

North Branch Early Learning Center

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GSRP Handbook

2025-2026



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Welcome

North Branch GSRP would like to welcome you and your child to the exciting world of preschool! This handbook is designed to explain the policies and operation of the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) and to answer any questions you might have. Keep this handbook so that you can refer back to it throughout the school year. We look forward to having you as a partner in your child's experience and education with us in GSRP.

North Branch GSRP is a cooperative effort of the Lapeer Intermediate School District (ISD), our local school districts, the Great Start Collaborative and other local community organizations. The funding for this preschool program is developed under a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential. The following information is designed to assist you in making your child's preschool experience as productive and enjoyable as possible.

All GSRP classrooms are licensed through the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. A licensing notebook is accessible and available to families during regular hours.

Philosophy/Purpose/Goals

We believe children learn best by doing. Children learn through interactions with objects, peers, and adults. When children have the opportunity for active thinking and experimentation, they learn about the world we live in and how things work. Children are motivated to learn by their own desire to make sense of their world. Most importantly, children learn through play.

North Branch GSRP is committed to providing a developmentally appropriate preschool program in a safe and nurturing environment. The program promotes social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth. Activities are designed to engage children in and allow them to explore their interests and develop at their own pace. Individual, small group, and large group experiences help children develop skills in language, literacy, math, problem-solving, physical development, self-regulation, and social skills. Teaching staff support children's development through observations and engagement, responding to children's needs and interests.

Cultural Competency Plan

GSRP classrooms are designed to be welcoming environments that respect cultural differences among children and families. Activities and classrooms reflect cultural diversity through language, celebrations, food, and materials. Parents and community

members are encouraged to share their cultures and backgrounds. Please feel free to share your culture in a variety of ways with the students and staff of the program!

In our program, our goal is for all children and families to feel valued and have a sense of belonging. This begins with our first interactions with families. Before school starts, we visit each family in their home to learn more about the child and their family culture. Home visits are a time for us to learn about your family beliefs, values, and typical daily routines and rituals. This helps ease the transition from home to the classroom. We may ask that you allow us to take a picture of your family or child to display in the classroom. We want children to see that we care about their families. We also want them to know we value them. Throughout the school year, we will plan lessons and activities that connect your family culture with what we are learning. You may be asked to share photos, books, recipes, or other items that we can add to our classroom.

We strive to embrace our local community. We do this by having toys, photos, books, materials, and dress up clothes that represent local businesses. We also invite community members to come into our classrooms to share information about our town and their work. In order to maintain awareness of the many differences, we all have our teachers attend training on topics related to diversity. We also seek out information and support from agencies that may help us better understand and meet the needs of our students. Some of these agencies are our local DHHS, Community Action Agency, and translation services.

About GSRP

GSRP is a free state-funded preschool program for qualified children who turn 4 by September 1 of the current school year. North Branch GSRP classrooms use the HighScope Curriculum and are evaluated by a Lapeer ISD Early Childhood Specialist to ensure quality and proper implementation of the state-required regulations. The specialist supports, mentors, trains, and evaluates programs and classrooms.

Classes are held Monday through Thursday each week. On Friday, the staff utilizes their time for lesson planning, staff meetings, workshops, home visits, parent/teacher conferences, and paperwork.

Attendance Policy: In order to participate in GSRP, your child will be required to attend on a regular basis. If your child is enrolled in a school-day program (full day), they must attend all day, each day. Regular attendance sets the foundation for future schooling experiences, provides more valuable educational experiences for your child, and allows for the teachers to have true insight on your child's developmental progress. GSRP

must document absences; if the staff is not notified regarding absences, attempts to contact families will be made in order to determine the reason for the absence. Staff will work with families to support the child's return to school. When families cannot be reached, children who are absent from class for 15 consecutive program days may be dropped from the program to make space available for a child on the waiting list.

Withdrawal Policy: The GSRP program offers students from all backgrounds and abilities a preschool experience. Children will not be withdrawn or excluded from a GSRP classroom or transportation services because of the need for additional developmental, medical, behavioral support, or assistance with toileting. Student attendance and participation in the program is crucial when implementing positive behavior support plans, therefore students in preschool are not suspended or expelled.

A parent may withdraw a child from the program at any time. If you need to withdraw your child from the program, please notify your child's teacher of the child's last day of attendance and reason for withdrawal.

Home Visits: Home visits are a requirement of GSRP and are scheduled to last 45 minutes. Home visits will occur in the fall and again in the spring. The initial home visit serves as an orientation opportunity for the child and parents to get to know the teacher and program. The final home visit will summarize the child's year in GSRP, a final assessment of development, and Kindergarten readiness.

Parent Teacher Conferences: There will be two parent-teacher conferences during the school year. Conferences last 30 minutes and are held in your child's classroom in the fall and spring. You can expect to discuss your child's overall development, strengths, areas for growth, and an opportunity to create goals during your conference time.

Nap/Rest Time: Child Care licensing requires full day programs to have a rest period set aside for children. Rest time is scheduled for no longer than 60 minutes. During this time, children may sleep or rest quietly, with a quiet secondary activity offered to those who do not sleep. Individual resting needs of children will be attended to during this time. The secondary quiet activity could include books, soft music, dolls, or fine motor manipulatives, and is dependent upon the program or classroom.

Work Time: Each day children are provided with at least one hour of uninterrupted play, often known as free play, free choice, or choice time. During this time, children are free to choose where they play, how they play, and whom they play with. This is a time for great social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development. Teachers are partners in play during this time and allow for children to lead their play and learning.

Birthdays: Birthdays are special to young children. When it is your child's birthday you are welcome to bring in an edible treat or non-edible gift (stickers, pencils, bubbles, etc) to pass out. If choosing to bring an edible gift, please be sure to ask the teacher about allergies. All edible gifts must be store bought and pre-packaged with an ingredients list on them.

Communication: Teacher/Parent communication is important. We have several ways we communicate with parents about their child's day. Examples are: phone calls, texting, newsletters, emails, Brightwheel messaging, FB groups, etc. We will provide regular newsletters to update parents on activities happening in the classroom. If the child sees both parents during the week, we send materials home to each parent on the days the child will see that parent.

Please check backpacks regularly for messages that may also be of a timely nature. For questions or concerns, please call your child's GSRP teacher.

Special Needs: GSRP programs within Lapeer County promote inclusion. GSRP strives to provide appropriate developmental learning opportunities for all children in accordance with the Michigan Department of Education Early Childhood Standards of Quality. The GSRP program uses developmental assessments/screeners which ensure all children are achieving appropriate developmental milestones. However, if the child presents with a developmental delay, the staff will contact the local educational agency (i.e. local school district) to initiate protocol for suspecting a developmental delay. All efforts will be made to continue the student in the least restrictive environment.

Curriculum and Assessment

North Branch GSRP uses the "HighScope Preschool Curriculum" as their approved curriculum. The HighScope curriculum helps early childhood programs create a high quality learning environment that enables every child to become a creative, confident thinker. In a HighScope preschool program, teachers ignite children's interest in learning by creating an environment that encourages them to explore learning materials and interact with adults and peers. We focus on supporting students as they make decisions, build academic skills, develop socially and emotionally, and become part of a classroom community.

Active learning is at the center of the HighScope Curriculum. It's the foundation of student's gaining knowledge through their natural play and interactions with the environment, events and other people.

My Teaching Strategies is the assessment tool used by all GSRP staff. My Teaching Strategies is an observation based assessment that uses 38 objectives. The objectives focus on key predictors of school success in the areas of social–emotional, physical, language, literacy, and math development and learning. The remaining objectives help teachers plan instruction in science and technology, social studies, and the arts, and enable teachers to assess children’s English language acquisition. This assessment is completed three times throughout the school year for each child enrolled. Information from the assessment will be shared with families through informal conversations, emails, texts, newsletters, etc. Formal discussions regarding curriculum and assessment will also occur through parent-teacher conferences minimally twice a year.

A developmental screener will also be completed at the start of the program year. North Branch GSRP will use the Brigance assessment. This screening will give the program a better understanding of where the child is developmentally. The results of the screener will be discussed with families, and any recommendation for additional, individualized support will require parental agreement.

Referrals: Careful observations of children through developmental screeners and the use of My Teaching Strategies allows for GSRP staff to recognize any need for referrals of children in order to best meet their needs in development. Staff will work with families to provide support in seeking services, and follow up support for areas such as speech/language and physical development skills. Additionally, knowledge of the family and child helps GSRP staff to recognize if any referrals may be beneficial for nutrition, mental health, social services, and so on. Parents are encouraged to be involved at every step of the referral process so that they can help advocate for the child and family’s needs. Support will be provided by GSRP to assist families in finding resources for any of the above, in addition to housing, clothing, food, etc.

Confidentiality: The results of the developmental screening, My Teaching Strategies assessment, and other evaluation results are handled with care and confidentiality. Parents are assured that our referral process is confidential and is designed to meet the individual needs of each child referred.

Calendar: Each family is provided a program calendar at the beginning of the school year. Refer to the calendar for information regarding the first day of school, last day of school, school breaks, or other days the classroom may not be open. If you are in need of another copy of the program calendar, please contact your child’s teacher or the program administrator.

Child Recruitment: The North Branch GSRP Preschool’s recruitment begins in the

spring of each year preceding the start of the program. Income for each family must be verified before determining that a child is eligible to participate in the program. The Income Verification form along with other eligibility documents are put in the child's official file. Documentation based on the seven risk factors is also completed at the intake. Parents may be told they are on a waiting list and if expected funding is maintained, will be formally considered for enrollment using the GSRP prioritization process once the funding of the program has been finalized. Tiered income eligibility ensures that GSRP finds and provides services to its target population and focuses on those most at risk.

Eligibility: The Great Start Readiness Program was designed to provide high-quality preschool to children at risk for low educational attainment in the school year before they are eligible for Kindergarten. We must consider many factors in determining placement, including:

- Child must be 4 years old by September 1st of the year he/she begins school.
- Family income must be verified
- Assessment and family information (Eligibility Factors) must reflect that the child has the greatest need as compared to the other children who are screened.

We begin taking applications at our Preschool Registration in March. We accept applications anytime thereafter at North Branch Early Learning Center or online at <https://version3.miecc.org/CaregiverPortal/44/5006>. Once the State School Aid Bill has been signed and allocations/awards have been announced, enrollment begins. Generally, this is sometime in late April or early May, but can be as late as August. A letter of acceptance will be mailed (or emailed) to the parent/guardian of a child enrolled into our program beginning in mid to late August.

Notice of Program Evaluation:

All GSRP classrooms are required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the state-wide Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). Information is sometimes collected about GSRP staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family.
- Observe children in the classroom.
- Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers, etc.
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law. Questions? Please contact: Your local Intermediate School District office or the MDE Office of Great Start, Early Childhood Education and Family Services at mde-gsrp@michigan.gov, 517-373-8483, or 608 W. Allegan, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909

Great Start Readiness Program

School-Day Sample Routine

The following is a sample daily routine of a school-day (full day) GSRP classroom.

Times of activities vary by classroom.

8:00 – 8:45	Arrival/Breakfast/Greeting Time – Children enter the classroom at their own pace. Parents/guardians are encouraged to stay until children are ready for them to leave. Children have choices about whether to eat, spend time with books, or interact with adults and one another. Once all children have arrived, adults share the Morning Message.
8:45 – 9:00	Large-Group Time/Music and Movement – All adults and children participate in activities planned around children’s interests, developmental levels, music and movement, cooperative play and projects; and events meaningful to children.
9:00 – 9:10	Planning Time – Children indicate their plans to adults in a place where intimate conversations can occur and where people and materials are visible. Adults use a range of strategies to support children’s planning (e.g., props, area signs, tape recorders, singing, planning individually, in pairs, in small groups).
9:10 – 10:10	Work Time (children’s hour of uninterrupted play) – Children always initiate activities and carry out their intentions. Children make many choices about where and how to use materials. During Work Time, adults participate as partners in child-initiated play and encourage children’s problem solving both with materials and during times of social conflict.
10:10 – 10:20	Cleanup Time – Children and adults clean up together. Children make many choices during clean-up. Adults accept children’s level of involvement and skill while supporting their learning.
10:20 – 10:30	Recall Time – Usually takes place in small group settings, but can take place in large group settings. Children use Recall Time to reflect on, talk about, and exhibit the experiences and activities they participated in during Work Time. . Adults provide a variety of materials and strategies to maintain interest as they follow children’s lead and encourage children to share (e.g., individual props such as puppets, telephones or periscopes, group games using a hula hoop, ball or spinner, re-enacting, drawing, showing and describing a structure or painting). Adults are unhurried in their approach and may complete Recall Time with four or five children each day
10:30 – 10:45	Small Group Time – An adult-initiated learning experience based on children’s interests and development where children explore, play, work with materials, and talk

	about what they are doing. Individual children explore and use the same set of materials in their own way.
10:45 – 11:30	Outside Time – Children have many choices about how they play in the outdoor learning environment, much as they do during Work Time indoors. Adults supervise children for safety and also join in their active outdoor play, supporting their initiatives and problem solving.
11:30 – 11:40	Bathroom/Wash Hands/Prepare for Lunch – Children assist in preparation and set up. Children choose where they would like to sit and are encouraged to serve themselves.
11:40 – 12:25	Lunch – Family-Style meals support children doing things for themselves (e.g., serve themselves, pour beverages, distribute napkins, wipe up spills). Children choose whether to eat, what to eat, and how much to eat. Adults eat and have meaningful conversations with the children. Children are encouraged to clean their own space including disposal of leftovers, wiping of tables, and pushing in their own chairs.
12:25 – 1:25	Quiet/Resting Time – Resting is a time for sleeping or quiet, solitary, on-your-own-cot play. Rest Time plans should be individualized to meet the needs of each child. Quiet play could include books, soft music, dolls, or fine motor manipulatives.
1:25 – 1:55	Wake/Bathroom/Snack – As children wake up, adults and children work together to put away cots and set up for snack. Children are encouraged to clean their own snack space including disposal of leftovers, wiping of tables, and pushing in their own chairs.
1:55 – 3:00	Plan/Work/Cleanup/Recall – (refer to AM descriptions).
3:00 – 3:30	Outside Time/Dismissal (refer to AM descriptions).

Volunteer and Background Check Policy

GSRP is always welcoming to parent/family volunteers! All staff and unsupervised volunteers must pass a comprehensive background check known as the Child Care Background Check.

All supervised volunteers are required to sign a screening form that states they have never been convicted of a crime, have felony charges pending against them, or have been involved in abuse or neglect of children. All supervised volunteers shall receive a Public Sex Offender Registry (PSOR) clearance before having any contact with a child in care. A copy of this clearance will be kept on file at the center. Any individual registered on the PSOR is prohibited from having contact with any child in care. In addition, the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Licensing Rules

state “any volunteer who has contact with children at least 4 hours per week for more than 2 consecutive weeks must submit to the classroom teacher a current verification of a negative TB test.

Volunteers will provide assistance in the classroom but will never have responsibility for oversight of the classroom. A volunteer will never be left alone or unsupervised with children other than their own. Discipline and redirection of children should only be carried out by GSRP staff.

Prior to volunteering, please speak to your child’s teacher about days and times that fit the classroom schedule, and to ensure all appropriate and required paperwork is on file.

All employees are also required to complete a federal fingerprint/background check.

Hazardous Situations: As a volunteer you have not been trained in the standards used by the GSRP staff when dealing with hazardous situations and material. We do not want to put you in a dangerous situation during an emergency. Immediately alert a teacher or other staff member to any hazardous situation. Universal precautions are used at all times when dealing with blood or body fluids. Emergency evacuation and tornado safety plans are posted in every classroom. Please take a moment to review them.

Family Partnerships/ Volunteering: Parents and other family members are welcome and encouraged to participate in any activities that interest them. Throughout the year, we welcome your help with special projects and/or activities. We always welcome you to volunteer in any way you are able to. When coming into the classroom to volunteer, we do ask that you make other arrangements for younger children. If you are unable to do this but would still like to help out, don’t worry, there are other great ways to help out your child’s classroom, just ask! Please do wait at least two weeks after the start of school to volunteer so that the children can get settled into their preschool routine. Field trips and other classroom celebrations are great ways to be involved in our classroom, too. We also encourage parents and grandparents to come in and be guest readers, share in a cooking experience, introduce your job to the children, or share your hobbies. Please let us know ahead of time so we can plan for it!

Local Parent Advisory: These meetings are held three times a year. Each program strives to have at least 2 parents per every 18 children enrolled. Families are encouraged to attend to discuss program requirements, data of child and program assessments, enrollment process, and more. Agendas and meeting minutes are provided by the program for each meeting. The mission of the Parent Advisory Committee is to advise the GSRP administration on existing and proposed education policies, bring forth issues of concern, and make suggestions about changes that will

improve the achievement of students and the effectiveness of the program.

Great Start Collaborative: Lapeer County Great Start Collaborative meets the second Thursday of each month in person or virtually via Zoom. (There is no GSC meeting in July.) The collaborative consists of community service agencies and organizations, Early Childhood administration and teachers, and parents or guardians living in Lapeer County. The purpose of the Great Start Collaborative is to improve Early Childhood outcomes. We welcome, encourage, and listen to our parents/guardians. Families with young children know what is working and what is not. We value their input, they are our reason why!

Great Start Collaborative Family Coalition: The Lapeer County Great Start Collaborative (GSC) has a family coalition in which GSRP parents should be represented. GSRP parents work with other committed parents to support quality early childhood practices in the community. In turn, these GSRP parents share ideas and activities through any way possible with the Local Parent Advisories. Each district should have a GSRP parent represented in the GSC Family Coalition. Our Family Coalition is in the growing process. We do not have a designated meeting time/place. We have been attending events and supporting the work of our local agencies.

Health and Safety Policies

Each child's health and safety is a matter of importance. Attention will be stressed with the children on good health habits. Despite all efforts contagious illnesses can be easily transmitted.

Therefore it is requested that a child be kept home if he/she has:

- been vomiting &/ or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- a temperature over 100°
- a severe cough
- sore or discharging eyes or ears
- an undiagnosed rash
- has a communicable disease
- Been on antibiotics for less than 24 hours.

It is requested that you notify us if your child will not be attending and the nature of the illness. You will be notified as soon as possible if your child has been exposed to any contagious disease while in our care. A physician's certificate of health may be required prior to readmitting a child who has been absent due to a contagious disease, extended illness or injury.

In case of an emergency the staff will make an immediate attempt to contact the parent/guardian. When a parent cannot be reached the staff will contact the person(s) designated on the "Child Information" form. In emergency situations an ambulance may be called at the parent's expense. It is in the best interest of your child to that you keep us updated on phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information. If your child has an allergy or medical condition, please indicate this on the "Child Information" form.

If a child becomes ill, the parent/guardian will be called immediately to have the child picked up. If the parent cannot be contacted, the caregiver will call the next person on the child information card until somebody is reached. The child will be cared for in a separate comfortable place in the classroom until they are picked up.

Reporting an Absence: If your child is ill and unable to attend school:

Please call your school or teacher to report the absence and include the following:

- Name of person calling in for the child (This is Jan Smith)
- Child's full name (example, Mark Smith)
- Name of teacher and session
- The specific reason for the absence

*If you call after business hours, please leave a message with the above information.

Medications: All medications will be administered under the following conditions:

- Prescription medicine must be in the original container bearing the pharmacy label, physician's name, child's name, instructions, and name and strength of medicine.
- Non-Prescription medications must be in its original labeled container and labeled with the child's name.
- Guardians must complete and sign the Medication Permission form (also available at the center) as well as bring the medication.
- Guardians must bring us the medicine personally. **CHILDREN MUST NEVER TRANSPORT MEDICATION TO AND/OR FROM SCHOOL.**

Health Appraisals and Immunizations: The State of Michigan requires a health appraisal and record of immunization for each child to be on file. Each student should have the immunizations required by law or have an authorized waiver. If a student does not have the necessary shots or waivers, the Early Childhood Coordinator may remove the student or require compliance with a set deadline. This is for the safety of all students and in accordance with State law. Waivers must be obtained at the local Health Department. Any questions about immunizations or waivers should be directed to the Lapeer County Health Department, 810-667-0391.

Tooth Brushing: Students are encouraged to brush their teeth after eating. GSRP students are provided a toothbrush, toothpaste and time to brush their teeth during the school day.

Snow Days When North Branch Area Schools are closed because of inclement weather, there will be no GSRP preschool on that day either. A message will be sent out from the teacher via the Brightwheel App.

Emergency Procedures: Specific procedures and instructions for emergency evacuation of the center are posted. Fire drills are practiced by classrooms and also by the school building as a whole. Tornado/shelter-in-place drills are done at least three times per year. Lockdown drills (in the case of an outside threat) will also occur at least once per year. A log is kept for all drills. Emergency procedures shall be reviewed with staff no less than twice a year.

*All emergency and evacuation routes are posted in highly visible areas in each classroom.

For additional information about emergency evacuations that require children and staff to proceed to designated safe areas on school grounds and off school grounds at North Branch Wesleyan Church , please request to see the comprehensive emergency plan available at the school's front desk.

Smoking/ Vaping: For the health and safety of our students smoking and vaping is not permitted on school grounds. In addition, smoking, and vaping are prohibited on field trips.

Physical Activity: A consistent daily routine must include appropriate amounts of time each day for children to have outside time where adults intentionally support and extend children's plans. Programs provide equipment and materials for active play. Children are required to have outside play time (weather permitting) for ½ hour in the morning and ½ hour in the afternoon each day.

Weather Policy: Wind-chill Factor- If the windchill is at 10 degrees Fahrenheit or below, students will not go outside.

Heat-index Factor- If the temperature is at 90 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, with the heat index, the students will not go outside.

Health and Nutrition/ Food: The GSRP collaborates with the North Branch Schools Food Service to provide all GSRP children a well balanced meal that follows child and

adult care food program nutritional guidelines. Families will be asked to complete a free and reduced lunch application to determine eligibility. **Parents should notify teachers of any food allergies and or dietary restrictions.** A nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack are provided to all GSRP preschool children, free of charge. Meals will be served family style in the classroom. Children will actively participate in the meal process; such as passing out paper products, pouring drinks and serving food.

GSRP classrooms participate in the National School Nutrition Program (NSNP) and follow the district's breakfast and lunch menus. GSRP classrooms also follow health, safety, and nutritional guidelines required by licensing. It is a GSRP grant requirement that families do not provide cold lunches for children unless the food they request to provide meets several conditions. One of these conditions includes that NSNP or CACFP requirements must continue to be provided. The NSNP provides our program with nutrition information and resources. When needed a district representative can provide training or individualized nutritional supports. You are encouraged to have your child participate in the free meals and snacks that are provided by the program. However, if a family wishes to provide lunch for their child, the program will require your signature on the GSRP Meal Flexibility Form.

Administrative Policies and Procedures

Delivery and Release of Children: When bringing your child(ren) to the center he/she must be accompanied into the child care center by a parent or responsible adult who shall sign-in the child(ren) in person using the Brightwheel app by scanning the QR code on their phone or using our kiosk.

Parent's may park in the visitor parking on the west side of the building or on Banker Street. Adults will need to walk up to the main entrance located on the west side of the building to sign child(ren) in or out. Children will be released only to the parent or legal guardian or those persons authorized by the parent in writing.

Please notify staff if someone different will be picking up the child(ren), even if their name is on the "Child Information" release listing.

Individuals picking up children may be asked for identification.

Pick-up Procedures: The only people other than a child's custodial parents/guardians who are authorized to take the child from the center are those people designated in writing on the Child Information Contact and Emergency Record. You may list as many people as you wish.

Busing Procedures: Preschool students will not be let off the bus at their designated stop unless there is a responsible, authorized person to receive them (hand-to-hand

contact must be made). In the event no one is there, they will be returned to their school and taken to FABS Child Care. Please ensure that the person picking up your child or getting your child off the bus has picture identification with them. Staff, including bus drivers, may ask for I.D. at any time and will ask if they do not know the person.

In case of emergencies, call your child's preschool and let them know that someone other than a listed person can pick up your child, but it is preferred to have such names written and indicated in the file. Persons who are excluded by court order from having contact with and/or picking up the child should also be indicated on enrollment paperwork. It is necessary to give a copy of associated documents to your child's teacher.

Folders:Your child will be bringing home a folder each week with papers, artwork, and weekly newsletters. Let your child tell you about the papers they have brought home to share with you. Displaying some of their favorite schoolwork helps to develop their self-esteem and pride in their work. Please check the folder each week and return them the first day they return to school the following week.

Backpacks: We recommend that your child have a regular size backpack to store their take home folders, artwork, change of clothing and items for rest time. Very small backpacks make it difficult for your child to take items to and from school. Please remember to label your child's backpack with their name.

Field Trips: Any off campus field trips will be announced in advance. A permission slip containing field trip information will be sent home for your signature.

Personal Belongings: Children are requested to leave food, gum, candy, money or other valuables at home. Please discourage your child from bringing toys or other "prized" possessions to the center except on special occasions deemed appropriate by the teaching staff. Such highly valued items are often difficult to keep up with and very hard to share. An appropriate social goal for the children is the sharing of equipment and materials as a part of the learning experience.

It is understood that many young children do have an object of special attachment, such as a blanket or stuffed toy, that helps to ease the transition from home to school and that a child might not be ready to share. These items will be kept in the children's cubbies, but are available to comfort in times of need. Teachers will help other children to understand and respect such feelings.

Staff will do their best to keep up with children's belongings, but cannot accept responsibility for the loss or damage of personal possessions. Labeling all personal belongings helps us to avoid loss of items. Weapons of any type (or toys that look like weapons) are not allowed in school.

Clothing: Children's clothing should be comfortable and easy for them to manage. Children will engage in messy and active play inside and out, therefore, play clothes that can be easily laundered are encouraged.

Children should wear sturdy shoes with non-slip soles to help prevent falling from climbing equipment. Open toed shoes, hard heeled boots, and children's plastic dress-up shoes are strongly discouraged. Sandals should have a strap on the back. In the winter, shoes and/or slippers are requested in addition to boots so that the classroom remains clean and dry.

Please send in an extra set of clothing (shirts, socks, pants and undergarments) for your child in a Ziploc bag with their name on it to keep in their backpack, locker, or cubby. Please label each article of clothing! These extra clothes come in handy for bathroom, water play and painting accidents.

Children should be adequately dressed for the season and the weather for outdoor play on each day of attendance. We go outside, weather permitting, every day. Please remember a warm jacket with a hood, snow pants, boots, hats and mittens, and a pair of shoes to wear indoors are needed on cold days. Outdoor activities are an important part of our program. Children will be expected to participate in outside play unless we have a written statement from the child's physician. PLEASE LABEL ALL OF YOUR CHILD'S WINTER CLOTHING.

Discipline Policy

The ultimate goal of discipline is to assist the child in becoming a self-disciplined, mature adult who accepts responsibility for his/her actions. At each age a child can assume some measure of self-control and therefore responsibility for his/her actions. The goal is to foster self-control and self-discipline, as it is appropriate for each age and to support the children as they practice and master these skills.

Consequently, the following principles of developmental discipline guide the action of the staff.

1. Understand developmental characteristics, behaviors, and needs. Be honest, reasonable, and realistic in the expectations of children.

2. Focus on/give positive attention for appropriate behavior. Ignore inappropriate behavior as much as possible. Try to keep the “no’s” to a minimum.
3. Anticipate and plan ahead to prevent possible problems. Structure or restructure the environment to prevent possible problems. Redirect a child to avoid potential problems or conflicts.
4. Be consistent. Make rules that can be enforced.
5. Identify and accept a child’s feelings. Correct behavior by telling the child what he/she did wrong, then tell the child what to do in a positive statement.
6. Remain calm.
7. Remember the long range goal of SELF-DISCIPLINE. Give growth-fostering direction. Encourage independence. Offer choices and allow children to make as many decisions as possible within the necessary limits.

The staff, parents and any other persons are PROHIBITED from using the following means of discipline while in the North Branch Early Learning Center:

1. Hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting a form of corporal punishment.
2. Restricting a child’s movements by binding or tying him/her (appropriate physical restraint may be necessary to prevent self-injury or injury to other persons or facilities).
3. Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child.
4. Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest or necessary toilet use.
5. Confining a child in an enclosed area such as a closet or locked room.

When preventive and structural measures do not work and external discipline is required, the child is (1) removed from the immediate situation to a nearby area and (2) required to sit and regain control. After a few moments a staff person discusses the situation with the child, helping them find appropriate means of dealing with a situation and at the same time making clear the limitations placed on their behavior and the reasons why.

In exceptional cases, additional alternatives may be employed, such as temporary removal, and requests for evaluation and/or consultations. Cases will be handled on an individual basis in cooperation with parents and in accordance with the school district policy on discipline.

Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect: Under the Child Protective Services Act, GSRP staff and volunteers are required to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect immediately to 1-855-444-3911. The employees of your child’s school district are considered mandated reporters under this law. The staff is not required to discuss their suspicions with parents before reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition before making a report. Under the act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. The Child

Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

Handling of Complaints/Grievances

GSRP classrooms are committed to providing a high quality program that meets, to the greatest extent possible, children's and family needs.

- 1) Should you have any concerns, first discuss the situation with your child's teachers.

- 2) If the problem is not resolved, discuss the situation with the Early Childhood Coordinator at North Branch Early Learning Center. Every effort will be made to achieve resolutions that are in the best interest of the child, family, and the preschool.

- 3) Other administration, such as a superintendent, may be contacted if a family does not feel the matter was resolved after following steps 1 and 2.

- 4) The Lapeer ISD GSRP representatives should be the last contact in the matter of complaints. The Early Childhood Contact can be contacted, and the district GSRP director should provide the name and number for the contact.