

Parent Policies

Chelsea School-age Program
699 McKinley Street & 335 Pierce Street
Chelsea, MI 48118

operated by

**gretchen's
house**



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Our Goals and Philosophy

Our Goals

Gretchen's House strives to provide a high quality Early Childhood Program by creating a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children and responds to the needs of families. Our parents and staff are partners, working together to meet the needs of the children and their families. As partners, we will communicate regularly and thoughtfully with each other to build a relationship of trust and respect.

Our Philosophy

Young children learn by doing! They acquire knowledge of their world through playful interaction with objects and people. Children are motivated to learn by their own desire to make sense of their world.

At Gretchen's House we are committed to providing a developmentally appropriate program, well trained teachers, a variety of materials and equipment, and a low ratio of children to adults. Our learning environments invite active engagement by children, and teachers encourage children's interests and activities through meaningful, conversation and support.

Our Program

Consultants

Gretchen's House uses the consulting services of a pediatrician and pediatric allergist. We also have a Teacher Support Coordinator and Director of Curriculum on staff. Teachers meet with these professionals regularly to discuss our concerns about individual children or behavior and health in general. If parents have a special concern about their child, these professionals will visit the center to help in evaluating any problems. They are also available to meet with parents who wish a consultation.

Field Trips

Parents sign a permission slip at enrollment that authorizes us to take their child on our regular and special field trips. Most of our trips will use Chelsea school buses. These trips may include going to public parks, The Jiffy Mix factory, public library, Greenfield Village, the zoo, water parks, etc. Schedules for field trips will be posted well in advance of the trip.

Birthdays and Celebrations

Gretchen's House celebrates each child's birthday, generally on the closest weekday to their actual birthday. We ask that parents not bring food or gifts to the center to celebrate their child's birthday. Our Birthdays Purple Page publication provides guidelines for our celebration policies.

Each Gretchen's House center has its own birthday traditions to mark children's birthdays. These may include a special activity, songs, or projects. Parents are encouraged to participate by visiting the center for an activity. Please speak to your child's teacher to determine the best way for you to join in the celebration.

We find many reasons to have special celebrations: winter holidays that have special meaning to the children or community, events of the world (such as the Olympics), are times when we often have special center activities. Parents are encouraged to help us celebrate these days and any other times that are important to your family. We are always looking for other cultural and ethnic celebrations that we could include in our program.

Food

Parents who wish to bring food for their child because of allergies, dietary consideration, or religious preference must provide the center with a written statement to that effect. Parents of children with food allergies are encouraged to provide a small stock of appropriate foods to be stored in the classroom. All food brought from home must be nut free and clearly marked with the child's name. Staff will not prepare special food, but they will serve the ready-to-eat foods parents provide for children with special needs.

The center will provide all meals for school-age children and summer campers except for on no public school days. For those days parents need to provide a nut free sack lunch.

Food Allergies

Gretchen's House makes every effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children. We are an Allergy Aware program, which means that we have established policies and procedures to meet the needs of children with food allergies.

We have a firm policy that parents may not bring food from home to share with other children. In addition, we ask that parents be aware of the foods they send in children's lunches (kindergarten and school age). We do not allow peanut butter, nuts, or food containing these ingredients in our programs.

Parents of children with diagnosed food allergies need to meet with the Director of the program to communicate their child's specific needs and establish an action plan based on recommendations from their child's physician.

Television

Broadcast television is not available to children at any time in our centers. A DVD may be played occasionally as a special activity or as part of an exploration of a particular topic, but TV is not part of our regular curriculum. All DVDs will be previewed by the staff, and only movies rate "G" or "PG" will be viewed.

Procedures for Releasing Children

Parents are asked to sign their name both when they drop off and pick up their child. This procedure is in place for all children at all centers at all times. A clipboard with daily sign-in/sign-out sheets is provided in each classroom.

The following procedures are used for releasing children:

- Only regular staff may release children; substitutes may never release a child.
- A child will only be released to another adult when written or verbal consent is given by parent, and the person picking up the child must be listed by the parent on the emergency card.
- If someone comes to pick up a child without a parent's permission and their name is on the emergency card, we will call the parent before releasing the child to make sure this is what they want,
- If a written letter is given, we will call the parent to verify it was they who actually wrote the note unless the note is handed directly to a full-time staff person who knows the parent. This can be done prior to pick-up time.
- If a person is unknown to staff, we will ask for picture identification. We will compare the picture with the person and make sure the name is listed on the emergency card. This applies to parents who are unknown to the releaser.
- The approved pick-up person must sign out to prove the child was released to their care.
- Parents or other adults who are picking up a child at the center must make contact with a teacher to acknowledge their release of the child.
- If the parent or adult forgets to sign out, the center may need to follow up with a phone call.
- We will not release a child to anyone whom we feel is under the influence of drugs, including alcohol.
- When in doubt, we will not release a child.

Health and Safety

Illness Policy

To protect your child, the staff, and the other children, we request that your child not be brought to the child care center when your child:

- Shows any one of the following symptoms:
 - sluggishness or unusual drowsiness without explanation
 - extreme irritability or cries and cannot be consoled
 - difficulty breathing
 - diarrhea that cannot be contained by diaper or use of toilet
 - blood or mucus in stool
 - vomiting more than twice in the past 24 hours
 - mouth sores or drooling
 - an unexplained rash
- Has an oral temperature of 102°F or more.
- Cannot participate comfortably in routine activities.
- Needs more care than the staff can give while they care for the other children.

Teachers will send home a "Sick Child Observation" form anytime they believe a child may not be feeling well. We provide this information so you can obtain appropriate treatment and/or plan for the possibility of your child needing to stay home. If we send a child home sick (i.e., with any of the above symptoms), the observation form will indicate that the child should not return to the center until he or she is well or being treated by a physician and meets our other criteria for particular illnesses.

We post notices on the parent information boards when children have been exposed to any communicable disease. We will care for a child that has symptoms of a communicable disease until a parent or authorized adult arrives.

After leaving a Center ill, the general rule is that a child must be free of symptoms and fever for 24 hours before returning to the Center. While there may be some rare exceptions, it is important that your child be well enough to participate in activities and also not be contagious. If an antibiotic is prescribed, your child may return after taking the medication for 24 hours if they are feeling better. We know this may be an inconvenience, but we also know that efforts such as these to contain illnesses benefit all of us. All parents must have emergency plans established to care for ill children.

Medication

Medication will be given only after a medication permission slip has been filled out and the medication is labeled with your child's name. We cannot administer the

first dose of any medication. Special note: When filling a prescription for your child, ask the pharmacist to divide the medicine into two containers—one for home and the other to be kept at the child care center.

Sick Days

Parents must pay for all contracted care. The same monthly rate will be paid each month, regardless of absence for illness or any other reason.

When Your Child Is Absent

Parents should call the center to report their child's absence for whatever reason. Our teachers need this information to plan their day, and to talk with the other children about their playmate's absence.

For afternoon care, when parents fail to notify the center by 3:00 p.m. that day that a child will not be coming from the Public School program as scheduled, there will be a progressive fee:

1st occurrence - \$5

2nd occurrence - \$10

3rd occurrence - \$20/Warning of possible disenrollment

If “no call-no show” occurs a 4th time, the contract may be terminated, at the discretion of the center Director.

Child Restraint in Vehicles

Automobile safety restraints will be used at all times for children riding in center, staff, or parent vehicles while in care at Gretchen's House. Parents will be asked to provide a car seat for their child if they are under 4 years of age, unless the children will be riding in the center busses which have built-in restraints for younger children. Older children will use seatbelts in center vans and busses.

Emergency Procedures

Injuries

Parents will be contacted immediately if their child is hurt and requires medical treatment. If we cannot reach you, we will contact the individuals listed on your emergency card. Appropriate First Aid will be given while we wait for a parent to arrive. If emergency care is required, we will call 911, and a staff member will accompany your child to the nearest appropriate medical facility as indicated on your emergency card. Parents will also be notified for injuries that are not of an emergency nature (pinched fingers, bumps on head...) that might require a physician's consultation, but are not serious. We believe that these decisions should be made by each family individually.

Fire

In the event of a fire, the children will be evacuated from the building, using the nearest exit and be removed to a designated safe place away from the building. All exits are clearly marked and each center practices regular fire drills. Our centers are equipped with smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and alarm pull stations that are inspected regularly.

Tornado

During a tornado warning, the children will move to a safe area (e.g. the lower level of the interior of buildings, near a staircase, away from doors and windows). Children and staff will remain there until an all clear has been sounded by the city sirens or over the radio. All centers practice tornado drills regularly during the tornado season.

Operational Information

Public School Vacations, Report Days

Any school age child enrolled for regular care at Gretchen's House is eligible to attend the center any day there is no public school and the Center is open. Children must register for these extra days in advance on the posted sign-up sheets, and enrollment is based on available space. Fees for extra days will be charged either to that month's or the next month's bill. Care will not be guaranteed for children who do not sign up. Fees will be charged for children who sign up and do not attend unless a cancellation is made one week prior to the day of care.

Snow Days/Inclement Weather/Building Emergencies

The Gretchen's House Chelsea Schoolage program may close when the Chelsea Public Schools close due to inclement weather. Please listen to radio stations the morning of inclement weather which announce school closings.

If the Chelsea Public Schools close, the Gretchen's House Schoolage program **will automatically have an 10:00 a.m. delayed opening**. Parents should call our **Snow Emergency Hotline (734.480.8592)** to get updates on center closings when there is inclement weather. Many of our staff live outside the immediate area of our centers, and treacherous driving conditions put them, as well as your family, in danger. Although it is our desire to remain open, our first priority must be the safety of our staff and families.

Payment Schedule

Payments are due, as per your contract, regardless of a child's absence for any reason. These include a child's illness, family illness, vacations, doctor appointments, parents' days off work, etc. A fee is imposed each time a change is made to the original contract.

Late Payment Fee

There is a late payment charge for any payments RECEIVED by Gretchen's House after the 10th of the month in which they are due. Special payment arrangements may be made, in advance, with the Director, if this causes a hardship to any family. A fee will also be assessed for checks returned to us for non-sufficient funds.

Photographs

We occasionally use photographs of children and teachers at our centers on job fair posters, in brochures, on our web site, etc. No names or other information are provided in these instances.

Late Pick-Up Fee

Parents will be charged \$1 /min. late fee for pick up after our stated closing time. A phone call to the center if an emergency arises is appreciated and will be considered in assessing this fee.

Waiting List Priorities

Children are given priority for enrollment in our program in this order:

- Currently enrolled children who wish to change schedules or locations.
- Siblings of currently enrolled children.
- Children living in the center's elementary school districts.*

Within these categories, the waiting list is based on the first date that contact was made with the center.

Withdrawal Policy

Thirty days' written notice is required if a child is to be withdrawn from the center before his/her contract expires.