikson’s Psychosocial Stages of Development**

- **About Erikson**  
According to Erikson, development occurs through a series of basic conflicts throughout the life span. How a person fares during each of these stages determines the direction of development and personality for life.
- **Trust vs. Mistrust (0 to 1 year)**  
This stage is referred to as the oral-sensory phase of development. Important Event: Feeding.  
  
Babies learn either to trust or to mistrust that others will care for their basic needs including: nourishment, sucking, warmth, cleanliness, and physical contact.  
  
Overall responsiveness toward the child during this time will discourage fears and encourage trust. Trust will help a child understand concepts such as object permanence, which is the understanding that people and objects still exist even when the child cannot see them.  
  
The concept of object permanence can be seen through games like peek-a boo (the child thinks you have actually disappeared, which is why they are SO excited to see you when you do re-appear).

This growing sense of trust and understanding helps the child form positive relationships in the future as well as sets the lifelong expectation that the world will be a trusting and pleasant place to live.

- **Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (1 to 3 yrs)**

This stage is referred to as the muscular-anal stage of development. Important event: Toilet Training. Children learn either to be self-sufficient or to doubt their own abilities while engaged in activities.

Typical activities during this stage include: toileting, feeding, walking and talking. If toddlers are punished inappropriately, they could develop a sense of shame or doubt, which could lead to a lack of self-confidence in the future.

It is important for caregivers to be reassuring yet not overbearing as the toddlers learn to feed, toilet, and get dressed by themselves during this stage.

- **Initiative vs. Guilt (3 to 6 yrs)**

This stage is referred to as the locomotor stage of development. Important Event: Independence

Children want to undertake many adult-like activities, sometimes overstepping the limits set by parents and feeling guilty.

They are eager to take on more responsibility, and often find a hero to emulate by dressing like them or doing something they do.

Caregivers need to help children understand that certain things are just not allowed while simultaneously teaching them not to feel guilty about their choices.

Encouraging harmless behavior such as an active imagination or other “child-like” play is important in helping the child not feel that they consistently make the “wrong” choices.

If a child is not able to do anything on their own, they may develop a sense of guilt that they are not capable.

- **Industry vs. Inferiority (7 to 11 yrs)**

This stage is referred to as the Latency stage of development. Important Event: School

Children busily learn to be competent and productive or feel inferior and unable to do anything well.

It is important for children to learn the need to succeed and to discover the importance of being productive.

Caregivers can encourage children at this stage to help out with tasks such as: setting the table, watering the plants etc.

Peer relations are continuing to form and can shape a child’s personality for years to come.

Difficulty transitioning between the world of home and the world of peers can lead to a feeling of inferiority.

Learning to take pride in their accomplishments will assist children in their peer relations and overall self-confidence.

- **Identity vs. Role Confusion (12-18 yrs)**

This stage is referred to as adolescence. Important Event: Peer relationships.

The resolution to conflicts in previous stages determines advancement through this stage.

Teenagers must achieve a sense of identity as they choose: occupations, sexual roles, and political and religious views. Role confusion can become threatening if they are not able to make decisions regarding their life choices. Adolescents tend to separate themselves from the identity of their parents during this time.

- **Intimacy vs. Isolation (19-40 years)**

The stage is referred to as Young Adulthood. Important Event: Love Relationships

This is a time of establishing intimate relationships with others and being able to relate on a deep personal level. An individual, who fears commitment and intimacy, will often feel isolated. It is important to give and share with another individual without considering what you will get in return.

- **Generativity vs. Stagnation (40-65 years)**

This stage is referred to as Middle Adulthood. Important Event: Parenting

This stage is defined by one's ability to care for another person.

If a person does not have children of their own, they should find a way to help future generations in some other way (environmentally, promoting equality, etc.) A person must deal with any concerns they may have about this concept or it could lead to stagnation later in life.

- **Integrity vs. Despair (65 yrs to death)**

This stage is referred to as Middle Adulthood. Important Event: Parenting

This stage is defined by one's ability to care for another person.

If a person does not have children of their own, they should find a way to help future generations in some other way (environmentally, promoting equality, etc.) A person must deal with any concerns they may have about this concept or it could lead to stagnation later in life.

We at Safari Childcare do our best to help guide the children through Piaget and Erikson's stages of development in the hopes they can reach and achieve developmental milestones. Piaget and Erikson each illustrated unique stages of growth to define how child development occurs. Their philosophies are incorporated into our: classroom structures, lesson plans, child assessments and daily interactions with the children.

## **Other notable theorists that help shape our child development philosophies include:**

- **Abraham Maslow: Who is He?**

Abraham Maslow is most well known for his hierarchy of needs. He feels that humans are motivated by unsatisfied needs and suggests that lower needs need to be satisfied before higher needs will be achieved.

### **Hierarchy of Needs:**

- Self Actualization: To become everything that one is capable of becoming maximizing full potential.
- Esteem: Self-esteem results from competence or mastery of a task. Attention & recognition that comes from others is another form of esteem.
- Love: Love and belongingness can occur after safety & physiological needs are met.
- Safety: Safety needs have to do with establishing stability and consistency.
- Physiological: Physiological needs are basic needs such as: air, water, food, sleep, etc.



## Here at Safari Childcare...

At Safari Childcare we do our best to help children maximize their “full potential” by strengthening “self-esteem” and giving them the “attention and recognition” they deserve for their many accomplishments. We ensure they feel a sense of “love and belonging” from their teachers and classmates in our supportive environment. Your child will feel the “stability and consistency” that comes from a place where the teachers and staff really care about their individual needs. Whether it is a special toy or activity that makes your child feel more secure our staff will go above and beyond ensuring the children’s physiological needs are being met.

- **Other notable theorists**

John Watson, B.F. Skinner, and Albert Bandura contributed greatly to the environmentalist perspective of development. Environmentalists believe the child’s environment shapes learning and behavior; in fact, human behavior, development, and learning are thought of as reactions to the environment. This perspective leads many families, schools, and educators to assume that young children develop and acquire new knowledge by reacting to their surroundings.

The ability to respond appropriately to this environment is necessary for young children to participate in teacher-initiated learning activities. Success is dependent on the child following instructions from the teacher or the adult in the classroom. At Safari Childcare we make sure our “environment” is filled with age-appropriate materials and equipment in order to effectively stimulate each child’s development.





# Safari Childcare's Learning Goals



## About Our Learning Goals

We recognize that there's no cookie-cutter approach to development. Each child is unique, and develops at his or her own pace. We do, however, look for signs that each child is progressing along a sequence of significant developmental benchmarks. These benchmarks allow the teachers and caregivers to approach each child at the appropriate developmental level. The following pages list the benchmarks of specific developmental categories:

- Social emotional benchmarks are concerned with how a child develops self-awareness, expresses feelings, and interacts with others.
- Language benchmarks note how a child develops speech sounds and communication skills.
- Cognitive benchmarks note how a child acquires and uses information.
- Motor skill benchmarks track how a child uses his or her body with control and efficiency.
- Hygiene and self-help benchmarks note how a child cares for personal needs in healthy ways.

As educators and caregivers, it is our responsibility to make sure children transition through these stages with positive experiences. We provide for the physical and emotional needs of infants. We never scold, but positively encourage toddlers and preschoolers, training them in self-help skills; and we provide an environment which allows children to fail, encourages them to succeed, and fosters self-esteem. We recognize each child as an individual and find ways to stimulate their development in a way that works for them. Our child assessments are designed to evaluate each child's individual progress which helps provide important feedback during conferences with parents. We strive to encourage children to reach and achieve these developmental milestones and can offer additional resources for parents in the event the child needs assistance.

## Developmentally Appropriate Educational Curriculum for All Ages:

Our curriculum balances child-directed activities with teacher-directed activities, and provides for a smooth transition between each.

## Child-Directed Activities

Children engage in a variety of self-selected Learning Centers available throughout the classroom environment. To the classroom visitor, it may look as if the children are "just playing." It is during this play that children do the most learning.



# Why Play?

## Introduction

Play is the work of children, and through play children benefit intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. The benefits of play for children's intellectual growth are numerous. As children play out the situations in their lives or pretend lives, they are met with situations they do not understand. As they approach the situations and attempt to make sense of them in the context of their own lives, they practice problem-solving skills and build new knowledge. Play is so important to a child's development and research has shown the benefits. Research says play is important for children of all abilities because it lays the foundation for reading, writing, mathematical reasoning and creativity. Play has an undeniable influence on every aspect of a child's development. (McElwain, 2001)

## The Power of Play

Play... aids growth... is a voluntary activity... offers children freedom of action... provides an imaginary world children can master... has elements of adventure in it... provides a base for language building... furthers interest and concentration... is vitalizing... has unique power for building interpersonal relations... refines a child's judgments... is the way children investigate the material world... is always a dynamic way of learning... offers opportunities for mastery of the physical self... ... is a way of learning adult roles... can be academically structured... is essential to the survival of humans... (Frank and Theresa Caplan, The Power of Play)

## Physical Skills

(Gross motor) These skills develop as a child at play learns to reach, crawl, walk, run, climb, jump, throw, catch and balance. Fine-motor skills, (the use of hands and fingers) advance as he or she handles play things, and small items such as beads, lacing cards and puzzles, which develops beginning writing skills. It is very important that the fine motor skills develop for a child to be able to hold a pencil and write, very important in kindergarten and preschool years. That is why many children at these ages are "playing" and manipulating small things in the classroom setting.

## Mental Skills

Mental skills are sharpened through play that encourages problem solving and demonstrates cause and effect. Children learn about shapes, colors, sizes and other concepts through play. Language blossoms as a child interacts with others and uses words for favorite playthings and activities.

## Social Skills

Learning to follow directions, cooperate, take turns, abide by the rules, share are important social skills mastered through play.



## Emotional Skills

Play also builds emotional skills, as children experience pleasure, bond with others, and work through feelings during role-play. Self-esteem, so crucial to one's long term happiness and success, also is enhanced when children achieve goals through play.

## Creativity

Play stimulates creativity and imagination, as well, and allows children to expand the horizons of their world. When a child pretends to be a doctor, a teacher, a parent, or a firefighter, he or she learns that life is full of possibilities and opportunities. Children learn how to be caring adults.

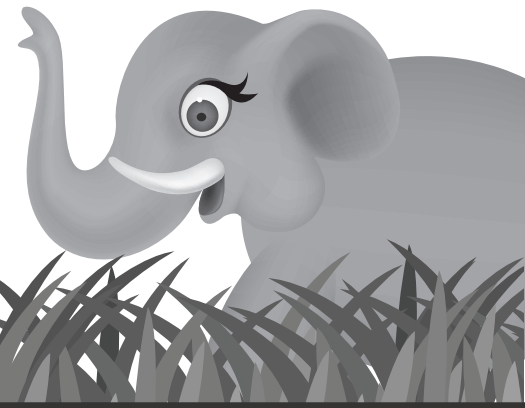
Perhaps the most important of all, play is fun. Years later, when we recall our childhood, it is the happy times spent playing with special friends that we remember most fondly.

## Playing IS Learning

Play is not what we do all day long but it is an important block of time in our day where we can assess children's development. We can recognize quickly the children that have never been away from home by their social skill development. We work to develop those skills with various opportunities to grow and learn in all areas of cognitive and emotional development. Children's play is more than just play. Through play, children are exploring the world and developing skills that will help them to live in the world. Play truly serves a higher purpose. (McElwain, 2001)



# Learning Centers



The most effective way to incorporate play into the classroom is through learning centers. They are small stations around the room that provide open ended activities for children to develop skills in all areas of the curriculum- language, social studies, science, mathematics, art, music, and drama. Learning Centers allow the children to make their own decision about where they want to go, how long they want to stay there, and what they want to do. Learning Centers, equipped with an assortment of materials, foster children's development through their self-selected activities. ALL our classrooms have the following:

## **Art Center:**

The art center is a place where children can explore a variety of interesting materials. Young children show us what they know through their artwork. They learn by using the senses and the center provides a multi- sensory experience for them. The materials in the art center include: paints, crayons, clay, colored pencils, yarn, natural materials, scissors, stencils, pencils, pens, and a wide variety of paper.

## **Blocks Center:**

The blocks center is an area that provides children with interesting construction materials for designing and building. It allows small groups of children to share materials, work together to make designs, and work out problems. Children learn about size, shapes, measurements, distance, and other building skills. The block center includes a variety of blocks, trucks, road signs, dinosaurs, or other related accessories.

## **Library Center:**

The library center is a comfortable place for children to explore and enjoy good books. Favorite books are displayed with cozy space for reading alone or with a friend. A beanbag or some soft chairs make the library center a comfortable place to practice beginning reading skills.

## **Dramatic Play Center:**

The dramatic play center allows children to recreate the social roles that they see in their everyday lives. The basic set-up center is an environment that is very familiar to most children-the home. However, as the year goes on, the center will evolve into a post office, restaurant, grocery store, office, and any other environment that the children would like. Dress-up clothes, child-sized furniture, and various props are included in this center. Prop boxes based on themes and stories encourage children to act out fantasy roles. Many times I can assess comprehension as children retell the stories I have read to them in this center. As children pretend, they develop social and emotional skills. This is encouraged by the props in the "kitchen", puppets, and a sand and water table.

## **Manipulative Center:**

The manipulative center provides children with interesting materials to explore. Exploration is essential to the development of mathematical and logical thinking. Some materials are introduced to the children in a lesson that gives them ideas on how to use them. Others are given to the children to explore and figure out on their own. There are a variety of materials. Wooden beads with strings, waffle blocks,

alphabet blocks, play money, colored blocks, tiles, magnetic letters, puzzles, cars, lacing bears, linking toys, things that snap together, pegboards and pegs, etc. are some of the materials found in the manipulative center. All these materials help children exercise their fine motor skills.

### **Science Center:**

The science center is a place for children to investigate, explore, and experiment with on-going manipulatives, activities, and projects. Curiosity, questions, and experimentation are all important to learning. A sand and water table is provided for the children to experiment with volume, measurement, floatation, etc. On some days, the water will be magically colored blue or red to spark imagination and wonder. Sometime very interesting conversations (language building and vocabulary building) take place here. This center fosters free exploration and deepening curiosity about our nature environment and the laws of physics that govern it. Equipped with magnets, magnifying glasses, and rotating collections such as leaves, rocks or birds nests, it instigates hours of self-directed study.

### **Computer Lab:**

The computer lab is a place where various developmentally appropriate computer programs are explored. Children have opportunities to go to the center to work independently with the computer. They learn to point, click, and master hand-to-eye coordination. Cognitive skills are developed here as children learn what actions are necessary to make the program move and create. Students have opportunities to work with math programs that teach numbers, language programs to teach letter identification in simple games and much more.

### **Music:**

Children may dance, sing and enjoy different types of sounds and rhythms through a diverse selection of classroom cassettes and compact discs. They are also encouraged to make their own music and rhythm, with instruments such as cymbals, triangles, tambourines and maracas.

### **Language & Literacy:**

Development of language skills and reading-readiness skills is encouraged with classroom materials such a flannel board set, and language-development pictures for children to create their own storyline. Preschool classrooms also make pencil and paper available for spontaneous writing. Of course, all classrooms are rich with plenty of books.

### **Games & Puzzles:**

To facilitate cognitive development, children can help themselves to activities that develop concepts such as numbers, colors, shapes, sizes, matching, and memory.

### **Large Motor:**

Equipment located both in the playground and in the classroom, enables children to expend their high energy while developing their large muscles. Climbers, riding toys, tunnels and large rocking boats help accomplish this.



# More About Safari Childcare

## Professional Staff

Safari Childcare employs energetic, patient, nurturing, and enthusiastic early childhood educators. Seasoned professionals are drawn by our progressive philosophies, above-average pay scale and excellent benefits. As a result, our staff becomes an extended family. Many of the original employees from our very first school in 1991 are still with us making a difference in children's lives.

- **Directors** oversee daily operations in order to maintain a high quality environment. They continuously work with teachers to ensure enhanced health and safety features are implemented as well as our comprehensive curriculum and child assessments. Directors also train and motivate staff to continue on the path of education even beyond their Lead Teacher Certification. Like all teachers, Directors are also responsible for obtaining 20 hours of in-service each year, 5 hours more than the DCFS requirement. These in-services keep all staff up to date on current healthy, safety, and curriculum procedures.
- **Lead Teachers** assume full-time responsibility for the smooth operation of their classrooms and for the welfare and education of each child in their care. They implement weekly lesson plans and child assessments and establish lasting bonds with the children and their families. Our lead teachers are chosen for their positive, nurturing disposition as well as their educational credentials.
- **Teacher's Assistants** offer invaluable support to Lead Teachers. Their supervisory assistance enables the teacher to give individual attention to children throughout the day. Assistants help the teacher prepare for daily lessons by cutting, gluing, copying and setting out materials for upcoming activities, and they lend a second set of hands during mealtimes, recess and many other busy times during the day. Teacher's Assistants may also be called upon to supervise specific learning centers, such as the art or science center, to lend children guidance. We encourage all our assistants to become early childhood teachers and offer full tuition reimbursement in the hopes they will continue on with their educational development beyond the required 20 hours of annual in-service training and development.

## Teacher Directed Activities

The teacher's role during self-selected activities is to augment the learning naturally taking place in the centers, with casual questions, conversation, and one-on-one interaction with children. Teachers help guide children through planned activities in order to provide an opportunity for children to practice manners, taking turns, and large- group dynamics. Teachers introduce specific themes and concepts based upon the curriculum and assessment guidelines.

- **Circle Time:** This special group time consists of stories, songs, and discussions to help children understand the concepts outlined in the themed curriculum. It also encourages social interaction.



- **Group Activities:** The teacher may direct the group to a hands-on art project, language activity, science experiment, or other event that emphasizes curriculum concepts. Some of these activities produce projects that can be taken home, while some—such as tracing letters in sand—are experimental, with no resulting “product”. During group times, the children are actively learning and are able to socialize and interact with their peers in a positive manner.
- **Transitions:** Easing children from self-directed to teacher-directed activities or through routines such as lunch, nap or snack with little disruption, requires smooth transitions. We accomplish this by announcing five minutes and three minutes in advance of the transition, so that the children may mentally prepare to finish their activity. Then routine songs for clean up, hand washing, mealtime, and nap time, make these everyday transitions not only anticipated, but fun, too.

## Guidance and Self-Discipline

You can feel confident your child will be treated with respect at Safari Childcare because our goal is to help children build self-esteem. Learning to recognize their own feelings, using words to express those feelings, and making choices to engage in constructive behavior, all contribute to children’s self-worth. We use several positive methods of behavioral guidance:

- We will **distract** the child’s focus from an unacceptable activity to an acceptable one, without confronting the inappropriate behavior.
- We will **redirect** the child toward the solution to a potential conflict, before a conflict occurs.
- We will ignore a child’s behavior if it is not harming anyone or anything.
- If absolutely necessary, a child may be removed from the scene of action, to cool-off, calm down, and take some time to mentally prepare to rejoin his or her friends. This is not to be used as a form of punishment, but rather an opportunity to help the child relax and remove them from a potentially problematic situation. Once the child is calm, the teacher will help the child to devise a more appropriate way to resolve the situation. Such a cooling-off period will last from ten seconds, to a maximum of one minute per year of the child’s age i.e. 2 year olds up to 2 minutes.

Throughout these techniques, we maintain the child’s dignity, encourage self-awareness, and foster self-respect.

## Nutritious Meals and Snacks

We provide children with hot breakfast, hot lunch, and an afternoon snack. Our tasty meals are made in our own commercial kitchen with fine, fresh ingredients, and follow the USDA childcare food guidelines. We encourage children to sample everything; but never force them to eat.

Mealtime is also an opportunity to learn. Children learn to wash hands before meals; they learn mealtime songs; and they learn basic table manners such as saying “please” and “thank you”. Mealtimes are a pleasant, social part of the daily routine.

Infant’s feeding times are tender moments when the nurturing caregiver cuddles, rocks and sings, while the infant drinks from his or her personal bottle. Bottles are never propped. Parents provide formula while the infant requires them. Once the child can have regular milk, we provide whole, vitamin D milk. Then, when the child is ready to eat solid foods, we offer fruits, puddings, and menu items that are fully mashed. Mealtimes at Safari Childcare are positive, bonding experiences, which help foster infants’ sense of trust and security.

## Parent / School Communication

Safari Childcare values the relationship between parents and school and frequent communication is the best way to maintain positive relationships in the best interest of each child. Communication vehicles include:

- **Daily notes** go home every day. Parents know right away about any significant achievements such as first words, first steps, or any special events that took place during the day. Infant charts also include times that diapers were changed, times that the child slept, and how/what the child ate.
- **Parent-teacher conferences** will now take place twice a year. This is a valuable time for one-on-one, uninterrupted dialogue about each child's progress. Samples of the child's artwork, writing, and other activities are collected for this occasion. Children are never compared to one another rather the child's progress is compared to his or her own previous skills throughout the school year. Most importantly, conferences reinforce open communication between parents and teachers.
- **Parent / teacher social events** include a children's performance, refreshments, games, and family activities. Please join us for our: Winter Celebration (February), Graduation ceremony, (June) and Halloween Bash (October). These events provide a casual environment for getting to know the teachers and other parents, as well as your child's school friends.

## Quality Control

Regulatory compliance: Safari Childcare passes routine inspections by several regulatory agencies.

**The Department of Public Health** literally gives us a "clean" bill of health. They confirm our staff handles and stores food in a sanitary manner, ensure sanitary procedures are followed in tasks such as diapering, and make sure all children have been properly vaccinated.

**The state Fire Marshall** ensures each classroom has an accessible fire exit route, that smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms are fully functionally and ideally located.

**The Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS)** is the licensing body for childcare centers in Illinois. In granting each school's license, DCFS has deemed that:

- Our staff is experienced, educated and has passed a thorough background check.
- Our classrooms and playgrounds are equipped with a plentitude of safe, age-appropriate materials and equipment.
- Our lesson plans are well prepared and developmentally appropriate.
- Our group sizes and ratios of adults to children are appropriate for a safe and happy classroom.
- Our policies and procedures ensure the safety and welfare of the children in our care.

We applaud the efforts of the regulatory agencies and realize you as a parent probably find some comfort in their efforts. The truth is, however, we are "where the rubber meets the road." We are who you can depend on each day to love and care for your child. You should know more than anything else that this is our passion and our love, and that you can count on us at all times.

## Customer Service and Satisfaction

In addition to satisfying the criteria of these regulatory agencies, Safari Childcare goes a step further. Our Quality Control Director conducts frequent internal inspections, to ensure that each school is consistently maintaining regulatory compliance. Our school nurse makes sure your child's immunizations are up to date and works with you, the parent, to ensure a safe and healthy environment for your child. We do our best each day to make sure our customers are satisfied.

## Comprehensive Training

Every member of our staff receives an in-depth orientation followed by continuing education throughout their employment. Prior to working with the children, each employee gets one-on-one training on the very policies and procedures that make our quality exceptional. They learn all the sanitation procedures pertinent to preventing the spread of illness-causing germs. They learn how to respond to any emergency should one arise. They commit all regulations to memory, and learn



## **Safety and Security**

Each school is fortified with a pass-code security entrance and security cameras.

Police and fire departments also electronically monitor our schools for instant emergency response, and can be at our doorstep should any of our strategically located “panic buttons” be activated.

Children may only be picked up by designated persons with written consent from the child’s parent(s). The authorized picker-upper must provide a photo ID and should not be given the code to the front door. If necessary, a family’s entrance pass-code may be changed in a matter of seconds.

Children are safe in the care of Safari Childcare employees. Applicants must pass a background check that spans all 50 states. Their fingerprints are matched against a national database of charged and/or convicted child abusers.

Every class rehearses monthly fire drills, following evacuation procedures posted in each classroom. Tornado drills are also rehearsed. Fire and tornado safety is also incorporated into the educational curriculum. So should an emergency occur, both staff and students will be prepared. Teachers are certified in CPR, First aid, and the Heimlich maneuver.

## **Conclusion**

We thank you for taking the time to view our philosophies. We firmly believe communication and understanding is vital in creating a collaborative relationship between school and home for your child. We encourage you to ask any questions you may have and welcome you to our extended family.

