

Future Einsteins
Preschool Program
Handbook
2011 - 2012



Future Einsteins Mission Statement

Future Einsteins acknowledges that the early childhood years are a critical time for the development of foundation skills that children will need to succeed in school and in life. To this end, Future Einsteins is committed to providing a high quality preschool program that meets the needs of a diverse group of learners.

Philosophy and Goals

The philosophy of the Future Einsteins Preschool Program is to provide developmentally appropriate activities, which allow children the opportunity to experience social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth.

Our program goals are:

- To be inclusive of all children.
- To build a connection between the child, the family and public school, to facilitate early intervention and kindergarten readiness.
- To support children as active learners who learn best from activities that they help plan, carry out, and reflect upon.
- To engage children in a variety of experiences that help them to make choices, solve problems, and actively contribute to their own development.
- To provide a safe environment where each child can build strong, positive relationships with adults and peers.

Contact Information

Parents/guardians are welcome to contact Future Einsteins at any time.

- Future Einsteins: 288-9035
- Email: futureeinsteins@myfairpoint.net
- Website: futureeinsteinsvt.weebly.com

Licensing

The Future Einsteins Preschool Program is fully licensed by the State of Vermont, meeting all health, safety, and fire regulations. Parents/guardians may access Early Childhood Program Licensing Regulations and/or Early Childhood Program information by contacting the State of Vermont at:

Child Development Division
Department for Children and Families
103 South Main Street
2 & 3 North
Waterbury, VT 05671-5500

1-800-649-2642 or (802) 241-3110

Or: http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/child_care_licensing

Admission Criteria

For enrollment in the Future Einsteins Preschool Program and to maintain compliance with state regulations, it is required that the following documents, completed as needed, are submitted to Future Einsteins prior to your child attending the preschool program:

- Enrollment contract.
- Emergency Info.
- A copy of your child's birth certificate.
- Immunization record signed by your child's physician.

Withdrawals

Please notify Future Einsteins in writing if you wish to withdraw your child from the preschool program two weeks before withdrawal

Preschool Staff

Future Einsteins Preschool Program staff consist of caring and skilled early childhood professionals certified in first aid and CPR. Future Einsteins staff collaborate to plan and implement the preschool program as a team and work collectively to provide the best possible experience for your child.

Curriculum

The curriculum of the Future Einsteins Preschool Program reflects the preschool program's commitment to what we believe is the best practice in early childhood education. Our goal is to create an environment that is rich in language and learning opportunities, a blend of teacher directed and individual learning experiences where each child is challenged at a level s/he can meet, thereby providing for successful learning experiences and stimulating a positive attitude toward education. Learning is taking place in everything that children do, and we want children to enjoy learning. Through observation and real life experiences, children become familiar and comfortable with differences and similarities in the world around them leading to acceptance and respect.

The typical daily schedule is filled with opportunities that balance quiet, active, large group, small group, indoor, and outdoor activities. Activities are planned based on a curriculum theme, taking into account the life experiences, interests, and developmental levels of all the children in the group. Chosen themes are relevant to children's lives, frequently brainstormed by the children themselves, and often incorporate customs, diversity awareness, health, and safety issues into the program. Children have the opportunity to talk and hear about the theme, listen to stories (both read aloud by staff, or at the listening center), look at books by themselves, sing songs, engage in activities, and work with varied materials relevant to the theme. There is also time for children to explore activities unrelated to the theme encouraging individual choice and expression.

Staff support children's efforts to problem solve within their social setting, to express their feelings and emotions, to make choices and follow directions, to expand their self help skills, and to represent their knowledge of the world in multiple ways.

Program Schedule

- 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Monday-Friday full day program for 3-5 year olds. (5 day, 4 day and 3 day programs available)
- 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., Monday-Friday half day program for 3-5 year olds. (5 day, 4 day and 3 day programs available)
- The preschool program follows the Colchester School's school calendar and is not open on snow days, during school vacation, in-service days, or when there is an emergency school cancellation or closing.

Separation

It is common for a child to have difficulty separating from a parent. This is always a tremendously difficult issue to deal with, not only for the child, but for the parent/s as well. It is just as challenging for a parent to leave preschool hearing the sound of their child's cries, as it is for the child to be "left" at preschool. In fact, it may be even **more** challenging for the parent, as the child soon stops crying and becomes engaged in activities, while the parent remembers only that their child is crying! While it is never a simple issue to resolve, there are several steps that can ease separation:

- Talk with your child about preschool before s/he comes. Explain to your child that s/he will be going to preschool, and that there will be other children to play with, activities to participate in, and adults who will care for and play with them.
- Talk about what will happen during your child's day: "You will have free choice, circle time, activities, recess, then snack," etc. to help reassure your child about the consistency of his/her day.
- Try to keep arrival consistent by following the same routine every day. Young children appreciate knowing what will happen next.
- When you leave, it is important to tell your child that you are leaving, and that you will come back to pick them up later, specific to your situation (i.e. at school, daycare etc.).

Please do not hesitate to ask the staff for assistance when your child is having difficulty separating. Staff members are always accessible to assist and offer suggestions, and are prepared and able to help a child deal with separation. Feel free to call during preschool to see how your child is doing.

Sleep Needs

Beginning preschool or returning to school after a relaxing summer or holiday vacation can be a challenging adjustment for both you and your child. You can help your child fully enjoy their preschool day by making sure that they receive enough sleep.

- According to the National Sleep Foundation and pediatricians, preschool children age 3 to 5 require 11 to 13 hours of sleep daily.
- Sleep, among other factors influences a child's temperament. Poor sleep (too little and/or poor quality) can be associated with behavior problems such as aggression, defiance, no-compliance, acting out, and hyperactivity.
- The proper amount and quality of sleep are very important to your child's development. A relaxing and consistent bedtime routine as well as a regular and consistent sleep schedule will help meet your child's sleep needs.
- For children in preschool for more than 5 hours there shall be an opportunity to rest for at least 30 minutes, but no child shall be forced to sleep. Rest time may included: reading, listening to music, sleeping, etc.
- Each child will be required to bring in a closed container with a sleeping bag will be used for nap/quiet time. This will be stored at Future Einsteins, at the end of the week, will be sent home to be washed.

Toilet Training

It is the expectation that children attending the preschool program are toilet trained. However, the preschool program staff understands that preschool age children may not yet be fully toilet trained. The preschool program staff want to support children who are still in the process of completing their toilet training, as well as help to reinforce the personal hygiene skills associated with using the toilet that you are teaching at home; hand washing and proper wiping. Please help your child by;

- Providing sufficient extra clothing (underwear, pants, skirts etc.) in the event of multiple accidents during the preschool day. Your child is welcome to store the extra clothing at school.
- Providing sufficient pull-ups and wipes as needed.

- Information on toilet training from the American Academy of Pediatrics is available at the end of this handbook in Appendix A.



Clothing

- Label all clothing to keep lost items to a minimum.
- Dress your child appropriately for the weather and outdoor play.
- Please keep an extra set of clothing in your child's backpack and/or cubby at school, in case of spills, accidents etc., and help your child remember to bring their backpack daily.
- Sneakers are a safe and comfortable choice of footwear for school.
- Your child is welcome to leave a pair of sneakers at school during seasons (mud, winter) when boots are needed.

Outdoor Recess

- Outdoor recess will be held daily except during inclement weather.
- In the winter months outdoor recess will be held when the outdoor temperature is 20 degrees or above, including the wind chill.

School Tools

- All school tools (crayons, markers, pencils, paper, glue etc.) are provided for your child.

Backpacks

- Backpacks are encouraged, sufficiently large enough to allow room for library books, shoes, folders, snack, lunch, and outdoor gear.

Backpacks with approximately a 1500 cubic inch capacity allow for sufficient space (or about 15" high x 12" wide, and 6" deep).

- "Clip system" backpacks and messenger type bags are discouraged, as both appear difficult for children at this age level to use independently.

Food



- Please send in a healthy snack (food and drink with low sugar content) for your child daily. The morning preschool session will have a mid morning snack, and the afternoon session will have a mid afternoon snack.
- Please pack an ice pack in lunch box for keeping your child's food cold.
- If you need to have your child's lunch warmed up, we do have a microwave available.

Transportation, Arrival, and Departure

- It is understood that it can be difficult to arrive at school "on time," especially during the winter months. Please understand that late arrival means that your child will miss being able to participate in activities designed to enhance all areas of your child's development, and can be disruptive to the other children in the classroom.
 - When dropping off your child please walk them to the classroom door. Students are encouraged to hang up their backpack and coat independently, with assistance as needed.
- Please do not drop off your child earlier than the designated start time, or pick your child up later than the designated end time of the preschool program.
- Any change in the regular transportation routine requires a parent/guardian note or phone call. Without a written note or a phone call, we will not change your child's usual transportation routine. Please provide the **name, street address, and phone number** of the person/s responsible for your child.



Field Trips

Parents/guardians will be notified in advance and will be required to sign permission slips if their child plans to join the group. Parents/guardians are welcome to attend!

Our Classroom Community

Every child is an important part of our classroom community. We understand that dispersing cards, birthday invitations, gifts, and other items is easily accomplished by sending those items to school with your child for the appropriate child to then take home. In order for every child to continue to feel s/he is an important part of our classroom community, please only send items to school if there is an item for every child in the classroom, along with your note indicating approval. Thank you in advance for your understanding and help with this matter. We feel certain that you would want your child to always feel that s/he is an important part of our classroom community, and never left out.



Birthdays and Holidays

- Parents are welcome to send in a healthy treat (i.e. fruit salad, muffins, etc.) to celebrate their child's birthday during snack time.
- We will be sensitive to all of our families when planning holiday activities. Celebrations will

be a form of learning about history and various traditions, and we may use books, arts and crafts, food, music, games and/or other age appropriate activities. Parents/guardians are welcome to contact Future Einsteins with questions or concerns.

Sharing

- A letter will be sent home explaining what children can bring to share and when they will have sharing time at school.
- We understand that many children also attend a daycare facility during their day, and the importance of having a special toy or object of affection to accompany them. Please help your child to understand that these special objects will remain in their

backpacks while at school. This will greatly help us in eliminating the possibility of damage to, and the distraction of these special objects while at preschool.

Parent Volunteers/Involvement

The Future Einsteins Preschool Program is much more successful with the help of volunteers. Parents are always welcome in the classroom, and there are many ways you can help. Here are just a few ideas: come into the classroom to help with a special art, make classroom games, chaperone field trips, share an occupation, read a story, share a song, or play a musical instrument.

Communication

Communication between parents and teachers is an important part of the school experience. When we all are informed things run smoothly and everyone, especially your child, has a positive experience.

- Your child will be provided with a home to school folder. This folder is for notes, notices, breakfast/lunch/snack payment envelopes, book orders, and any thing else that needs to be communicated between school and home.
- Your child is required to empty their folder to each day.
- Please check your child's folder daily for information from school, and help your child remember to bring in their folder every day by keeping it in their backpack. This will be an important way to communicate between home and school.
- When sending in any items (such as requested donations for special activities or clothing), please be sure to include a note so that it will be understood who and what the items are for.



Parent/Teacher Conferences and Progress Reports

- Progress reports are sent home to parents/guardians at the end of each month. You will receive a summary of your child's development and learning during each of these marking periods.



If you have any concerns about your child's progress at any time, please call or send a note to schedule a meeting.

Behavior Management

Our goal is to provide safe and appropriate care and education for each child. We recognize that every child has different needs and responds to different interactions. We strive to work with families to provide the best experience possible for all children in the program. Children are encouraged to reflect on their behavior and make choices to correct inappropriate behavior, with adults acting as the mediators, rather than the problem solvers. It is the goal of the program to empower children to learn to make appropriate choices.

Parents/guardians can help by keeping staff informed of any changes at home, which may affect behavior (i.e. medication, sleeplessness, change in family situation, illness, death of a significant family member or pet). Our staff will keep parents/guardians informed of any incidents that happen during the program. Should a concern arise, a staff member will contact the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate with staff and should feel free to schedule a conference at any time. It is our goal to work with the family until we find a mutually satisfying solution.

Child Abuse and Neglect

All Future Einsteins employees are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. This means that they are required by the law to submit to DCF/SRS an oral or written report within 24 hours if they have a reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please contact Future Einsteins.

Grievances

Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss any concerns regarding the program with the classroom teacher. If the grievance is not resolved to satisfaction, parents/guardians should speak with Robin Luter, the owner of

Future Einsteins. If concerns are still present, parents/guardians have the right to call or write the Vermont State Licensing Department:

Child Development Division
Department for Children and Families
103 South Main Street
2 & 3 North
Waterbury, VT 05671-5500

1-800-649-2642 or (802) 241-3110

Child Care Consumer Line: 1-800-649-2642

Medical Policy

It is our preference that both prescription and non-prescription medications be administered to children prior to their school attendance. If your child requires prescription medication during program hours, we ask that you follow these regulations:

1. Medicine must come in an original prescription bottle and be given directly by a staff member.
2. Medication **must be accompanied by a completed "Prescription Medication Order and Permission Form"**
3. Non-prescription medications (i.e. Tylenol) may be administered to your child if you have indicated your permission to do so on the emergency form.

No child may be admitted to the Future Einsteins Preschool Program in the following instances:

1. If it is the opinion of the staff and/or medical professional that the child is too ill to be in the preschool program.
2. If the child is diagnosed with any of the following:
 - Bacterial Meningitis
 - Chicken Pox
 - Shigella
 - Campylobacter
 - Salmonella
 - Giardia

- Polio
- Impetigo
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis A
- Measles
- Mumps
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Rubella (German measles)
- Streptococcal infection
- Tuberculosis (active)

If the child is diagnosed with any of the above illnesses, the child may only return to the preschool program when a medical professional indicates that it is safe to do so.

3. If the child has any of the following symptoms:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Severe cough
- Conjunctivitis ("Pink-eye")
- Jaundice
- Rash with fever or behavioral change
- Other symptoms of possible severe illness (lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, persistent abdominal pain).

The child may return 24 hours after the above symptoms have disappeared. If the child presents with any of these above symptoms while at school, you will be immediately contacted to pick up your child from the preschool program.

4. If the child is diagnosed as having any of the following conditions:

- Lice; may return after appropriate treatment is completed.
- Scabies, Pinworm, or Ringworm; may return 24 hours after treatment is initiated.

Accidents/Incidents

We will always inform you if your child is exposed to any contagious illnesses during the program.

Our staff is trained and certified to handle most medical emergencies. Our policy is to first contact the parents/guardians. However, if the situation warrants, we will activate EMS (Emergency Medical Services; 911 ~ Colchester Rescue), and then attempt to contact the parents/guardians. Upon recommendation of the EMS personnel, children may be transported to a hospital emergency room for definitive emergency care prior to parental contact. Please know that we will accompany your child, and continue to attempt to contact you while your child receives emergency care.

Accident/Incident forms will be filled out for any injury or incident occurring within program hours. A copy will be kept in your child's file and parents/guardians will be given a copy.

Smoking Policy

Smoking is not allowed on the grounds of, or in the buildings of Future Einsteins.

Appendix A

Toilet Training

There is no set age at which toilet training should begin. Before children are 12 months of age, they have no control over bladder or bowel movements. While many children start to show signs of being ready between 18 and 24 months of age, some children may not be ready until 30 months or older. This is normal.

Most children achieve bowel control and daytime urine control by 3 to 4 years of age. However, even after your child is able to stay dry during the day, it may take months or years before he achieves the same success at night. Most children are able to stay dry at night after 5 years of age.

Signs that your child may be ready include the following:

- Your child stays dry at least 2 hours at a time during the day or is dry after naps.
- Bowel movements become regular and predictable.
- You can tell when your child is about to urinate or have a bowel movement.
- Your child can follow simple instructions.
- Your child can walk to and from the bathroom and help undress.
- Your child seems uncomfortable with soiled diapers and wants to be changed.
- Your child asks to use the toilet or potty chair.
- Your child asks to wear "big-kid" underwear.

Note: Some child care programs require children to be toilet trained as a requirement for enrollment. Don't let this be a threat to your child; it may be an incentive for her to cooperate in the toilet training process.

Major changes in the home may make toilet training more difficult. Sometimes it is a good idea to delay toilet training if:

- Your family has just moved or will move in the near future.
- You are expecting a baby or you have recently had a new baby.
- There is a major illness, a recent death, or some other family crisis.

However, if your child is learning how to use the toilet without problems, there is no need to stop because of these situations.

Toilet Training Tips

- **Decide which words to use.** Choose the words your family will use to describe body parts, urine, and bowel movements. Remember that other people will hear these words too, so pick words that will not offend, confuse, or embarrass anyone. Avoid negative words like "dirty," "naughty," or "stinky." They can make your child feel ashamed and embarrassed. Talk about bowel movements and urination in a simple, matter-of-fact manner.
- **Pick a potty chair.** A potty chair is easier for a small child to use because there is no problem getting onto it and a child's feet can reach the floor. Special books or toys for "potty time" may help make this more enjoyable for your child.
- **Know the signs.** Before having a bowel movement, your child may grunt or make other straining noises, squat, or stop playing for a moment. When pushing, his face may turn red. Explain to your child that these signs mean that a bowel movement is about to come. Your child may wait until after the fact to tell you about a wet diaper or a bowel movement. This is actually a good sign that your child is starting to recognize these body functions. Praise your child for telling you, and suggest that "next time" he let you know in advance. Keep in mind that it often takes longer for a child to recognize the need to urinate than the need to move bowels.
- **Make trips to the potty routine.** When your child seems ready to urinate or have a bowel movement, go to the potty. It may also be

helpful to make trips to the potty a regular part of your child's daily routine, such as first thing in the morning, after meals, or before naps.

- **Try training pants.** Once your child starts using the potty with some success, training pants can be used. This moment will be special. Your child will feel proud of this sign of growing up. However, be prepared for "accidents."

If any concerns come up before, during, or after toilet training, talk with your pediatrician. Often the problem is minor and can be resolved quickly, but sometimes physical or emotional causes will require treatment. Your pediatrician's help, advice, and encouragement can help make toilet training easier. Also, your pediatrician is trained to identify and manage problems that are more serious.

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