



Family Handbook

152 US Route One #8
Scarborough, Maine 04074
(tel.)207-883-5882 (fax) 510-1831
Director: Ruth C. Hughes M.Ed.
www.shootingstarsprogram.com

Where every child can reach for the stars!

Table of Contents

Title	Page
Introduction.....	1
Daily Schedule.....	2
Arrival and Dismissal.....	3
Backpacks.....	3
Hours and Vacation.....	3
Rights of Parents and Children.....	4
Fees.....	5
Snow Days.....	6
Emergency Closings.....	6
Emergency Policies.....	6
Evacuation Action Plan.....	7
Mandated Reporter.....	8
Expulsion Practices and Release of Children.....	9
Medical Emergencies, Serious Injury or Death.....	9
English Language Learners.....	10
Parking.....	10

Clothing and Supplies.....	10
Snacks/Lunch.....	11
Birthdays.....	11
Mailboxes.....	11
Pesticides and Animals.....	12
Administration of Medication.....	12
Illness Policy.....	12
Immunizations.....	13
Management of Communicable Diseases.....	13
Discipline Policy.....	14
Communication and Parent Involvement.....	15
Assessment.....	15
Student Records.....	16
Parent Observation Conferences.....	16
Grievances and Complaints.....	17
Playground Rules and Ratios.....	17

Physical Activity Policy.....	20
Screening and Referral for Special Education.....	21
Diversity and Bias Free Environment.....	22
Confidentiality.....	21

Introduction

Dear Parent,

Welcome to The Shooting Stars Program and thank you for choosing our school for your child. Shooting Stars is a private self-supporting preschool located at 152 US Route One in Scarborough since October 2005. We offer unique programming for children from 3-5 years of age. Our objective is to provide an individually appropriate curriculum that will assist in meeting the academic, social, physical, and emotional needs of you and your child.

The Shooting Stars program consists of three classrooms that per licensing can have a maximum of 42 children at school each day. All three, utilize a multi-age approach where curriculum focuses on the individual. Shooting Stars is unique, where it offers classrooms for both children with and without identified special educational needs. Children from all three classrooms participate in mainstreamed activities and can learn and play together. By doing so, all children can benefit from the expertise of visiting therapists who specialize in speech/language, physical and occupational development. With such a wide range of developmental abilities, our teachers are required to have a high level of training and qualifications. All lead teachers have either a master's or bachelor's degree in education and all supporting staff are licensed with the Maine Department of Education. This includes background checks and finger printing through the Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services.

We use several published curriculums, including "The Letter People", "Social Thinking", "Handwriting without Tears" "Learning without Tears, and "Ready S.E.T. Go!". Curriculum is designed around developmental benchmarks identified by the Maine State Department for Early Childhood Education. Our philosophy is considered "Activity Based Instruction (ABI)". This method is a child-directed, transactional approach that

weaves individual developmental goals within the classroom routine, planned activities and child-initiated interactions.

At Shooting Stars, we feel it is essential to develop a pre-academic curriculum that will better prepare children for Kindergarten: however, we have a strong emphasis on social-emotional development. Teaching appropriate peer interactions and conflict resolution strategies through play will strengthen and enhance each child's personal development.

The Shooting Stars Program's daily routine is very similar to what you see in any preschool classroom. Our goal is not only to learn but to have FUN! We begin our day with a morning circle time which offers music, stories, movement and can choose activities such as block play, dramatic play, arts/crafts as well as games and puzzles to stimulate growth and development. The children gather for a mid-morning snack. Each classroom will have whole group instruction on a specific theme chosen for that week. Activities to promote growth in all developmental areas are designed around this theme. We will also go outside each day to enjoy the playground or have more indoor fun during bad weather. Music and yoga play a large role in our program with much dancing, singing and movement.

Daily Schedule Example

This is only an example of a possible daily schedule. Classroom teachers may adjust to better suit children's needs.

9:00-9:15 Check in / Music and Movement

9:15-9:30 Morning Meeting

9:30-10:00 Snack and Bathroom

10:00-10:30 Center Choice Time

10:30-10:45 Classroom Walk Outdoors

10:45-11:15 Theme Circle with Project

11:15-11:45 Playground Time

11:45-12:15 Lunch and Bathroom

12:45-1:00 Learning Bins

1:00-1:15 Read Aloud

1:15-1:30 Center Choice Time/Learning Centers

1:30-2:00 Playground Time/Goodbye

3.

Arrival and Dismissal

Please drop children off promptly at 9:00am and pick up at 2:00. Blue Star parents use the front door entrance for drop off/pick up. Green and Orange stars use the back doors facing the parking lot. Please follow drop off and pick up procedures that were included in your welcome packet.

When checking your child out at the end of the day make sure, that you have verbally spoken with your child's teacher when dropping off and picking up. This will ensure the safety of your child. If someone other than yourself will be picking up your child, we ask you have this in writing and give to your classroom teacher. We will need a form of identification to verify their name at pick-up.

Backpacks

We ask that you send in one backpack, large enough for a lunch box and one change of clothes. Some children will be sharing cubbies, there is not enough space for children to leave clothing at school. One backpack also allows children to easily carry all their belongings outside to the playground for pick-up. Please label all belongings!

Hours/Vacation Schedule

The Shooting Stars Program follows a public-school calendar that was determined by Child Development Services of Maine. Because we service children with special education needs, the state requires our program to adhere to their calendar. A schedule of these days will be handed out separately. You can also find this calendar on our website

ShootingStarsProgram.com or on Maine.gov CDS website.

The Shooting Stars Program is open Monday-Friday 9:00-2:00. For children with identified special needs, the number of days and hours that your child will be enrolled is determined by the

4.
hours indicated on your Child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) from Child Development Services.

A six-week summer program is also offered three days a week for 3 hours each day.

Rights of Parents and Children

A. Rights of children. Children receiving childcare from Providers have the following rights.

1. Children must be free from emotional, physical, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
2. Each Child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the Child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the Child.
3. Each Child has a right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards in this rule.
4. Each Child must be provided childcare services without regard to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex, or family composition.
5. Children must be treated with dignity, consideration, and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes the use of Developmentally Appropriate practices by the Provider and Staff Members.
6. Each Child has the right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for that Child
7. in conjunction with community or state agencies by the Provider.
8. Each Child has a right to Developmentally Appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.
9. Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to Provider policies and practices.

A. Rights of parents and legal guardians of children receiving childcare from Providers.

- 1. A Child's Parent or Legal Guardian must be fully informed of items or services which are included in the rate they pay for childcare services.**
- 2. A Child's Parent or Legal Guardian has the right to be fully informed of findings of the most recent inspection conducted by the Department. The Provider must inform Children's Parents or Legal Guardians that the licensing inspection results are public information and inspection results must be posted in a prominent place on the Premises.**
- 3. Parents or Legal Guardians must be notified by the Provider within two business days of any actions taken against the Provider by the Department, including but not limited to, decisions to issue conditional Licenses, refusal to renew a License, or to impose fines or other sanctions.**

Fees

For parents enrolled in the Blue Star classroom, rates are \$46 per day for a 5-hour day. Payments can be made on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Payments can be made by cash, check, or credit card. If paying by credit card, there is a 2.75% processing fee.

Depending on your preference, monthly invoices will either be e-mailed or placed in your child's cubby. Payments need to be paid by the first day of each month. There is no written fee contract that is required for families to sign. If monthly payments are late, the director will contact families individually to request payment. If payments are late and exceed two months without payment or an agreed payment plan agreed upon by the director and the family, it will be the discretion of the director to release a child from at The Shooting Stars Program at that time.

6.

It is expected that children are to be picked up promptly from school each and it is understandable that there will times when parents are late; however, it is the directors' discretion to apply late fees to families who are often late. Late fees are \$5:00 a minute after the designated pick-up time.

Snow Days

If Scarborough Public Schools is closed due to hazardous weather, the Shooting Stars Program will be closed. We will not have a separate announcement on the TV or radio. To be notified of cancellations, listen, and watch for a cancellation of Scarborough Schools. If there is a delayed opening for Scarborough Schools, Shooting Stars will also be delayed. Snow days will be made up at the end of the school year.

Emergency Closings

If children are unable to attend The Shooting Stars Program due to building or town emergencies, such as broken water pipes, power outages, severe weather (hurricanes/flooding) etc, parents will receive a phone call from the director of Shooting Stars to notify you of any cancellations. If any such emergencies arise while children are at school, parents will be called and asked to pick-up their children and bring them home.

Evacuation Policies

The Shooting Stars classrooms are required by the state to include lighted exit signs, sprinkler systems, strobe lights, fire alarms and sufficient exits out of the building. The class conducts monthly fire drills and is visited by the town fire department monthly to ensure that safety systems are in working order.

During fire drills children are escorted to the playground and if we need to exit the front of the building, we will stand at the

7.

mailbox areas in the front parking lot. If there is a building emergency such as a bomb threat or gas leak, where children need to be several miles away from the facility. All teachers will drive children to my home at 27 High Point Rd. in Scarborough which is 2.7 miles away. The State of Maine Child Care licensing department has given facilities permission to transport children without car seats for building emergencies. If this was to occur, all parents will be notified and ask to pick up your children at my home.

Emergency Action Plan

Policy-It is the policy of The Shooting Stars Program to take every possible action to comply with all emergency regulations and protect all children and employees in emergency situations. Ruth Hughes, Director of The Shooting Stars Program is responsible for making sure this emergency action plan is kept up to date, practiced and reviewed periodically.

Reporting Procedures: Ruth Hughes must be immediately notified of all emergency procedures.

Type of Emergency & How to Report and Procedure

Fire-Activate Fire Alarm: follow classroom procedure to evacuate the building, call 911.

Explosion-Evacuate building: call 911 - Transport to 27 High Point Rd. Scarborough. Teachers have parent signed permission to drive all children without car seats.

Weather: Remain in Building, call all families for pick up, if families are unable to get children due to weather emergency, wait with children until rescue can evacuate children, call 911 if necessary.

8.

Bomb Threat: Call 911, Evacuate Building to an area 2 miles away, Transport to 27 High Point Rd. Scarborough. Call all parents to pick up children immediately. Transport to 27 High Point Rd., Scarborough Home of Ruth Hughes.

Chemical Spill/Gas Leak: Evacuate the building to an area 2 miles away, Transport to 27 High Point Rd. Scarborough, call Landlord and 911, if necessary, call all families for immediate pick up of children.

Violence: Call 911, Remove Children to a safe area away from view of violent event, notify parents of event if deemed necessary by director.

Medical: Call 911, Perform first Aid/CPR if necessary, contact parents of child if medical situation is related to their child. Notify families if a medical emergency was observed by their child.

Lock Down Procedure: if there is threat of an unwanted intruder. staff will immediately call 911, All doors and windows will be locked, and children will shelter in place away from view of windows until police have notified it is safe outside the building. This safe space is in the Green Star Circle area of the classroom.

Mandated Reporter

The Shooting Stars Program is a licensed childcare program with the State of Maine which means that all staff are mandated reporters of child abuse and/or neglect. If staff suspect child abuse or neglect with any of the children at the Shooting Stars Program, staff will report directly to the Department of Health and Human Services. If staff ever suspect child abuse or neglect from a staff member at Shooting Stars, that is reported directly to the Department of Education Licensing Department. Maine Child Protective Intake Unit: 800-452-1999

Expulsion Practices and Release of Children

For children who are enrolled as a Child Development Service referral, children will not be expelled or released from care unless their behavioral challenges and developmental need cannot be sufficiently met by the staff and therapy team at The Shooting Stars Program. If that happens a meeting with the family and Child Development Services (CDS) to determine appropriate placement. For children enrolled as a regular education placement where their needs are too significant and challenging to be met in a 1:8 teacher to student ratio, a meeting with the family will be held with a recommendation to place a CDS evaluation referral. If parents refuse the referral, the director of The Shooting Stars Program reserve the right to release the child from the programs care. This will not happen without a face-to-face discussion with the family and a minimum of a 1-week notice.

Children may only be picked up by their parent or the emergency contact that has been listed on the child registration form. If someone other than the parent or person listed on the registration needs to pick up your child, please notify either your classroom teacher or the director by phone or email. Persons other than the parent and emergency contact will be required to show photo identification.

Medical Emergencies, Serious Injury or Death

The Shooting Stars Program trains all staff with the American Heart Association's First Aid and CPR course. In the event of a medical emergency or accident, trained staff will assess the scene and situation to determine appropriate responses. Appropriate first aid will be administered, and staff will contact the director and/or authorized person. If determined necessary, 911 will be contacted and staff will follow the instructions given by emergency response personnel. Guardians will be notified of the emergency by phone. In the event the child is to be transported to the hospital by ambulance and the guardian is not at school a staff member will accompany and remain with the child until the guardian arrives.

Pursuant to Child Care Licensing Rules and Regulations, The Shooting Stars Program will notify their Child Care Licensing Worker in the event of a serious medical emergency requiring ambulance transport to a medical facility or in the event of a child's death.

English Language Learners

The Shooting Stars Program welcomes families of all backgrounds. The primary language in our program is English. If you communicate more comfortably in another language, please let the director know. We will make every reasonable effort to make our resources and communications accessible to you in your home language. We will work with the families to incorporate and celebrate every background, language, and culture in our program. If you families have specific traditions around the holiday feel free to share this with your classroom teachers so that they can incorporate that in daily lesson plans and activities.

Parking

The entrance to The Shooting Stars Classroom is either to the front or rear of the building. If your child attends the typical preschool program (Blue Stars) please park at the front parking lot and enter through the front door. If your child attends a CDS specialized program enter through either the Green Stars or Orange Stars classroom which is located at the back of the building. For the Green and Orange star classrooms, please drive behind the Scarborough Market Place and park in front of the playground. You may enter through the door marked Shooting Stars with the appropriate color star for your child's classroom.

Clothing/Supplies

Your child will need the following: a change of clothes (including underwear and socks) that can remain at the classroom and outside clothing appropriate for the weather. We will try to get outside everyday even in the winter. The only time we remain inside is when it is raining heavily, or the

temperature/wind chill falls below 20 degrees. We ask you to label everything with your child's name. We cannot be responsible for lost or missing clothing, but we will maintain a lost and found area. Diapers and wipes need to be provided if your child is not yet potty trained. Because we do go outside daily, weather permitting, we ask that you dress your child accordingly. Please no sandals, flip flops, or crocs. These types of shoes make it difficult for children to maneuver safely on the playground equipment. Shoes must be worn in school at all times. No slippers please. For safety reasons, in the event of a fire drill, there would be no time to change into shoes.

Snacks / Lunch

Shooting Stars is a PEANUT FREE SCHOOL. We do not provide meals, please send your child to school everyday with a lunch box with enough food for a morning snack and lunch if they remain for the full 4 hours each day. We do offer the children water during each meal but feel free to pack a drink for your child if water is not preferred. Please notify us of any allergies to food.

Birthdays

Celebrating birthdays is such a special time for your child and we love celebrating with them; however, due to the increasing incident of food allergies in children, we ask that you **DO NOT** send in birthday treats to school. It is very difficult for young children to understand why they cannot have a special treat that has been brought to school. Instead, your child can bring in a special toy or item that they can share with the class. This will be a show and tell day for just the birthday girl or boy!

Mailboxes

Each child has an individual parent mailbox where artwork, notices and reports are placed. These boxes are located in each classroom above the cubby area with your child's name. Please check boxes daily.

Pesticides and Animals

The use of pesticides and/or herbicides are not used at The Shooting Stars Program either in the building or outside on the playground. If a problem ever arises where such substances need to be used. Parents will be notified, and children will not be allowed to participate in those areas until the space is safe and free from chemicals.

Administration of Medication

The Shooting Stars Program shall administer prescription medication only upon written order from a physician and according to the labeled instructions on the original medicine container. A written, signed and dated request from the parent must be submitted before any medication can be administered by staff.

We shall record the administration of all prescription medicine. We shall not administer any non-prescription medications to a child without written, signed, and dated parental permission naming the medication and the dosage. We also require that we have a written and signed parental request for any non-prescription lotions that need to be applied to the skin.

Illness Policy

Under no circumstances should you send your child to Shooting Stars if he/she has any contagious illness or is running a temperature over 100 degrees F. A sick child cannot do well in a group setting and it is difficult for the staff to give a sick child the extra attention he/she needs. We assume that any child who is sent to Shooting Stars is well enough to participate in our regular program including outdoor play. If a parent feels that his/her child is not well enough to participate in all activities, he/she must keep that child at home. Children must be free from fever (100 or higher), vomiting, diarrhea and without medication for 24 hours.

Criteria for illness is as follows:

1. An elevated temperature of 100 degrees F. or higher
2. Vomiting
3. Uncontrollable diarrhea or two or more loose stools
4. Unexplained rash
5. Discharge from eyes or ears
6. Highly contagious illness such as but not limited to strep throat, scarlet fever, chicken pox, impetigo, conjunctivitis, measles, mumps, viral infections etc.
7. Lice

Please keep in mind that these are only guidelines. If we feel that your child cannot fully participate in the program, you will be notified to pick up your child. We ask that you do so within 30 minutes of our request. If your child is going to be absent from school, please call before 8:30 am to notify classroom teachers.

Immunizations

The Department of Health and Human Services requires that all Nursery School licensed facilities maintain copies of immunization records of each child. If you choose not to have your child immunized, please be aware that your child will have to remain at home in the event that there is a breakout of serious contagious disease. If an outbreak of a contagious disease occurs at The Shooting Stars Program, the state of Maine's Center for Disease Control will be notified, and an outbreak plan will be developed on how to proceed.

Management of Communicable Diseases

Because of the danger to student and employee health, Shooting Stars is required by law to adopt a policy for enforcement to safeguard the health of any student or employee who has contracted or been exposed to a communicable disease. Shooting Stars has protocols and procedures for:

- Educating school personnel regarding symptoms and management of communicable diseases
- Training for handling blood-borne pathogens (Required by [OSHA](#))
- Keeping children with signs of communicable disease at home and seek appropriate treatment.
- Record-keeping regarding non-immunized children during outbreaks
- Exclusion and follow-up of children who are not immunized against vaccine preventable diseases or who have contracted a communicable disease.
- Designating the schools physician consultant or school director as liaison with public health officials for the reporting of [“notifiable” communicable diseases](#).

School Absentee Reporting (>15% due to illness)

In addition to individual cases, when a potential outbreak, including those involving exposure to a communicable disease, toxic agent, environmental hazard, or a potential epidemic is identified, immediate notification to the Maine CDC will be made. Currently childcare facilities no longer required to notify the CDC of Covid-19 positive cases, however there is advisement to notify the CDC of any positive cases of Monkey Pox.

Discipline Policy

The teachers in The Shooting Stars Program use praise and positive reinforcement methods to manage behavior in the classroom. This reinforcement is social verbal praise with natural rewards (stickers, toys). We will often design reward systems with charts and posters to motivate children toward success. These strategies will increase self-esteem, problem solving abilities and self-discipline. When

15.

needed we will use a “break” or “cool down” period if a child is overly agitated. There is an area in each classroom that is a designated place for children to have quiet space when needed. When appropriate we will work closely with families to develop a behavior plan that can be effective both in school and at home. We do not use physical restraints with children unless they are posing a threat to cause bodily harm to themselves or others. If a physical restraint is required, a meeting will be held with that child’s family to write a behavior action plan and discuss how to safely restrain a child. An incident form will also be completed in accordance with the State of Maine’s chapter 33 law on restraint and seclusion practices in school settings.

Communication/Parent Involvement

Communication with families and parent involvement is critical to the success of The Shooting Stars Program. You are the expert on your child and know their needs best. Continuous dialogue between parents and teachers about your child’s progress and needs essential for a successful learning environment. Two conference times will be set up at the beginning and end of school to discuss your child’s personal development and specific achievements.

Assessment

All children will be evaluated by an individual developmental assessment which will be conducted through out the year. This information along with work samples collected in individual portfolios will be shared during your child’s conference. Portfolio’s follow the Maine State Learning Guidelines for early childhood education.

Assessments used for children in the Blue Star classroom are formalized, developmental check lists developed by The Letter People preschool curriculum. Children in the Orange and Green star classrooms are evaluated with formalized standardized testing in accordance with Child Development Services.

All assessment information is kept strictly confidential and only classroom staff at Shooting Stars will have access to this information. Data collected from assessments will be used to design curriculum and meet the individual developmental needs of your child. Assessment information will be reviewed with parents at least once a year, during private conferences with classroom teachers or during annual review meetings if your child receives services from CDS.

Student Records

All records of each child, including Individual Education plans, assessments and reports from therapists are kept strictly confidential and placed in a locked fireproof filing cabinet within The Shooting Stars classroom. Additional copies of any records pertaining to the IEP are kept at Child Development Services. Only Shooting Stars Staff have access to these records. For students to begin school, we need all parents to turn in registration form, medical information, and a copy of your child's immunization records. All teacher and child files are kept for a minimum of 5 years.

Registration forms must include emergency contact information, pediatrician, and health insurance name/number. There is also a section on registration forms that allow you to provide permission for your child to be photographed with the purpose of classroom bulletin boards, art projects and on-line sharing of photos on our web site and Facebook page. Names of children are never used on the web.

Parent Observations and Conferences

Families may visit/observe any area of the facility at any time during the program's regular hours of operation but please do call ahead and schedule an appointment with the director, Ruth Hughes. We have many visitors to Shooting Stars and this will ensure that we do not have too many unfamiliar adults in the building at one time.

Children in the Blue Star classroom will have a private parent/teacher conference with the lead classroom teacher. During this time, lead teachers will discuss assessment results, developmental progress as well as strengths and any concerns.

For children in the Green and Orange Star classrooms, Child Development Services will schedule a yearly meeting to discuss progress toward identified goals and qualification for continuation of services. Written quarterly progress notes will also be written to outline progress toward identified IEP objectives.

All families are welcome to request a meeting with classroom teachers to discuss their child at any time. Teachers will do their best speak directly with families at drop off and pick up times but if you were unable to touch base with your teacher, feel free to call or e-mail at any time.

Grievances and Complaints

If ever there is a grievance or complaint about Shooting Stars, please feel free to contact me directly by phone or email so that we can schedule a face-to-face meeting to discuss the situation. I put communication with parents as a priority and always want to resolve any issues promptly.

Playground Play Policy, Ratios and Rules

Per licensing certification, The Shooting Stars Program is permitted to have a maximum of 42 children at school per day. Our playground has sufficient space to allow all the children on the playground at the same time. The below ratios are maintained on the playground at all times.

Maximum ratios include:

Blue Stars: 16 children – 2 teachers (1:8 Ratio)

Green Stars: 10-14 children – 5 to 6 teachers (1:1, 2:1,3:1 Ratio)

Orange Stars: 8-11 children – 8 to 11 teachers (all 1:1 Ratio)

Numbers depend on hired staff and recommended ratios from Child Development Services.

Our playground policy includes:

- 1. Maximum number of children on playground at one time: 42**
- 2. Staff will spread out to have equal numbers of staff in 3 zones: East end, West end, and middle of playground space.**
- 3. Requirements for supervision will include:**
 - * Positioning near swings to prevent children being hit**
 - * Positioning near play climbers and slides to make sure children are safe and following playground rules.**
 - * Help Children adhere to all playground rules**
 - * Staff will maintain their child to teacher ratio that they were assigned to for that day (1:8, 1:1, 2:1 or 3:1)**
 - * Staff trained on all playground rules and safety precautions**

Playground Rules and Safety Precautions

- Feet first going down the slide (never headfirst). Then, quickly get out of the way. No stopping on the way down either, and no climbing up the slide.**
- Waiting turns, and letting other kids have a chance on all playground equipment, one at a time (swings, slides, etc.). No pushing at all!**
- Sit down on the swings, never stand on them, and never jump off them while they're in mid-air. Always hold on with two hands.**
- Staying away from swinging swings, so you don't get hit. If you're pushing someone on the swings, make sure you leave enough clearance, so you don't get knocked over on their way back to you.**
- No climbing on or over the fence.**
- Big kids should be aware of little kids and play gently around them.**
- No throwing sand, mulch or rocks.**
- No wandering off without an adult knowing where they are.**
- No opening the gate, that is a teacher job!**
- No jumping off of slides or climbing structures.**

Teachers will be on the lookout for the following when outside on the playground:

- **Any loose parts on the playground.** If they see a bar that isn't tightly screwed in, or a swing hook or pole leg that looks wobbly, they should tell their director right away, and inform the children not to go near that equipment until fixed.
- **Wet, slippery surfaces,** such as on the slide (especially since kids like climbing up them). The kids should know not to step on the very wet playgrounds until dried off by a teacher.
- **Very hot surfaces.** Sometimes, playground equipment made of metal, or even plastic, can get hot in the summer. Always touch metal/plastic slides and rails softly before letting children use them.
- **Hard foundations or lack of soft cushioning on the ground.** This is the most serious cause of injury on a playground. The 'padding' on the ground should not only be made of a soft material, it should also absorb the impact of the fall. Staff will make sure all areas of the playground are sufficiently covered with playground chips.
- **Tripping, bruising and cutting hazards.** And, while rocks, sticks and toys may be part of the playground scene. Teachers will advise children not to run with sticks. Teachers will remove large sticks that pose a that may be dangerous to children. For wood parts of a playground, make sure there are no breakages that could cause splinters or cuts.
- **Sharp objects that don't belong on the playground.** This includes needles, broken glass, nails or other objects left behind by irresponsible citizens.
- **'Dirty' things that don't belong on the playground** Children should be ultra-sensitive to not touch these things and taught to get an adult. Such items include

- trash, dead animals, and the like. Children will be taught that these can be dangerous to their health; it won't come naturally to their logic.

Physical Activity Policy

Shooting Stars believes in providing a school day that is filled with physical activity. We start our morning with either a 15-minute gross motor obstacle course, music/movement dancing and yoga. Starting our day with physical activity helps get the wiggles out and prepares us all for a more successful day not to mention it starts our day out with fun! All physical activities are designed and modified to include all abilities. No one is left out on account of physical challenges or disability.

We schedule motor breaks throughout the day with one to two 10-15 Minute walks around the building to take a break and get some fresh air. A 30-minute playground time is also scheduled in the morning and in the afternoon each day. We never withhold active play to manage behavior but rather use it to motivate children. If a child is becoming overly active and not safe during an activity, we will recommend a calming activity to settle them down and then invite them to rejoin the group.

Screening and Referral for Special Education Services

All children at Shooting Stars are informally assessed with tools that determine current developmental skills in literacy, math, self-care, and social/emotional development. These screenings are done through teacher observation and direct informal assessment through the year. Shooting Stars has licensed special education

teachers, speech/language pathologists as well as occupational and physical therapists who are trained to identify developmental concerns. If ever there is a concern with a particular child, both classroom teachers and the program director will have a private conversation with the parent to gain permission for further screening. If the screening warrants further evaluation, the director of Shooting Stars will verbally request permission from the parent to place a referral with Child Development Services who will schedule a meeting to discuss the evaluation process if needed.

Diversity and Bias Free Environment

Our approach to diversity is simple: it's about embracing everyone. From cultivating a culture where all children, families and staff can bring their best selves to school deploying diversity initiative that supports all.

Shooting Stars welcomes children of all backgrounds and abilities. Shooting Stars does not discriminate based on disability in its services, programs, or activities. We do not screen or exclude enrollment of children based on their disability, culture, language, background, gender, or race. We make every effort to make changes to the physical environment, classroom curriculum and activities to include all enrolled at Shooting Stars.

Confidentiality

All child and family information shared with staff at The Shooting Stars Program is kept strictly confidential. Staff have signed employment agreements never to share any

personal information about children and families enrolled at Shooting Stars.

If you have any questions that are not answered in this handbook or have any suggestions for us to consider, please feel free to speak with us about them. We know that your child will have a successful and enjoyable learning experience here at The Shooting Stars Program. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with you and your child.

**Ruth Hughes M.Ed.
Director/Owner
The Shooting Stars Program
152 US Route One #8
Scarborough, Me 04074
207-883-5882
Rhughes5@maine.rr.com
www.shootingstarsprogram.com**

